

**NYC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TESTIMONY  
ON INTRO. 1933 BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION  
April 24, 2020**

Good morning Speaker Johnson, Council Member Rivera, Chairman Rodriguez and members of the Transportation Committee. I am Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation and I am joined by Deputy Commissioner for Traffic Planning and Management Eric Beaton and Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs Rebecca Zack. DOT and NYPD thank you for the opportunity to testify, on behalf of Mayor Bill de Blasio, on the legislation before the Committee tasking DOT with opening 75 miles of City streets up to pedestrians and cyclists during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In recent years, DOT has been proud to aggressively design and implement hundreds and hundreds of street safety, bike lane, bus lane and pedestrian plaza projects throughout the five boroughs. And we passionately share the goal of opening more of our City's streets to mass transit, bikes and pedestrians. But during the COVID-19 crisis, New York City government is facing profound personnel, operational and budgetary challenges. We have taken a hit like almost no other city in the world and are still grappling with the virus every day.

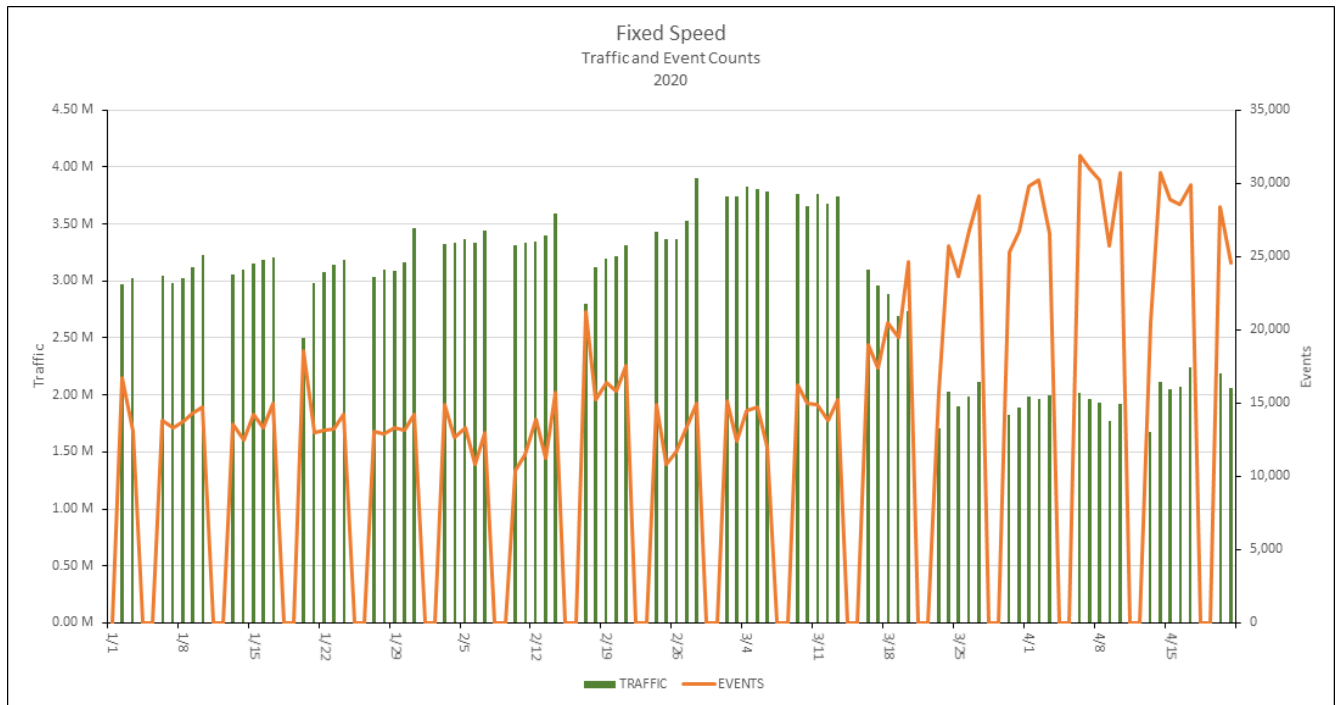
We want to work closely with the Council to find a common ground on our shared goal of making many more miles of our streets and sidewalks safer and more available for New Yorkers seeking open space. But we ask that the Council recognize the many challenges and competing demands all of us in City government, especially NYPD, are facing.

As we all know, we are the epicenter of this global pandemic, and both NYPD and DOT, like many of our sister agencies, have felt the impact of the virus directly, with many employees infected, out sick, and some lost forever. We mourn the loss of our colleagues and so many other New Yorkers, and our hearts go out to all who have lost loved ones.

This crisis has also dramatically changed our City streets. Street activity has plunged, which has led to one bit of good news: we have had the longest period without a pedestrian fatality—40 days—since we began tracking by mode in 1983.

But, unfortunately, in our much emptier streets, some drivers are speeding recklessly, and we can never let up our vigilance. DOT's speed cameras have issued almost double the number of violations compared to before the crisis, as shown in the chart included in my testimony. And we are continuing our pace of installing 60 new speed cameras each month and plan to meet our goal of standing up the largest speed camera program in the world.

At DOT, we are also maintaining the agency's critical functions, including emergency roadway, bridge, sidewalk and traffic operations infrastructure repairs, as well as running the Staten Island Ferry 24/7. And we are working closely with our union partners to ensure that our workforce is properly socially distanced, well-equipped and fully supported.



*Traffic (blue) and Speeding Event Counts (orange) since January 2020*

You have heard Chief Pilecki testify that when closing streets, both agencies want to prioritize public safety first and foremost, including the safety of all street users and ensuring safe operations for buses, trucks carrying supplies, and emergency vehicles. Thus, while we share the underlying principles of the bill before the Committee today, opening up 75 miles to pedestrians and cyclists—about 800 blocks—in seven days, as this bill mandates, is simply not possible to do safely and effectively given the significant strain all the relevant City agencies are under.

Many supporters of extensive closures have cited Oakland’s plan as model New York City could follow. While Oakland announced it would discourage car traffic on 74 miles of streets on April 11<sup>th</sup>, thus far, as Chief Pilecki testified, that city has still only implemented fewer than ten miles. What Oakland DOT is doing is discouraging, but not completely prohibiting, car traffic on its streets in phases, at a deliberate pace, and not all in one week as this bill mandates.

At DOT we examined Oakland’s model and see two cities with different realities and possibilities. Alameda County, where Oakland is located, has had fewer than 1,350 known COVID-19 cases, with 366 in Oakland itself, and 46 deaths county-wide—a small fraction of the number of people our City has lost on a per capita basis. New York City is tragically still seeing more COVID-19 fatalities every few hours than Alameda County has seen to date. Our agencies are therefore under very different strain resource-wise, and we also have to be far more cautious about enforcing social distancing in the public spaces we create.

Additionally, our cities are built differently, and our streets see disparate uses. New York City is the densest city in the country, with around 27,000 people per square mile citywide, and almost 70,000 people per square mile in Manhattan, compared to 7,000 people per square mile in

Oakland. The streets that will be closed in Oakland are typically low-density, single- or multi-family residential streets, where overcrowding is not a major concern.

In contrast, New York City's density varies greatly by neighborhood, and ensuring closed streets are equitably distributed, particularly in minority and low-income communities, will require closures in dense areas with complicated uses and higher traffic volumes. But while there are a lot of challenges with the Oakland model, we do want to work with the Council to find ways, given our current resource constraints, to create more miles of open space for pedestrians and cyclists while not causing crowding that requires additional NYPD enforcement or significant disruptions to emergency vehicles, trucks or mass transit.

We are currently evaluating multiple strategies to meet this need and hope in the coming days we can find common ground with you and other key stakeholders, with whom DOT has also been talking.

Beyond any temporary measures, which will be challenging to implement while the pandemic is still raging, we are starting to plan longer-term about what our transportation system will look like when our City begins to reopen, including talking to our regional transit partners, business groups, experts, advocates and our counterparts in other cities, especially in Asia and Europe.

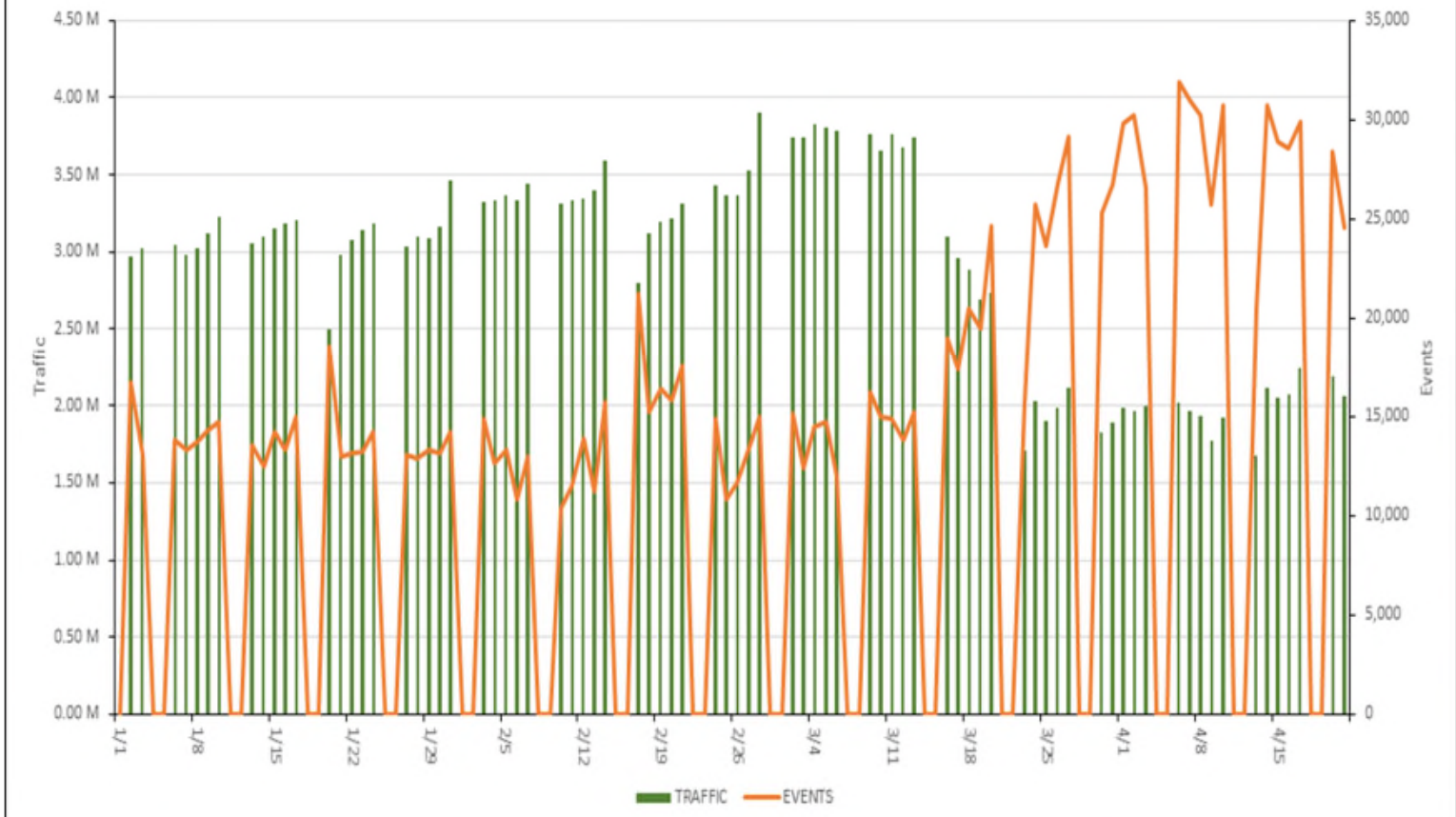
We will face a new reality, with many unknowns, but it will also present a unique moment to re-think our streets, both in the immediate recovery, and over time, to ensure they are safe, healthy, sustainable, more bike- and pedestrian friendly, and supportive of a rekindled civic and economic life. We look forward to working with the Council in the days and weeks ahead.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I will be happy to answer any questions.

Fixed Speed  
Traffic and Event Counts  
2020



Fixed Speed  
Traffic and Event Counts  
2020



**STATEMENT OF ASSISTANT CHIEF MICHAEL PILECKI  
NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT****BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
REMOTE HEARING  
APRIL 24, 2020**

Good morning Chair Rodriguez and Members of the Council. I am Deputy Chief Michael Pilecki, the Operations Chief for the Transportation Bureau within the New York City Police Department (NYPD). In addition to my colleagues from the Department of Transportation (DOT), I am joined today by Assistant Deputy Commissioner Oleg Chernyavsky. On behalf of Police Commissioner Dermot Shea, I wish to thank the Council for the opportunity to comment on Intro. # 1933/2020, which would mandate the closure or narrowing of 75 miles of city streets.

The Department wholly endorses the practice of responsible social distancing during this pandemic and we have taken extraordinary measures to ensure that people using the city's streets, sidewalks and parks are acting appropriately and maintaining a safe distance of at least six feet from each other. Last month we detailed nearly 700 officers and supervisors to a taskforce specifically created to address this issue with the primary goal being to ensure those not observing social distancing do so, and these efforts have been overwhelmingly effective. Since the start of the emergency, we have taken minimal enforcement in those few incidents where all other efforts to gain compliance had failed.

Today I want to speak primarily to the overarching concern this legislation would pose to the NYPD – the level of manpower that would be necessitated to ensure this proposal is executed safely. At the peak of this crisis, just last week, the Department had a daily sick count of over 7000 officers, or nearly 20% of our uniformed officers. We are still seeing daily sick reports of between 4000 and 5000 officers, which is about four to five times higher than the norm. Due to these daily manpower deficits, we have had to deploy our resources strategically to those areas most in need as conditions on the ground are changing day to day.

Given these realities, deploying officers or agents to police an area that is roughly the equivalent of three full marathon spans would not be possible. If the intent is to mimic the mixed use streets model that Oakland will be installing, then I would urge caution. This is a situation that has potential to severely impact public safety, as pedestrians may be lulled into a false sense of safety and complacency by streets that appear to be closed to traffic but are in fact not. In addition, while Oakland announced it would be closing 74-miles worth of streets, it did not do so immediately, as this bill would have the city do. To date, nearly 2 weeks after it was first announced, roughly 9-miles worth of roadway has been closed with limited information on its success.

Even if we established these areas without a fixed police presence, I feel compelled to mention that police officers will nevertheless be summoned to respond if 311 complaints are made that individuals are either not distancing or wearing face coverings. This is currently the case in public parks and at essential businesses that have remained open throughout this national emergency. Moreover, closing that many streets would still likely require NYPD personnel to direct traffic in

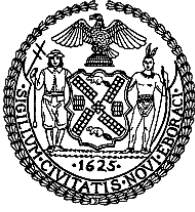
and around the street closures or restrictions. Likewise, of concern would be the permitting of pedestrians to walk in and share roadways with motor vehicles and bicycles, whom will all have a simultaneous right of way. The risk posed by such a model to pedestrians and bicyclists alike appear to be significant, especially in the absence of a police presence.

Regardless of what some may see as a success in Oakland, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. We would not be able to deploy unmonitored barricades, on the scale envisioned by this legislation, which will inevitably be moved and not replaced. Closing or restricting 75 miles of city streets is not the equivalent of a one-day block party. This proposal appears to be a citywide measure with no particular end date and affecting nearly all areas of the city. Creating the model envisioned by this legislation without an adequate level of police presence is not workable and creating it with a police presence is not operationally realistic in today's climate.

To ensure the safety of those who use our streets, and to facilitate the flow of emergency vehicles, the Department would need to post an officer or Traffic Enforcement Agent at every impacted intersection to enforce the restrictions and to move barriers when needed. In some ways, it is a "Catch 22". If we use movable barriers there must be personnel present to ensure motorist compliance and to move those barriers for emergency vehicles and deliveries. If we use immovable concrete barriers, emergency vehicles, deliveries and residents on those streets will be indefinitely re-routed and we must have personnel present to direct this traffic. Not to mention the valuable minutes ambulances, fire trucks and police vehicles will spend taking alternate routes to respond to emergencies. If an immovable barrier is installed which leaves enough space for emergency vehicles to pass, we are back to square one and we must place an officer or TEA at that location to enforce the restriction.

This is, of course, a complicated issue, and we should work together to come up with creative ways to provide individuals with functional public spaces they can use while maintaining safe distances. The Department stands ready to work with the Council and our sister agencies to ensure New Yorkers are afforded such spaces in a manner that does not require significant investment of police resources or that would create situations that will require enforcement of emergency health and safety orders currently in place.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about this critical issue and we look forward to answering any questions you may have.



CITY OF NEW YORK

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**LOWELL D. KERN**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

April 16, 2020

Hon. Corey Johnson  
Speaker, New York City Council  
250 Broadway, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Proposal for Open Streets**

Dear Council Speaker Johnson,

In an effort to provide more safe space for all New Yorkers to comply with physical distance requirements, Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) requests from the Mayor that streets in our community, and throughout the city, be open to pedestrians and that vehicular traffic be routed through major crosstown and arterials only. This is an easily implementable program based on the City's existing "shared streets" model. Please find enclosed the letter we sent to the Mayor.<sup>1</sup>

**Thank you** for your public calls and letters to open streets to pedestrians. We are seeking even greater advocacy from the City Council at this time as more and more cities demonstrate how to make their streets safe spaces for physical distancing.

With the confinement extended by one month, during good weather, and lack of a plan for allowing normal activity to resume, it is critical that New York City follow the lead of other countries and cities who have adopted these programs to slow the contagion.

This is a simple measure that will save lives. It will also go a long way to show the average New Yorkers and frontline workers that the City understands their plight, appreciates their sacrifices and will give them the same chances to stay as healthy as the more fortunate ones.

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<sup>1</sup> Because Covid19 emergency decisions are being made by the City very quickly MCB4 believes it is important to provide input into this topic as soon as possible. This letter has been voted by the Transportation Committee but not adopted by the Full Board. It will be proposed for ratification at the next Full Board meeting.



Thank you,



Lowell D. Kern  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4



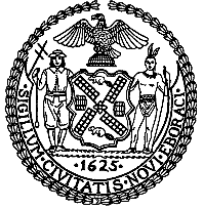
Christine Berthet  
Co-chair  
Transportation Planning Committee



Dale Corvino  
Co-chair  
Transportation Planning Committee

Enclosure

CC: Hon. Jerry Nadler, U.S. Congressman  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, U.S. Senator  
Hon. Richard Gottfried, NYS Assembly Member  
Hon. Linda Rosenthal, NYS Assembly Member  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President



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**LOWELL D. KERN**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

April 16, 2020

Mayor Bill De Blasio  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Proposal for Open Streets**

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

In an effort to provide more safe space for New Yorkers to comply with physical distance requirements, Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) requests that streets in our community, and throughout the city, be open to pedestrians and that vehicular traffic be routed through major crosstown and arterials only. This is an easily implementable program based on the City's existing "shared streets" model.

Because COVID-19 emergency decisions are being made by the City very quickly, MCB4 believes it is important to provide input into this topic as soon as possible. This letter has been voted by the Transportation Committee but not adopted by the Full Board. It will be proposed for ratification at the next Full Board meeting.

With the confinement extended by one month, during good weather, and lack of a plan for allowing normal activity to resume, it is critical that New York City follow the lead of other countries and cities who have adopted these policies to slow the contagion.

Pedestrians and emergency workers in our district cannot abide by the 6-foot distancing guidelines due to the narrowness of sidewalks and are subject to potential contagion when they go to work or grocery shopping. As you know, one of the most striking outcomes of the City's efforts to slow the spread of the coronavirus has been the near elimination of cars from our streets, which has made the City quieter, safer, and our air much cleaner. The City must allocate this available street space to those who need it most in order to slow the spread of the virus and let pedestrians use available space near their homes. As such, MCB4 requests the following streets be open to pedestrians 24 hours a day:

- W. 15<sup>th</sup>, W. 16<sup>th</sup>, W. 17<sup>th</sup>, W. 18<sup>th</sup>, W. 21<sup>st</sup>, W. 22<sup>nd</sup> and W. 26<sup>th</sup> Streets, Sixth Avenue to the West Side Highway
- W. 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Ninth to Eleventh Avenues,
- W. 36<sup>th</sup>, and W. 37<sup>th</sup> Streets, Eighth to Eleventh Avenue
- W. 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, Eighth to Tenth Avenues,
- W. 44<sup>th</sup>, W. 45<sup>th</sup> and W. 46<sup>th</sup> Streets, Eighth to Twelfth Avenues
- W. 51<sup>st</sup>, W. 53<sup>rd</sup> and W. 56<sup>th</sup> Streets, Eighth to Eleventh Avenues

MCB4 also supports Manhattan Community Board 5’s Transportation Committee’s call to fully pedestrianize Broadway, which is used by those residents living on the eastern side of the district and would work to coordinate an open streets program with our surrounding Community Districts.

This is quite different from the street fair model: the open streets will service essentially the residents from the block and will not be crowded. As it stands today, the risk of physical proximity is much greater on the constrained space the sidewalks provide.

As many cities and countries have now demonstrated, implementation need not be complex or require NYPD assistance. Simple cones and a sign at each street entrance would make this possible. The City should enlist block associations, Business Improvement Districts, and neighborhood associations in this effort. The “shared streets” model already allows ambulances, sanitation, and local traffic to pass as needed.

Many of our residents are confined to small and/or crowded apartments. Domestic violence reports are already skyrocketing. Confining New Yorkers to their homes and sometimes distant and limited park space may have long term impacts on our society. Our shared streets should be open for New Yorkers as necessary “safe spaces” so our front-line workers can safely get to work and trips to the grocery store, doctor, or exercise can be done without risk of contagion.

This is a simple measure that will save lives. It will also go a long way to show the average New Yorkers and frontline workers that you understand their plight, appreciate their sacrifices and will give them the same chances to stay healthy as the more fortunate ones.

Thank you,



Lowell Kern  
Chair  
Manhattan Community  
Board 4



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning  
Committee



Dale Corvino  
Co-Chair  
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CC: Hon. Jerry Nadler, U.S. Congressman  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, U.S. Senator  
Hon. Richard Gottfried, NYS Assembly Member

Hon. Linda Rosenthal, NYS Assembly Member  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon Corey Johnson, New York City Council Speaker

My name is Xian Horn I am an advocate, Forbes contributor and speaker with cerebral palsy and mobility disability.

Before the Access-A-Ride same day E-Hail revolution, 20 years of my life and schedule revolved around AAR booking times, waiting on hold for reservationists, and the busier I got, missing the 5pm cut off time to book my trip for the day ahead, and therefore having to cancel or make my own way. Would you ask every New Yorker to book their subway or bus ride 24 hours in advance?

If not, then cutting us (down to an embarrassing 8 round trips a month) or underfunding the same day ehail program from Access a Ride & rendering the MTA's most celebrated, equitable transportation program useless is calling us all second class citizens. Therefore, this not simply a budget issue, but one of basic access and civil rights. And so far, 6,275 people from all over the world agree. They all signed the petition to stop cuts and expand the program:  
<http://chng.it/pzMm5Phk>.

Since social distancing, we all know what it's like to feel isolated. For many in the disability community, this is their everyday with access to transportation or financial resources. The city always finds money for things it deems important like for Covid-19 relief. Please stand with us and help us fund this civil right.

Suppression of demand is illegal and suppression of an often isolated population like ours, inhumane. We are a pivotal point in history where we will define how people with disabilities will be treated for generations. We will either slide backwards or catapult forward and inspire all to join us. New York is the greatest city in the world. Please show us that our New York minutes count as much as everyone else's.

As city council members, I ask to consider what you want your legacy to be? How would you like to be remembered?

And:

What side of history, civil rights, and justice do you want to be on?

I'll let you decide.

God bless you and keep you safe. Thank you!

My name is Charles Todd, and I am a resident of Hell's Kitchen. During normal times the sidewalks in my neighborhood are already absurdly cramped. There are many spots where a combination of a stoop and a tree bed or a trash pile will make pedestrian traffic literally single file. We are thankful for Corey Johnson's office working to remove outdated and unused payphones to free up some space, but the sidewalks remain too narrow. So while walking with a stroller in Hell's Kitchen is a challenge in normal times, keeping social distance on our sidewalks during this pandemic is impossible.

On every side street we are still allocating two lanes of traffic to the free storage of personal vehicles for the minority of residents who own a car. If we aren't going to change our street parking system during this pandemic, then we must close the streets themselves. With traffic down considerably and the remaining cars speeding at record rates, it's time to allocate our street space more equitably for the safety of all New Yorkers. Cities around the world are closing down miles of streets to allow citizens to exercise and run essential errands without violating social distance rules. We aren't asking to have a block party, we're asking to be able to walk to the grocery store safely.

New York should be leading on this issue, not falling behind. New York is not different from Oakland when it comes to the ability to close streets for the safety of all. The only difference is the vision and leadership from the top. If our mayor is being driven 12 miles to exercise in a park in a different borough, how can he understand what the rest of us are going through? Open the streets now.

Charles Todd  
West 54th Street

## **New York City Council Committee on Transportation**

### **Testimony on behalf of the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership Business Improvement District**

#### **Intro. 1933**

Good morning members of the New York City Council Committee on Transportation. My name is James Mettham and I am the Executive Director of the Flatiron/23<sup>rd</sup> Street Partnership Business Improvement District (Partnership). On behalf of the Partnership, I am writing to express support for Intro. 1933 that would require the Department of Transportation (DOT) to provide additional street space to pedestrians and bicyclists while COVID-19 social distancing requirements are in place.

The Partnership has a long history of innovative, successful collaboration with city agencies including DOT. Since 2008, the Partnership has managed, maintained, and programmed the Flatiron Public Plazas that were created when vehicular travel lanes on Broadway and Fifth Avenue were reallocated into bike lanes and pedestrian space. Additionally, the Partnership worked with DOT on the installation of Manhattan's first shared street block in the summer of 2017 in an effort to alleviate pedestrian congestion and normalize a complex intersection. Along Broadway, from 24<sup>th</sup> Street to 25<sup>th</sup> Street, this popular intervention gives pedestrians the right-of-way and vital public space to move about and social distance safely.

We remain committed to partnering with DOT, NYPD, other municipal agencies, and our local stakeholders to provide safe, pedestrian-first streets and sidewalks. The Partnership's Public Safety Officers, Clean Team, and social service outreach professionals are currently in the district providing essential services, and Partnership administrative staff are on-hand to assist in the strategic placement and management of additional street space for pedestrians and cyclists in the Flatiron and NoMad neighborhoods.

Thank you for your consideration and for addressing the important public health role that our public realm can play as we strive to overcome and recover from this crisis. The Partnership is ready and willing to work with DOT and our elected leaders to address the challenges facing New York City during this unprecedented time. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

My name is Philip Leff, and I'm chair of Transportation Alternatives' North Brooklyn Committee. We are a neighborhood with historically some of the highest rates of air pollution in the city, and some of the least amount of open space per capita. Long before COVID-19, our rate of hospitalizations from respiratory diseases was twice the city average, and we have borne the burden of the highways and waste transfer stations that bring poisoned exhaust through our neighborhood streets. Yet our community is more than an exit ramp, and our streets are our home, and more than a way for people to pass us by.

Our community was in desperate need of open space before the pandemic. The few large parks were overwhelmed on hot summer days, even though they can be over a mile away for many. Playgrounds were teeming. The line to get into the McCarren Park pool reached for more than a block. Now the latter two options have been taken away. Where will people go? It is unrealistic to expect people to stay inside for a whole summer, and in the case of stifling, unventilated apartments without air conditioning, it could be deadly. Opening streets to people will provide the space to get outside, stay sane, while staying close to home.

While there may be fewer cars on the road, those who are driving are driving more recklessly, and DOT and NYPD have the speed camera and crash data to prove it. Looking out of my window on my corner of Maujer and Humboldt Streets, I witnessed two crashes in one day. One of these crashes required an ambulance on one of the busiest 911 call volume days in our city's history. Why are we adding to the burden of our emergency services? Opening streets to people gives a signal to drivers that they need to slow down, and stop using our neighborhood residential streets as their personal speedway.

Lastly, there is still a need for people to get to work, and hopefully even more of a need over the next few weeks as restrictions lift. People are understandably wary of taking public transit at this time. Yet, if even a small number of people switch from transit to driving, the increase in congestion, pollution and crashes will make our city unlivable, and send more people to our overburdened hospitals. Cities around the world understand this simple fact, and are taking aggressive action to make walking and cycling safer in a post-lockdown world. I thank the City Council for continuing forward-thinking action with this bill, and I look forward it's swift approval and a speedy implementation for the Open Streets program.

Thank you,

Philip Leff



## Open Streets Testimony, Katherine Willis

Friday, April 24, 2020

My name is Katherine Willis, and I am a resident of Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn. I am testifying today in support of City Council's open streets legislation. We need this legislation to help open streets across all boroughs of New York City to enable everyone to maintain safe physical distancing outside.

My roommate and I live in a small apartment in Brooklyn. Fortunately, both of us are currently healthy and still employed. But, while we have enough space in which to work separately and do our own solitary activities in our apartment, we have to go outside every few days to buy groceries, do our laundry, and exercise. The street in front of our home—Nostrand Avenue, a major thoroughfare—has sidewalks that are 12 feet, 9 inches at their widest, which is barely adequate for physical distancing; and they're only 8-and-a-half feet wide next to tree pits, which doesn't allow for any safe passing on the sidewalk when more than two people are walking. Although there are far fewer cars and trucks on the road during this pandemic, when we need to walk on the street to avoid close-passing other pedestrians, we could easily be hit by someone driving.

For now, we are forced to take our chances with a wear-a-mask-and-hold-your-breath approach—both literally- and figuratively-speaking—which is of course medically unsound and physically, not to mention otherwise, exhausting. Furthermore, when I need to go for a long walk or run, or see something other than my own walls and windows, I am lucky to live less than two miles from Prospect Park. But as the weather gets warmer, more New Yorkers will need to go outside of their apartments, and open spaces like parks will become crowded. On top of that, most residents of NYC do not live as close to a major open space as I do. We all need and deserve more space to walk, run, and bike at least 6 feet away from each other.

Open streets are crucial today and into the future. New Yorkers can be resilient in this pandemic, as in other crises, if we use the tools we have to face these challenges. Now it is necessary to engage our intelligence, creativity, and good will towards our neighbors to open our streets to the majority of people—including those of us in Brooklyn—who need to get around without a car or truck. If Oakland can prioritize pedestrians on 74 miles of streets, we can do so on at least 75. Let's not let lack of imagination or will stop us from doing what we can and what is right.

From: Wendy Brawer, 30 year resident of the Lower East Side

Testimony re: Legislation to Open City Streets

4/22/20

In 1993, I took part in a team rethinking mobility in Manhattan\*. This 17-year plan reduced the societal cost of mobility by 50% by 2010. Our plan opened a lane of parking on every street.

Fast forward to today - there's evidence\*\* showing that particulate matter from cars exacerbates COVID-19 deaths, so the societal cost is rising. Distancing is a powerful preventative, yet too many heavily impacted neighborhoods don't have wide enough sidewalks\*\*\*.

It's time to create distancing space by removing stored vehicles and reduce (and enforce) speed limits. #OpenStreets will have a profound benefit to our health and well being.

#OpenStreets is something we can live with.

Thank you,



\*The [Manhattan 2010](#) team included Charles Komanoff, George Bliss, David Bergman, et al.

\*\* <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-52351290>

\*\*\*see <http://sidewalkwidths.nyc>

Note: My family has a car in Manhattan that's always been stored in a city garage, where private property belongs.

4/24/2020

My name is Melodie Bryant. Thank you so much for hearing my testimony today.

I'm a resident of Chelsea and open streets are a matter of life and death for me because as a senior, I am especially vulnerable to the Corona Virus. I abide by advisories to stay home, but there are times when I need to go out: once a week for groceries, and an hour a day for exercise. I'd like to be able to practice safe social distancing, but my neighborhood doesn't permit it. The sidewalks on my street are about 8' wide (by the tree wells about 3'). So when people approach me, social distancing is simply impossible. My choices are either risking infection from the virus via other pedestrians, or walking into the street and risking getting hit by a car. Either one will land me in the ER – the last place any of us wants to be right now. As you probably know, there are far fewer cars on the streets these days, but drivers are taking advantage of that open space to drive a lot faster, so I don't feel safe walking in the street.

In addition, my neighborhood has a lot of street sheds. The other day, 3 men – ironically discussing the virus, walking close together (and not wearing masks) - came towards me as I was on the sidewalk halfway through a street shed. There was literally nowhere for me to go to avoid them. If I had been able to safely take the street to begin with, I would never have been in this position. As it is, I am hoping that within the next week, I will not be another Corona statistic.

This is especially infuriating knowing that 80% of our street space is given over to cars – who for the most part aren't even using it. In my neighborhood, they are all parked!

The pandemic has changed everything. We can't afford to wait on this. We need to open up the streets to make social distancing possible for all New Yorkers.

Thank you –

Melodie Bryant  
238 West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10011  
savvyflix@gmail.com



**Testimony of Patrick McClellan  
New York State Policy Director  
New York League of Conservation Voters  
City Council Committee on Transportation Hearing on Int. 1933  
April 24, 2020**

Good morning, my name is Patrick McClellan and I am the State Policy Director at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV represents over 30,000 members in New York City and we are committed to advancing a sustainability agenda that will make our people, our neighborhoods, and our economy healthier and more resilient. I would like to thank Transportation Chair Rodriguez and Council Member Rivera for the opportunity to testify on Intro 1933 today.

As New Yorkers continue to endure the COVID-19 crisis, the need for more open space becomes more apparent every day. When New Yorkers leave their homes to get some fresh air, which medical professionals recommend for both physical and mental health, they deserve to be able to do so as safely as possible. However, many of our city's sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate pedestrian traffic while also allowing for proper social distancing measures.

Many New Yorkers are also opting to bike more often during this crisis, either for exercise or, for many essential workers, in order to avoid a public transit system that cannot guarantee reliable service or safe distance from other passengers due to the horrific toll this virus has taken on the MTA's workforce. In the month of March alone, CitiBike demand [surged by 67%](#).<sup>1</sup> This increase demands that we provide more space for cyclists to observe social distancing recommendations.

Int. 1933 addresses these issues directly. Through the implementation of shared streets or the closure of at least one lane on a street to vehicular traffic, this bill would allow for at least 75 miles of road to be used as additional street space for pedestrians and cyclists during the time of social distancing. Similar programs have already been enacted in many other major cities and have shown promise in addressing issues of increased pedestrian and cyclist traffic without increasing conflict with automobiles.

Of course, our city did not have enough open space or green space even before this pandemic. For the most famously walkable city in America, our streets are too often not designed with pedestrians in mind. When too much street space is given over to cars, and when people choose to drive or take for-hire vehicles because they do not feel safe using other modes of transportation, emissions of greenhouse gases and particulate matter pollution go up. This is bad for New York's role in climate

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/14/nyregion/coronavirus-nyc-bike-commute.html>

change and bad for a wide range of public health outcomes, including respiratory illness. Tragically, we know now that New Yorkers who are exposed to the highest levels of air pollution, disproportionately in communities of color, are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

Intro 1933 is a temporary solution for a temporary crisis, and we wholeheartedly endorse it. However, I hope that this legislation's successful implementation will build momentum for full and partial pedestrianization of more streets, more pedestrian plazas, and safer biking infrastructure - all of which can be built out at low-cost during the City's budget crisis and made more permanent at a future date when the City's finances have recovered. In this unprecedented time, we need new ideas to protect New Yorkers. Whether residents are biking to work, walking to the grocery store, or exercising outdoors, they deserve our support in keeping themselves safe and healthy; that will remain true even after this pandemic ends.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



Testimony of the American Heart Association

Before the New York City Council Committee on Transportation

Regarding

Int 1933-2020 - A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to temporary space for pedestrians and cyclists

April 24, 2020

Greg Mihailovich, Community Advocacy Director  
American Heart Association, New York City

Thank you, Chair Rodriguez and the members of the New York City Council Committee on Transportation for the opportunity to testify before you here today in support of Int 1933-2020 – which would create temporary space for pedestrians and cyclists while social distancing guidelines are in place.

The American Heart Association is deeply concerned about the public health crisis facing our country. Our top priority regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) is the health and well-being of individuals and their families today and in the future, in every community, everywhere. Our mission – *to be a relentless force for a world of healthier, longer lives* – is more important than ever. We are continuing our mission-critical work in these challenging times and we know that people with cardiovascular diseases are more likely to be seriously impacted by the virus than others.

The American Heart Association recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity at least five days a week for overall cardiovascular health, and an average of 40 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous-intensity three or four days a week to help lower blood pressure and cholesterol. Engaging in daily physical activity reduces the risk of obesity, coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes, and some types of cancer.<sup>1</sup> Promoting active transportation -- the opportunity to bike, walk, or roll to work, school, or around the community -- through policy, systems and

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<sup>1</sup> Spengler JO. Promoting Physical Activity through Shared Use of School and Community Recreational Resources. Research Brief. Active Living Research, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, April 2012. Available at: [http://activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR\\_Brief\\_SharedUse\\_April2012.pdf](http://activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR_Brief_SharedUse_April2012.pdf)

environmental change is one of the leading evidence-based strategies to increase physical activity across the lifespan.<sup>2</sup>

Staying active also provides benefits beyond the physical. Stress can affect your mental and physical health in many ways. Long-term activation of your body's stress response system may put you at risk for health troubles like digestive problems, anxiety, headaches, depression, sleep problems, weight gain, memory and concentration issues, high blood pressure, and heart disease and stroke.<sup>3 4</sup> Even spending non-active time outside in nature can help lower your stress and result in better health outcomes.

While social distancing guidelines are in place, New Yorkers need to be able to walk, run, and bike in a way that keeps them appropriately distant from one another to maintain their physical and mental health. With the population density of our city, creating temporary space to safely move around outside is a reasonable way to provide that opportunity. We support Int 1933-2020.

Additionally, while we understand that there are tough budget decisions to be made as a result of the current crisis, New York City should do everything it can to avoid taking away funding from active living and active transportation options when New Yorkers need them the most. The Brooklyn Greenway Initiative (BGI) reported that on Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, their sensor along the Greenway near the Brooklyn Navy Yard recorded almost 4,000 bicycles, making it the busiest single day of bike traffic since BGI started recording data in June 2019. Unfortunately, many of New York City's greenways have significant gaps and poorly maintained sections. While we should prioritize helping New Yorkers through this crisis and support and protect our essential workers, we should not completely abandon improving active transportation infrastructure.

We realize this is a dynamic and challenging situation, and we thank you for everything you have done and will do to protect the lives of the people of New York City. The American Heart Association is a reliable and trusted source of information based in credible science, and we will continue to be your partner in ensuring the health and well-being of all New Yorkers.

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<sup>2</sup> Nazelle A, Nieuwenhuijsen JM, Anto, et al. Improving health through policies that promote active travel: A review of evidence to support integrated health impact assessment. *Environ Int.* 2011. May; 37(4): 766-777.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health, Stress and your health. <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/stress-and-your-health>

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coping with Stress. <https://www.cdc.gov/Features/CopingWithStress/index.html>.

**Testimony on Behalf of the United Parcel Service (UPS)  
to the NYC Council's Committee on Transportation  
Intro. 1933-2020  
April 24, 2020**

UPS thanks Speaker Johnson, Chair Rodriguez, and Council Member Rivera for holding this important hearing today, and for the opportunity to share comments on proposed Intro. 1933, which will temporarily close some streets to allow pedestrians and cyclists to maintain social distancing requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While ensuring the safety of UPS employees has been our top priority, UPS has leveraged our global logistics network to ensure that communities have what they need to combat the virus. Here in New York, UPS employees have worked tirelessly to deliver critical medical supplies, personal protective equipment (PPE), food, and household items to keep our neighbors safe. This week, UPS drivers completed the fourth delivery of corona-virus related supplies to the NYPD, with all deliveries now totaling more than 352 drums of hand sanitizer and additional face masks. Yesterday, we were proud to partner with the Mayor's Office to deliver medical gown fabric for New York City-based manufacturers to produce 400,000 hospital gowns. These are just two examples of how UPS is using its capabilities to assist New York City's response to COVID-19. Every day, close to two thousand UPS employees are on the road, ensuring that New Yorkers are receiving their critical packages on time.

As an industry leader in sustainability, UPS supports the goal of Intro. 1933 to provide additional space to pedestrians and cyclists. Providing space for recreation and micro-mobility will be important as the City battles COVID-19 and provides opportunities following the pandemic to reimagine the City's curb space to allow for more efficient deliveries. While UPS is grateful that the bill includes language that the Department of Transportation (DOT) should consider deliveries to essential businesses and truck routes when planning temporary street closures, we urge the Council to clarify this directive to also consider residential deliveries.

Currently, the vast majority of UPS' package volume is destined for residential buildings, as many commercial buildings remain closed in New York. New Yorkers are relying on UPS to receive their medicine, food or cleaning supplies on time. Just like other essential businesses, UPS is managing an increase in demand with limited human resources. It is critical that our drivers be able to make their deliveries expeditiously and safely. Maintaining delivery service in all communities is essential to stop the virus' spread – each delivery means one less trip to the store, keeping many vulnerable New Yorkers safe at home. Therefore, we strongly urge the Council and DOT to develop a plan that allows deliveries to co-exist with pedestrian and cyclist use of all streets.

Thank you for your consideration. UPS looks forward to continuing to work with the Council to support the City's efforts to combat COVID-19.





**Statement in Support of Int 1933**  
**To the City Council Committee on Transportation**  
**Submitted by Brooklyn Greenway Initiative Executive Director Terri Carta**  
**April 24, 2020**

Brooklyn Greenway Initiative (BGI) is a private nonprofit that for two decades has been focused on the development, establishment, and long-term stewardship of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, a vital and nearly complete component of the greenways network throughout NYC's five boroughs. As the "backbone" of the city's bike infrastructure network, greenways serve as safe and accessible green corridors for active recreation and non-motorized transportation. They are linear connectors of people and communities, providing public access to green space and the waterfront, commercial corridors, and job centers.

**BGI enthusiastically supports the proposed COVID-19 Relief Package calling for NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) to install no less than 75 centerline miles of streets as temporary space for pedestrians and cyclists.** This will enable New Yorkers in all neighborhoods to safely get outside for fresh air and exercise for their physical and mental health. These spaces will allow citizens to connect with community while remaining physically distant, and to commute to essential jobs using alternative means of transportation.

Implementation of this new Local Law should address open streets needs along two lines: space for stationary or hyper-local activities like taking in fresh air and sunshine, neighbors socializing from a distance, or children playing outside; and space for longer-range mobility like commuting and running or cycling for exercise.

For longer-distance needs, BGI advocates use of two ready-made and already-approved frameworks to facilitate quick installation of temporary infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the five boroughs, benefiting more New Yorkers faster:

- The Green Wave Plan map of projects to be implemented by the end of 2021
- The Streets Master Plan use of a "connectivity index" for prioritization of projects

As other cities transition to the next phase of the COVID-19 crisis, they have seen an increased use of bicycles for transportation and healthful exercise. We expect the same in New York City where we have already seen surges in bike traffic. BGI's Greenway usage data collected continuously since last June near the Brooklyn Navy Yard shows a 140% surge during the first three weeks of March as Coronavirus hit NYC, followed by sustained higher-than-normal use in late March and April. Over the last three weekends, use has almost doubled week over week [our sensor recorded 7,268 bikes on 4/19 vs 3,925 on 4/4], climbing higher than the busiest day recorded last summer. Our data correlates with increased bike traffic over East River Bridges and patterns of use by essential workers reported by CitiBike.

Right now, the Greenway is providing critical safe passage for people commuting to essential jobs and safe space for solo exercise and stress-relief. But this isn't true where gaps in the planned network remain.

**The Council and DOT need to prioritize connecting gaps in the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway and our citywide greenways network to help New Yorkers access public space and safely commute post-pandemic.**

Open streets are needed within neighborhoods and communities, and also needed between them. Closing major gaps in the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway – in Red Hook, Sunset Park, from Coney Island Creek to Plumb Beach, and between the Navy Yard and Brooklyn Bridge Park – will immediately benefit Brooklyn's 2.65 million residents and over 1.1 million employees.

Thank you, Speaker Johnson, for bringing this conversation to the fore with leadership from Council Members Rivera, Rodriguez, Menchaca, Kallos, Reynoso, Levin, Cabrera, Constantinides, Van Bramer, Powers, Koo, Levine, Lander and Chin. Thank you, Chair Rodriguez and the Transportation Committee, for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record.

Testimony of Mark Dicus, Executive Director of the SoHo Broadway Initiative

April 24, 2020  
New York City Council  
Committee on Transportation

Re: Int 1933-2020  
COVID-19 Relief Package - Temporary space for pedestrians and cyclists

The SoHo Broadway Initiative is the not-for-profit that manages the neighborhood-focused business improvement district on Broadway from Houston to Canal Street. The Initiative represents both commercial and residential interests of SoHo Broadway property owners and tenants.

I am writing in support of Int 1933-2020, which would create no less than 75 centerline miles of street space for pedestrians and cyclists citywide during the COVID-19 temporary spacing order.

The name of the game during this pandemic has been, is, and will continue to be, reducing density so that people can maintain social distance. Current New York City sidewalk design makes it very difficult to properly social distance. Today, more space is needed to improve mobility for essential workers going to/from work, for residents who need to walk to/from grocery stores and pharmacies, and for people who need to exercise or get fresh air. Just as importantly, in a future reopening of the economy, an open streets plan envisioned by this legislation will create more space for people going to work, to shop, or to walk, jog or cycle for recreation.

Action is needed today to provide immediate relief that takes pressure off of the city's sidewalks, parks and other open space, but also to work out some of the kinks in preparation for the reopening of society where social distancing guidelines continue but there will be significantly more people in the city's public spaces and transit ridership is likely to be greatly reduced.

Just over a month ago, our BID, which represents Broadway between Houston Street and Canal Street, was full of people walking side-by-side and heavy vehicular traffic. Today, the sidewalks and streets are empty as people stay home to prevent the spread of this COVID-19. A similar picture can be seen throughout the city. We see a city that desperately needs more space and streets with capacity to help meet that need on a temporary basis.

Over the past several weeks, cities ranging from Bogota to Denver to Minneapolis to Oakland have started to rethink and experiment with how to give people, the lifeblood of our cities, more space to walk and exercise by converting underutilized vehicular travel and parking lanes to space for pedestrians and cyclists.

Any open streets plan should be responsive to local and city-wide needs, prevent overcrowding, and have minimal impact on the City's limited resources.

A responsive design can maintain access for emergency vehicles, essential public services (bus, trash collections, etc.) and essential businesses. A responsive design also allows for flexibility to implement a variety of closures from closing the curb lane to expand the sidewalks to a full street closure.

Pedestrianizing a street through multiple neighborhoods creates contiguous amounts of space on a scale that prevents crowding, relieves pressure on popular parks and provides safe transportation routes for essential workers. The idea is to provide lots of space to walk and bike to allow for ample social distancing.

To minimize the impact on the City's resources, the design should use readily available resources (cones and barricades). The design program should also minimize reliance on NYPD for traffic control personnel and rely on maintenance partners, such as BIDs, civic groups, neighborhood associations, etc. to support a City lead open streets plan.

In contrast to an approach dependent on a heavy police presence, the City already has proven models to partially or fully close streets to vehicular traffic, where the NYPD is aware of the closure and only checks-in if issues arise—think of block parties, the Department of Transportation's Weekend Walks program, or even just temporary sidewalk closures for construction that uses cones and barricades.

Finally, while we believe this bill is a great first step toward creating a safer and more functional public realm during the COVID-19 outbreak and the eventual reopening of the economy, many more opportunities should be pursued to create more pedestrian space.

The Clean Curbs Pilot Program, announced by DOT last month to as an alternative to the current practice of placing piles of bagged garbage on the sidewalk and instead storing it in containers in the roadway, is needed even more urgently now and should be greatly expanded in scale.

In addition, demand for cycling and micro mobility options is predicted to increase as the economy reopens and commuters avoid mass transit (and room for automobiles is constrained). Measures such as expanded bike lanes and bikeways, increased bikeshare capacity, additional bike parking, and legalization of electric scooter and other micro mobility sharing companies must be enacted.

The City should also make reforms to reduce the prevalence of scaffolding sidewalk sheds, which create unpleasant choke points for pedestrians. In addition, to further free-

up sidewalk space, the city should consider allowing restaurants to use parking spaces for outdoor seating and require street vendors to locate in the parking lane rather than the sidewalk.

The Initiative commends the City Council for introducing the open streets legislation as a creative solution to public needs during the current crisis and coming recovery. We would be happy to provide support in maintaining the configuration of any pedestrianization efforts that include our district as a result of this initiative. In addition, we urge you to pursue additional accommodations to improve the pedestrian and bicycle capacity of our streets and sidewalks to ensure New York is well-positioned for recovery in the coming months.

Dear Mr. Johnson:

It defies all logic and reason that you would open up streets in the city as so called “Safe Pedestrian Spaces”...which will bring people together, bring residents from all parts of the city to other areas of the city. This, as I said, flies in the face of the public health and medical logic we’ve heard from virtually all the physicians, epidemiologists, virologists who have been advising us to practice social (physical) distancing and avoid close contact with other people.

Why would you do this to SoHo/NoHo, which have, it is said, remained relatively Covid free? Why would you advocate moving people, *without compelling reason*, from one part of the city to other parts? And in moving people, move the virus along with them? What better way to enable the virus than to encourage travel?

Why, then, not encourage street fairs throughout the city? Why not encourage street concerts, dance parties, Covid parties? Well, the latter is virtually what you are proposing. And I, as an “older” person with several serious underlying conditions, am deeply concerned about what this means for my wife and me, as well as other residents, old and young, in our building and throughout SoHo, where we reside.

In my *physician-recommended* walks in lower Manhattan, I have observed that fully 60 to 80% of walkers, joggers and cyclists **do not wear masks**. This appalls me each time I go out. A significant proportion of people in this city are, or seem, indifferent to the prospect of infecting others...or of being infected. Our extremely experienced and respected internist (at NYU Langone) warned us sternly to consider every other individual as a potential carrier, and to defend ourselves accordingly.

So to my mind this Safe Spaces proposal represents one of the worst public health actions, and bad judgments, since Christine Quinn shamefully enabled the closing of St. Vincents Hospital (then won her 3rd (“illegal”) term in office...but subsequently lost all credibility and never got to be mayor).

I implore you not to open up the streets of SoHo/NoHo and other neighborhoods around the boroughs **until there is an actual testing and tracking program underway** so people will not, willy nilly, carry the virus to other areas with the specific approval of government. YOUR GOVERNMENT!

On another note, I hope this finds you well, and safe, along with your staff and loved ones.

Sincerely yours,

Jack Keith  
16 Crosby Street

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letter sent today:

To the Community Board 2 Traffic Committee:

My wife and I are 4 decade+ residents of SoHo, and have become aware that various NYC officials (Corey Johnson, Gail Brewer, Carlina Rivera) are proposing to open a large number of streets in SoHo as “Safe Pedestrian Spaces” which will bring residents from other areas of the city to SoHo—as a sort of recreational destination.

We adamantly oppose this proposal! And we are appalled at the number of streets in SoHo/NoHo being suggested for “opening” to realize this dangerous experiment. Precisely whose “safe pedestrian space” are we talking about here? Clearly not the residents of our areas.

For what possible reason would we ever, at this time, want more people in our neighborhood, simply for recreational purposes, any of whom may be undetected Corona carriers and who could easily spread the virus here? Is SoHo to be marked out, yet again, as a prime playground (and petri dish) of the city?

In our view people will come here and, potentially, spread the Corona virus to a community which, until now, has been practicing very disciplined social distancing rules. This would constitute a gross violation of all the advice and health guidelines set out by public health officials, physicians, virologists, epidemiologists.

Moreover, if any of these city officials (and BID members) actually walk the streets of the city, they would know that more than half the people who walk, jog and bike these streets do not wear masks. This in itself will not change, and makes it vastly more dangerous for those of us who have underlying conditions, but who, on physicians advice to get outdoor exercise each day, need to walk the streets to remain as healthy, physically and mentally, as possible.

I sincerely hope the Committee will oppose this ill-conceived proposal and vote it down.

With best wishes for your health and well being,

Jack Keith  
16 Crosby Street  
Jkeith@panix.com

Regarding your idea to close miles of NYC streets for pedestrians and cyclists -- I find your thinking narrow-minded and shortsighted. It appears you would like this city to be designed only for young, active individuals and to hell with the rest of us. If you had your way, I believe you would design Manhattan to be one large Pedestrian Plaza. It would be much appreciated if you would take into account ALL New Yorkers – not just the young and healthy – when coming up with your ideas.

I live in Manhattan. I cannot walk for miles in this city to a destination and I am unable to ride a bicycle. I rely on public transportation, taxis, and my car. My car IS my legs. Now, with the pandemic, I will not be using public transportation any time soon. Not to mention the hazard that bicyclists, who DO NOT follow traffic laws, create. They have caused injury to me, my friends, and my neighbors. And what about emergencies? What about deliveries?

You are young. You do not seem to understand the plight and experiences of those older than you. I am more concerned with immediate health and safety emergencies, and the ability of folks to get to where they need to be..... NOT creating space for people to play. I would hope this would be your priority as well.

cc. Mayor DeBlasio

Donna Meyers  
dmtiki4@gmail.com



## Opening the Streets

This Morning News talking about opening the Streets so people can walk and distance themselves. Don't think is a good idea we are supposed to be stay at home. By clinging this you going to have more people out walking,then before you know it everyone be out. Not a good idea.

Adamina Hernandez  
gloriasanta1926@gmail.com

no Manhattan street closures

Dear Speaker Johnson,

Streets should not be closed in Manhattan for “recreational” use.

Closing streets will impact on emergency vehicles.

Once streets are open, there will not be social distancing. Moreover there will be an increase in trash.

Sincerely

Melanie Saltzman

Jeermeka

jeermeka@aol.com

## Closing the Streets

Mr. Johnson,

I wholeheartedly agree to closing larger portions of the streets moving forward. 3 blocks of Park Ave did not make sense. I suggest closing the boulevards in each borough - Park and Broadway in Manhattan, also either Martin Luther King or Adam Clayton Powell in Harlem, Grand Concourse in the Bronx, Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn and one in each of Queens and Staten Island. Those are very pleasant places to walk. Thank you for championing this.

Marion McCue de Velez

PS I have been a resident of NYC for almost 45 years and a lifetime resident of NYS.

Marion Mccue De Velez  
marjoan246@gmail.com

## Convert Mosholu Parkway in Van Cortlandt Park to Social Distancing-Compliant Open Space

Dear Council Member Cohen;

In the development of the bill to allocate more street space to pedestrians and cyclists, please consider prioritizing the section of the Mosholu Parkway between West Gun Hill at Van Cortlandt Park South and the Henry Hudson Parkway as the northern terminus. This roadway is wholly in Van Cortlandt Park and does not have adjacent commercial or residential land use issues. It would not require NYPD patrol as this roadway has no cross-streets. There is sufficient space to create lanes for cyclists and walkers while maintaining social distance.

Regards,

Langston GOREE

Kimo Goree  
lgoree@gmail.com

Strongly SUPPORT legislation to open city streets for pedestrians/cyclists

Speaker Johnson,

As a Harlem resident, I have been very concerned about crowding on sidewalks and in parks during the COVID-19 crisis. It is impossible to keep 6 feet away from other people. I have written to the Mayor three times asking him to open the near-empty streets in my neighborhood to pedestrians and cyclists, but this is clearly not a priority for him or his administration. For all these reasons, I strongly SUPPORT your proposed legislation to open 75 miles of streets citywide, in every community. Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Ken Moore  
W. 131st St.  
NYC 10037

[ken@kenmoore.org](mailto:ken@kenmoore.org)

Hello Mr. Reynoso and Mr. Johnson

As a resident of Greenpoint, I am writing to you in support of several options being discussed at today's meeting. They include the following:

Pushing for Open Streets- the proposed 75 miles is a bare minimum for a city of 8.5 million and over 6000 miles of roads- I urge you to push for many times that number- perhaps 10% of roads could be closed, at 600 miles, giving millions of New Yorkers safe space to breath and be outside- as well as creating safe zones for essential workers to move about the city and avoid and heavily overcrowded subways. This could work to open up bike lanes, as well as bus only lanes- again reducing subway use.

Rent/eviction freeze- Please support the rent/eviction freeze, as New Yorkers need to be able to continue living in their homes safely and without the worry of becoming homeless- particularly in a crisis. We already have tens of thousands of homeless, each of whom should be given a guaranteed apartment- there are thousands if not tens of thousands of empty apartments across the city-USE YOU MASSIVE AUTHORITY as the City Council to force these apartments to be rented out to those who need them. You have the power- USE IT.

Essential worker benefits- as the first city in the US to offer full medical coverage, you must make this process instantaneous and paperwork free- while also heavily promoting it to all New Yorkers. All workers, not just essential workers, need a job and payment guarantee, with special attention paid to those keeping us all alive- food workers, hospital staff, etc. We must make it as safe as possible for them to continue supporting all of us- see the above comments as well.

The above are a good starting point. As the wealthiest city in the US, and one of the wealthiest in the world, I expect to see you support ALL New Yorkers through this crisis and beyond, guaranteeing us a decent quality of life no matter what.

Thank you, and I look forward to watching what you do,  
Cameron Shore

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Cameron Shore

*M.Arch, CCNY 2017*

<cameronshore@gmail.com>

proposal to implement Intro 1933-2020 with a series of "linear parks"

Dear Speaker Johnson and Council Member Rivera,

Below please find a proposal to implement Intro 1933-2020 by creating a series of contiguous bike routes aka "linear parks".

It can be accomplished immediately and at negligible cost and does not require the participation of the NYPD.

Critically, it addresses the needs of NYC's 800,000 cyclists who otherwise have no access to recreational facilities not shared with pedestrians and runners.

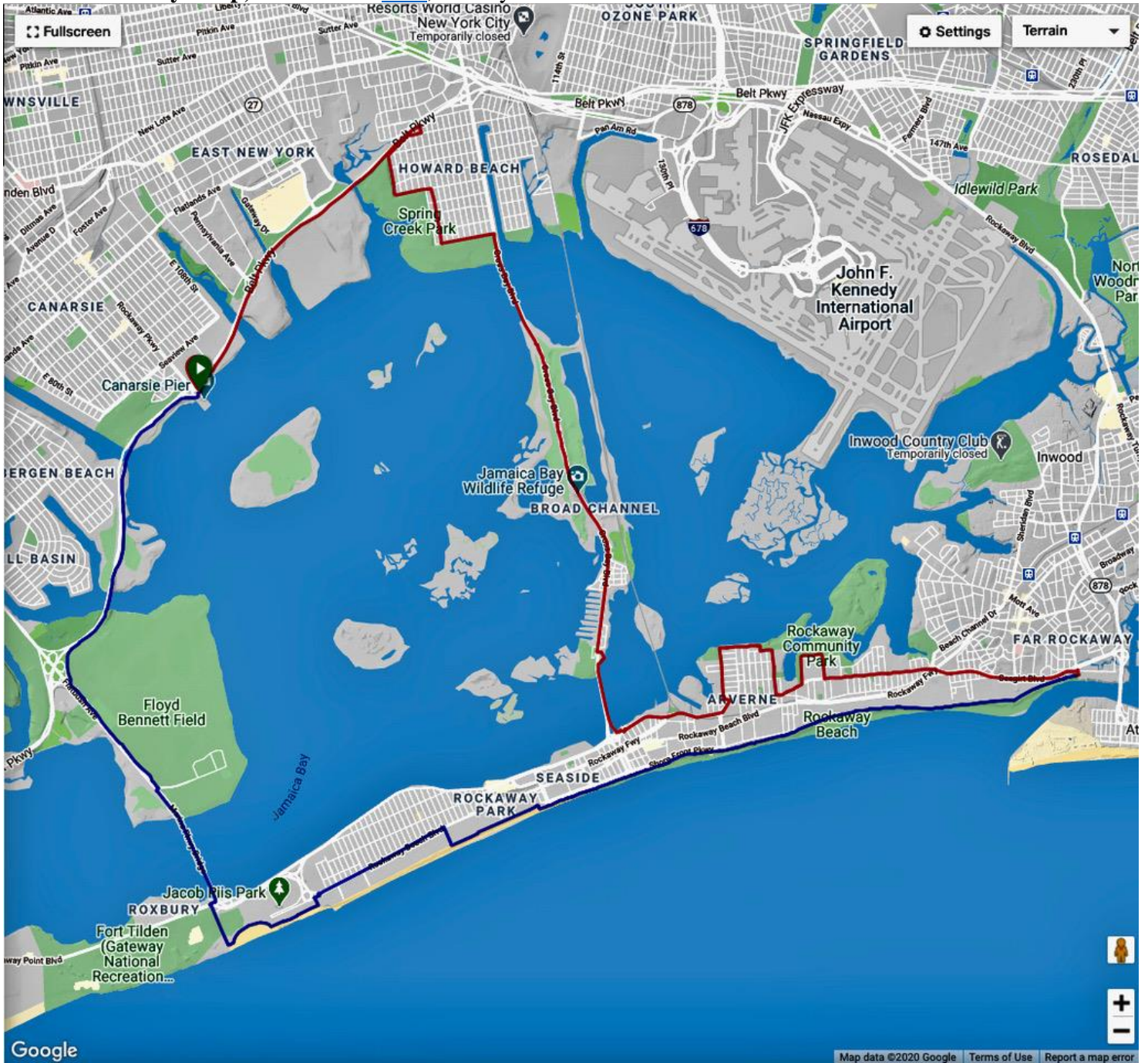
I welcome the opportunity to review. Respectfully.

Neile Weissman  
917 446 6002  
Complete George

### **Examples**

Below are five examples. Each comprises GPS files (requires setting up a free account to access), turn-by-turn printed directions and maps ("red" is outbound, "blue" is the return). Also see notes and benefits.

# #1 - Jamaica Bay Loop, 28.5 miles - GPS, turn-by-turn

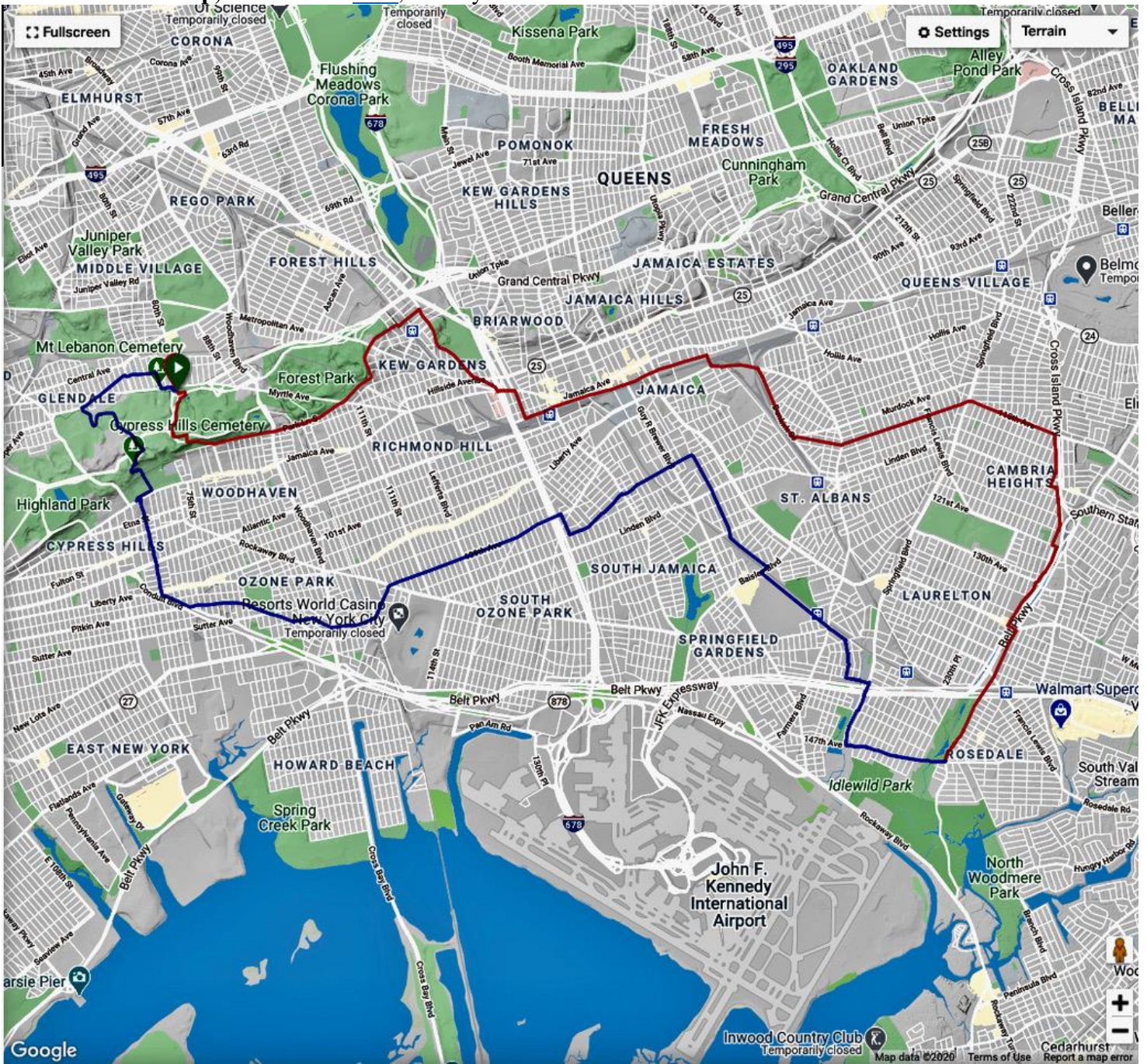




## #2 - Pelham Bay Loop, 27.5 miles - [GPS](#), turn-by-turn



### #3 - Laurelton Loop, 25.7 miles - [GPS](#), turn-by-turn



# #4 - Staten Island Loop, 41.7 miles - GPS, turn-by-turn



#5 - Staten Island Loop (2012 Olympics), 7.5 miles - [GPS](#), turn-by-turn



## Notes

The proposed routes comprise loops of up to 40 miles. They pass through Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and the Bronx. In some instances, they begin-and-end in Manhattan.

Intended for use by bicyclists, they aggregate existing on-road bike lanes, separated bike paths, low-intensity residential streets and industrial areas that get little traffic on weekends.

They share characteristics with urban “event” rides such as Tour de Bronx and the TA Century; group rides organized by New York Cycle Club and Five Borough Bike Club; and “numbered” routes based on the U.S. Bicycle Route System.

The routes largely avoid shared-use paths already crowded with pedestrians and runners – Hudson Greenway, Prospect Park and Central Park. Note that the CP Conservancy just called for cyclists to limit “fast” riding to hours before 7AM.

The routes skirt city parks at frequent intervals in order to provide rest stop opportunities. It is therefore critical that the Department of Parks commit to keep these restrooms in operation.

Because this proposal doesn't call for moveable barriers, or active enforcement of social distancing guidelines, it does not require involvement by NYPD.

This proposal can be implemented immediately, and at minimal cost, by posting links to gps data, turn-by-turn cue sheets and maps. As the routes gain acceptance, they can be enhanced with signage and on-street improvements.

## Benefits

- This proposal creates facilities for 800,000 adult cyclists that lack access to recreational facilities not shared with pedestrians and runners. Current plans to implement Intro 1933-2020 effectively optimizes gained space for pedestrian use.
- By drawing bicyclists off existing shared use paths, the new routes will reduce density and the potential for user conflict.
- In addition to providing opportunities for exercise and recreation, these routes will drive patronage of neighborhood food stops (“cycle tourism”).
- Routes that loop out of Manhattan would supplement mass transit for daily commutes.
- Because these routes have durable value, it will be worthwhile for DOT to continue to invest in Vision Zero improvements as well as to expand the routes to bridge “transportation deserts.”

**Bio**

I plan and lead 50 rides per year for New York Cycle Club. I also head up Complete George – 250 organizations and communities calling for wider bikeways across the George Washington Bridge.

April 27, 2020

## **Comments on Proposed Street Closings in Community Board 2**

Proposal to be heard at the Community Board Traffic Committee on 04/27/20 (submitted by e-mail)

### **THE PROPOSAL: to close several SoHo/NoHo streets to vehicular traffic.**

I am an architect living and working in a loft on Prince and Lafayette Street for the past 40 years. I am also an active participant in the Advisory Group to the SoHo/NoHo rezoning initiative.

This proposal appears to have confused Pandemic-related objectives suggested by the Mayor with goals benefiting the now-closed local retailers, resulting in inappropriate and contradictory effects.

#### **A. Actions appropriate to the Pandemic**

Any actions taken during the Pandemic have to enhance social distancing, not to reduce distancing by increasing street density or encouraging non-essential travel within the city.

The Mayor's stated goal was a response to overcrowding in the very few parks the downtown community has access to, most notably the Hudson River Park. The objective was to relieve that and other parks' density that at times violated social distancing rules. One could argue that some streets adjacent to parks can be closed to increase the parks' effective surface area (or playgrounds, or any public spaces) thus reducing their density. For example, closing Washington and Greenwich Streets already utterly devoid of vehicular traffic might offer an alternate means to bicycle, walk or jog along a route parallel to the river, relieving the totally overcrowded bike path and the walking path along the waterfront. Similarly, closing some streets surrounding Washington Square Park could increase its surface area for sporting use. Selective closures of streets next to playgrounds might be considered if expanded play areas or recreation spaces would result.

However, closing streets surrounded by stores and offices and not connected to any existing park and recreation spaces would produce the opposite result: it would attract crowds congregating, window shopping, picnicking on take-out food and being served by the street vendors and food trucks that will inevitably follow the crowds. Precisely the opposite effect of social distancing rules.

Ultimately, the beneficiaries of such central SoHo street closures would be the stores facing those streets when these stores are allowed to open. This clearly reveals this proposal's actual purpose and why it is contrary to any goal appropriate during the Pandemic.

In no case should a major thoroughfare be closed to vehicular traffic: cars, taxis, buses and trucks still move along Broadway, West Broadway, Houston, Broome and Lafayette Streets. Diverting any such through-traffic onto local streets would be inappropriate at any time but especially silly at this time.

A far more effective subject to consider at this time would be the creation of new protected bike lanes across this neighborhood and the rational connection of existing lanes into a coherent network of bike corridors offering safe and continuous patterns of circulation within Manhattan. There are good northbound routes from SoHo to Midtown (although 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue is sadly missing, as is a safe route from Brooklyn Bridge north from Worth and Centre to Lafayette and Prince Streets), but there is a noted absence of any path leading south of Houston or even 4<sup>th</sup> Street in the central zone west of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The Bowery, or La Guardia/West Broadway, or making the Lafayette Street path a two-way system might be options, if Broadway cannot handle losing one of its parking/loading lanes. Now that vehicular traffic is light and the need so acute is the time to make these simple changes.

## **B. Options to discuss after the Pandemic is resolved**

After the complete resolution of the Pandemic by an effective vaccination or treatment option, it may be appropriate to discuss changes in traffic patterns and decreasing some sidewalk density by selective street closures. It should be noted that earlier proposals to close some SoHo streets have been emphatically turned down by the community. Any re-examination of such ideas should be considered only after the need for a Pandemic response would no longer color the argumentation.

One of the objectives of any discussions at that time should involve reducing through vehicular traffic from local streets in Community Board 2. For example, outbound Williamsburg Bridge traffic should be blocked from using Spring Street east of Broadway, by prohibiting left turns from Broadway onto Spring Street: this alone would also unblock the downtown lane of Broadway from being stalled all the way into NoHo, as the left turn is slowed by pedestrians crossing Spring Street along the east side of Broadway. This southbound traffic would be diverted to East Houston Street that could handle it with a simple change, a right hand green arrow to stay green while the left turn arrow is green and all pedestrian crossing signs are red already anyhow.

Similar changes could eliminate the use of Grand Street as a short cut from the Holland Tunnel to the Williamsburg Bridge.

Separating the four types of bus traffic (local, long-distance, sightseeing and NYU) along Broadway and allowing them room to bypass each other by pulling out of the actual bus lane at different places to make their stops would not force them to either wait in the bus lane or to bypass the busses stopped at the "bus islands" by going into the traffic lane. These bus islands are counter-productive. On the other hand, wide sidewalks at intersections are a real improvement as they increase surface area where crowds wait to cross and they cut the number of lanes to cross from four to two, increasing pedestrian safety.





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Lynn B. Kelly

New York City Council  
Committee on Transportation Hearing  
COVID-19 Relief Package - Temporary space for pedestrians and cyclists  
April 24, 2020

Written Testimony by Lynn Kelly, Executive Director of New York Restoration Project

My name is Lynn Kelly and I am sharing written testimony as Executive Director of New York Restoration Project (NYRP). NYRP supports the City Council's proposed bill to open city streets to pedestrians and cyclists (Int. No. 1933) and we thank the leadership of Council Member Rivera and Speaker Corey Johnson for their work on this important issue of access to open space.

NYRP's work is driven by the belief that access to high quality open space is a fundamental right of every New Yorker. As New York City's only citywide nature conservancy, we manage 52 gardens and over 80 acres of parkland across the five boroughs. We work to ensure that our city's open spaces are optimally resourced, highly accessible, and meet the needs of as many New Yorkers as possible while creating a healthier environment for those that live in the most densely populated and least green neighborhoods.

Now more than ever, parks and gardens play an invaluable role in helping New Yorkers cope with COVID-19. Most parks across the city remain open and serve as one of the few public resources for the community, providing a respite for residents seeking fresh air and exercise as many of us are quarantining in our homes. Community greenspace has been shown to provide a number of important physical and mental health benefits, including improved cardiovascular health, lower obesity rates, reduced symptoms of depression, and decreased levels of stress. The public health benefits of these open spaces are especially critical during this time of crisis and will be even more important in our city's rebuilding and recovery efforts.

The impact of COVID-19 on our parks and gardens has been compounded by new challenges with higher levels of usage and crowds. As more residents are flocking to their community parks, we are experiencing increased maintenance and staffing needs with higher numbers of visitors to natural areas. Current operations are limited and scaled back, while existing crews are overextended and concerned about health and safety as well as practicing social distancing while carrying out their work.

Fortunately, Int. No. 1933 would provide an opportunity for New Yorkers to access open space through the implementation of shared streets, as well as alleviate issues of maintaining social distancing in heavily utilized parks. As the weather gets warmer, many New Yorkers will venture outdoors to enjoy fresh air and exercise, and maintaining access to open space will be even more crucial in preserving the health and well-being of our residents. It is especially important in communities without existing recreational space, and in densely populated areas with heavily used parks. Now is the time to come together to ensure that all New Yorkers have the access they need to open, shared space in their communities.



NYRP works extensively in communities in Central Brooklyn, the South Bronx, and Northern Manhattan, where nearly half of all residents live below the poverty line. Unfortunately, these have been some of the hardest hit communities in New York City, with the Bronx experiencing the highest coronavirus infection rate of all five boroughs. In these communities, 1 in 4 people are food insecure—and because they lack access to healthy food, they are 85% more likely to be obese. NYRP parks and gardens provide consistent access to fresh food, and space for fresh air and physical activity. Garden members grow over 87,000 pounds of produce every year—about \$175,000 worth of fresh, healthy produce provided at no cost to families with limited access to nutritious, affordable food. Vital community programming and environmental education in our spaces brings New Yorkers out to their parks and gardens and meets the identified need for STEM resources in underserved schools. We know the impact that access to open space has on a community. Open Streets poses an opportunity to serve New Yorkers living in neighborhoods furthest from green spaces, and where COVID-19 impacts have been large.

Where the city can ensure a safe streets program that increases New Yorkers' access to open space and will not hinder emergency vehicles from responding to calls, NYRP supports a plan to close streets to vehicle traffic and accommodate the growing needs of pedestrian New Yorkers navigating the city in search of open space. The program should prioritize park-poor neighborhoods where residents suffer the results of disinvestment, and where even temporary public space has the greatest opportunity for positive impact on community health.

NYRP works under the conviction that environmental justice and social justice are inseparable and codependent. Together we can work to make our communities more equitable beginning with our shared spaces. We encourage our partners in the City Council to support this open space legislation and investing in our city's parks and gardens.



Testimony of Mary Beth Kelly, ACSW  
New York City Council Transportation Committee Hearing  
April 24, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Mary Beth Kelly and I am the co-founder of Families for Safe Streets.

I always knew that if there ever was a major health crisis in our city, where I'd find my husband. Like so many other physicians, despite the grave risk to themselves — he'd be on the front lines treating patients. Well, that's where he'd be, if he had not been killed in 2006 by a reckless driver while riding his bicycle.

As a physician, he felt honored by the opportunity to care for his fellow New Yorkers. "I am happiest when I am serving," he once told me, and I had no doubt. That's who he was as an internist, and as a person; he lived his integrity.

So why, I ask, is our city administration not doing the same when it comes to its citizens? Why is it being so stingy allocating enough space for our physical and mental health? Opening streets for pedestrians and cyclists only is proven to reduce crashes, save lives and preserve our precious hospital beds during this crisis for Covid-19 patients.

A huge opportunity presents itself in the midst of this Covid moment, it begs creative innovation with our largest real estate asset: our streets. And please, Mr. Mayor, stop making open streets about policing. In 1976 when the city was on the verge of bankruptcy, I volunteered on a van, a "skate mobile." Each day, communities all over this city blocked off their neighborhood streets from cars using cones, so kids with little else could skate. We had no police presence, only a local firefighter with a big red wrench who generously screwed an adapter to a hydrant so all could fly through the spray on a hot day in July. And I have no doubt that if we had to then, stay six feet apart, we would have done willingly for the pleasure an open street afforded.

The ultimate sacrifice is now being made by our health care workers, our grocers, delivery cyclists, pharmacists, and transit operators, so I implore our government to

serve them, and to serve us all, visibly, and where it matters. Give us space! Give us open streets to keep that necessary social distance. Space to safely travel to, and on, the bus or subway. Give us clean air to breathe. Give our children room to safely ride a bike, seniors peace of mind to venture outside, and parents a little relief from being full-on while keeping the peace inside. Let us hear the birdsong — of hope. As the weather warms, staying home will become so much harder for our fellow New Yorkers with the least amount of living space, the absence of air conditioning. Give us what is of greatest value right now — the very thing we need most.

The streets belong to all of us, not just to the four-wheeled vehicles that most New Yorkers do not own. Stop making us squeeze down narrow sidewalks, clinging to their edges to stay alive. Pass Intro 1933, create Open Streets, seize opportunity, the deep joy, as my husband had that is inherent in serving New Yorkers, of truly taking care of one and all.





Testimony of Dahlia Goldenberg  
New York City Council Transportation Committee Hearing  
April 24, 2020

My name is Dahlia Goldenberg and I am a member of Families for Safe Streets. I am here today with my 2-year-old child to urge the City Council and the Mayor to OPEN UP THE STREETS OF NYC for the people who need them.

Several years ago, my husband got hit by a reckless driver while crossing the street in our neighborhood. His knee was badly damaged but thank god he survived and fully recovered. Ever since, I've been more anxious about crossing the street because I know just how easy it is to get hit. I'm overly vigilant about looking back over my shoulder for cars anytime I cross the street. And the image of my child getting hit by a car flashes in my mind all too frequently.

Let me give you a snapshot of what it's like to be a mom with a toddler in NYC right now:

I have a very active 2-year-old, and it is so painful to know that he has fewer opportunities to run freely, climb on things, or to learn how to ride a balance bike right now. Our apartment is tiny, and for the sanity of all of our whole family, I take him outside once a day.

It's very hard to get him to wear a mask, so he needs to really stay at least 6 feet away from other people, if not more.

If Sammy is walking down the sidewalk and inspecting trees or rocks, or if he's riding his balance bike that he just started using this week, I have to keep an eye out for anyone walking towards us or coming up behind us. If it doesn't look like they are going to step out in the street to give us space, or if the person approaching us is also a toddler on a little bike, then I have to scoop him up, tear him off of his beloved bike just as he's getting the hang of it, and carry him in my arms into the street between the parked cars.

And if the sidewalk were any more narrow, it wouldn't be safe to let him walk or bike at all.

When I'm out with him in the stroller, most people kindly step into the street for us. But it looks like they're not going to, then I have to carefully manipulate the stroller off the curb into the street in between two parked cars, then look out for cars on the street and walk down til I find another spot to get the stroller back up on the curb - not an easy feat.

Having more safe space where I can watch him run freely without panicking about him getting too close to someone, or getting hit by a car and dying would make the world of difference to us. It would also keep our neighbors safe from his potential coughs or sneezes.

Please, for the safety of all children, all New Yorkers, please pass Intro 1933, the COVID-19 Relief Package and temporarily provide life-saving space for pedestrians and cyclists.



Testimony of Raul Rivera  
New York City Council Transportation Committee Hearing  
April 24, 2020

Good afternoon. My name is Raul Rivera. I am a NYC native, a TLC driver with over 15,000 trips completed, a crash survivor and a member of Families for Safe Streets.

On 12/3/17, one day before my 48th birthday. I was on a shift when another driver ran a red light going well over the legal speed limit, causing me to t-bone his car, and left me with serious back injuries that I live with to this day. I was already a safe driver, but now I regularly urge all of my fellows drivers to drive so carefully.

Even with the COVID epidemic, I have not stopped working. Every day I transport frontline and essential workers to and from their destinations.

I am testifying today because I fully support the bill to open streets for pedestrians and cyclists because it will keep all of us safe.

It is crazy out there on the streets. I see more and more drivers speeding recklessly. In the Bronx I have seen people stop traffic on the southbound lane of the Bruckner Boulevard just so cars can drag race down the street.

Please, I call upon all of you, the Mayor and the entire City Council to tackle this speeding crisis now before more people are killed or seriously injured. This bill is a step in the right direction. It will make other streets less likely to turn into speedways. It will let our essential workers walk to and from work when they can, without contaminating their neighbors. As a professional driver, I urge you to pass this bill now.

Thank you for your time.

CONTACT: [raulrivera22@hotmail.com](mailto:raulrivera22@hotmail.com)



Testimony of Nickya Whittington  
New York City Council Transportation Committee Hearing  
April 24, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Nickya Whittington and I am a new member of Families for Safe Streets.

Next month will mark two years since I buried my 7-year-old son Shavone Bethea, Jr. He was killed by an MTA bus driver on Webster Avenue in the Bronx. His 11-year-old brother, Dishawn, had to watch him die. All I wanted to do was lift up the blanket in the morgue, but they said not to because his body was so badly crushed. I just kissed his beautiful face.

I know we are living in the midst of a pandemic, but traffic violence is a silent pandemic too. Just a few months ago, Dishawn was hit by a van as he crossed the street with the light with his uncle. He fractured his knee and wrist but thankfully will recover unlike Shavone.

I am here today but I wanted to speak out. To talk about Shavone and urge you to pass this bill to save lives and help prevent others from suffering in both pandemics as we do.

Shavone was a special boy. One day when I was out of a job and nearly out of food, Shavone took his old books outside on a trolley and sold them. He made some drawings too. He got \$70 and said mommy, now we can get something to eat. If he was here now, he would be telling me, "Don't cry mommy, everything will be ok."

On our last Mother's Day together, he wrote me a poem. I want to read it to you now:

Sometimes you get discouraged  
Because I am so small  
And always leave my fingerprints  
On furniture and walls  
But every day I'm growing  
I'll be grown some day



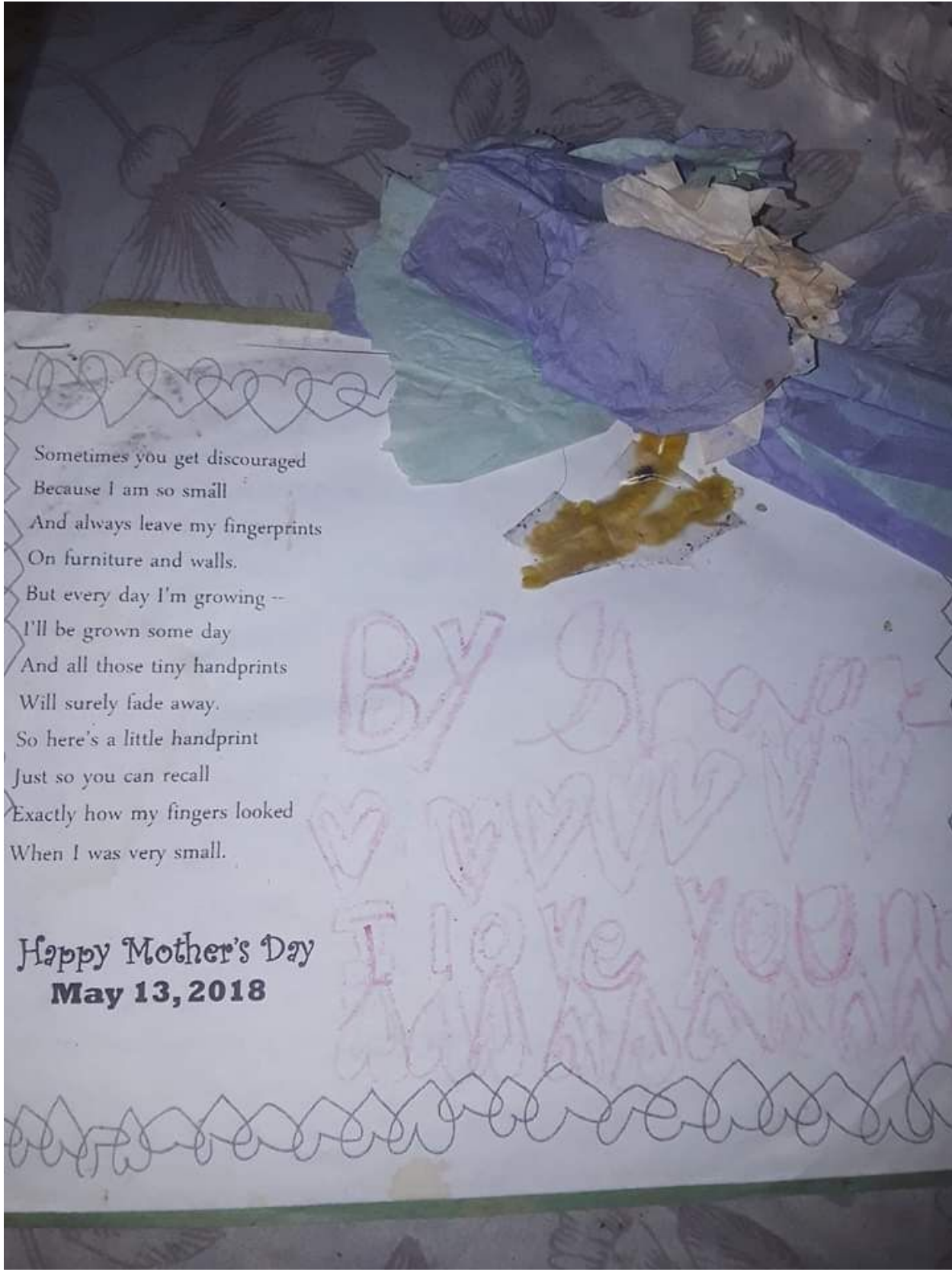
And all those tiny handprints  
Will surely fade away  
So here's a little handprint  
Just so you can recall  
Exactly how my fingers looked  
When I was very small

By Shavone Bethea, Jr

Please, for Shavone, for all the parents who have buried their kids because of traffic violence and the COVID epidemic. Pass Intro 1933 and make it safer to walk our streets. This bill will make sure we don't spread the virus, it will prevent deadly crashes and will keep us all safe.

Thank you.





Sometimes you get discouraged  
Because I am so small  
And always leave my fingerprints  
On furniture and walls.  
But every day I'm growing --  
I'll be grown some day  
And all those tiny handprints  
Will surely fade away.  
So here's a little handprint  
Just so you can recall  
Exactly how my fingers looked  
When I was very small.

*BY Sarah*  
*I LOVE YOU*

**Happy Mother's Day**  
**May 13, 2018**

The card features a poem on the left side and a drawing of a child's handprint on the right. The handprint is drawn in purple and yellow, with the fingers spread. The card is decorated with a scalloped border at the top and bottom. The background of the card is white, and the text is printed in a simple font. The drawing is done in a childlike style with visible pencil or crayon marks.

**Happy Mother's Day**  
**May 13, 2018**

Testimony of Miriam Fischer  
New York City Council Transportation Committee Hearing  
April 24, 2020

I am a long-time advocate, since the last century (!), of safer streets, reducing traffic, pollution, congestion. The pandemic is an unprecedented opportunity to re-envision our public space, health, safety. Safe streets without traffic are in my dreams of paradise and heaven.

I was hit by a taxi in 1984 which put me in a coma. I couldn't work for years, and have permanent injuries which have changed my life. My husband, Peter Freund, and I became activists. Peter is one of the organizers of Auto-FreeNY both because my crash inspired him to become involved and because he is an environmentalist.

Now, we all see a different landscape with clearer streets, less swarms of cars. Statistics already document fewer crashes and less sickening air pollution and particulates.

I applaud this is a first step. We want to open more streets to pedestrians and bicyclists. The immediate purpose is to save lives during the pandemic by physical distancing. But safety and lives are also part of Vision Zero too. All users -- drivers, bikers, pedestrians have to need to follow the rules of the road -- no speeding, stop at red lights, etc. Cars are racing in certain neighborhoods, defying speed limits and turning our streets into race tracks.

I also welcome more bikes, safer bike lanes, and expect an increase of riders. But, they too must follow the rules of the road and keep our seniors, children and people with disabilities safe. Some now ride on the sidewalks which are too narrow. This bill will give everyone more space. I have balance problems and many near falls because even before the need for social distancing, there was not enough room now for cyclists and pedestrians on our streets. Let's address this problem before bad habits become entrenched.

NO PREVENTABLE injuries now, overwhelming ERs and hospitals. Not ever.

It's all about safety and lives and health, preventing what we can. A community. We're all in this together. Please pass Intro 1933 quickly to address traffic violence and the COVID pandemic.

CONTACT: [fisherfreund@hotmail.com](mailto:fisherfreund@hotmail.com)



**The Garment District Alliance**  
209 West 38th Street  
2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10018

212.764.9600  
garmentdistrictnyc.com

NYC Council Int. 1933-2020 Hearing  
Wednesday, April 22, 2020  
Barbara A. Blair for the Garment District Alliance

The Garment District Alliance applauds the proposed bill (Int 1933-2020) to require NYCDOT to provide at least 75 miles of additional street space to people walking and riding bicycles while COVID-19 social distancing requirements are in place. We thank Councilmember Rivera and the other sponsoring councilmembers for proposing this important legislation. A recurring theme over the last month has been the lack of space to be outdoors to get fresh air, exercise, and maintain good mental health. This problem will only escalate as the weather warms and once non-essential businesses are allowed to begin reopening.

The Garment District Alliance and other neighborhood groups have been trying to address elements of this problem for years, but the need is even more critical now. As you continue to work to keep our city safe, I ask that you consider further initiatives related to the management of our streets that are critical as we continue to promote social distancing and eventually begin to allow non-essential businesses to reopen. Some ideas we are advocating for include:

- Street Seating: Allow restaurants to better distance customers while remaining financially viable by implementing new, short-term policies that allow temporary seating in parking spots in front of their establishments. This tool could be an extension of the NYCDOT Street Seat program, modified to allow businesses to conduct transactions in the space. There is precedent in other cities, such as Montreal and Portland, which allow restaurants to serve food and alcohol in such parking areas.
- Vendors: Allow and require that street vendors locate in an on-street parking space facing the sidewalk rather than narrowing walking space on the sidewalk.
- Sidewalk Sheds: Aggressively reform the city's scaffolding policies, which appear unique among global cities in creating an environment of blight with nearly 350 miles of scaffolding covering and constricting city sidewalks for unnecessarily long periods of time.
- Sidewalk Space: Facilitate pedestrian flow by accelerating the removal of unnecessary street furniture elements that take up sidewalk space such as phone booths (most of which no longer even function).
- Sanitation: Just prior to the escalation of the crisis, DSNY announced the "Clean Curbs" pilot program to get garbage bags off sidewalks, as they hinder pedestrian flow and are sources of potential health problems. Public health and keeping people moving are of critical importance.

Thank you for your consideration. With forward thinking and a proactive approach, we can not only recover from this crisis but emerge with a city that is more livable and vibrant than ever.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Blair  
President



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**Gale A. Brewer, Borough President**

**Friday April 24, 2020**

**Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Testimony Before the New York City Council  
Committee on Transportation**

Good afternoon. My name is Gale Brewer and I am the Manhattan Borough President. I am testifying in favor of legislation introduced by Speaker Johnson and Councilmember Rivera to temporarily expand space for pedestrians and cyclists to allow for safe social distancing during the coronavirus epidemic.

I recently sent a letter with Councilmembers Johnson, Rivera, Chin, and Powers to Mayor de Blasio requesting that the City re-initiate its temporary pedestrian expansions, with a focus first on Broadway between Times Square and Chinatown. The letter had the support of many of the Business Improvement Districts along the Broadway corridor and has since picked up additional support from Manhattan Community Boards 4 and 5 and the Financial District Neighborhood Association.

My letter and the Council's proposed legislation recognize the unfortunate fact that our streets are poorly designed to properly respond to this crisis. In many cases, particularly in Lower Manhattan, the sidewalks are narrow and make social distancing difficult. People may not return to work and entertainment venues if their experience involves enduring the pedestrian-heavy crowding synonymous with Midtown.

It is imperative that we create more space for pedestrians and cyclists. With traffic down dramatically, this can be achieved by strategically closing some streets to motor vehicles.

Boston, Denver, Oakland, Minneapolis, and San Francisco have all announced ambitious plans to open streets to provide more space for social distancing. There are 135 cities around the world that have responded to this crisis by opening streets to pedestrians and cyclists. From this global perspective, the Council's proposed legislation is a mainstream idea.

In order to implement this idea, we should coordinate and cooperate with community boards, neighborhood organizations and BIDs or local Chambers of Commerce to plan, execute, and maintain street spaces for the public. Every effort must be made to garner this base of support to minimize demands on NYPD or DOT at a time when their resources are severely limited.

As a co-chair of the East Midtown Rezoning Task Force and now a member of the East Midtown Public Realm Improvement Fund Governing Group (East Midtown Governing Group), I have seen how BIDs representing businesses that need loading and delivery space work successfully with a community that needs open space when streets are closed or shared. On a broader level, lots of considerations could go into the selection of the streets, such as density and household income, access to food sources, connections to parks, emergency routes to hospitals. This data-driven analysis could help to prioritize the need for open space and the selection of streets.

These proposed, innovative approaches to street use will not only help to limit community spread during the Covid-19 pandemic, but also provide a template for future uses of city streets. I support the Council's proposed legislation. It serves an immediate need and begins a conversation about the recovery and future needs.

My name is Xian Horn I am an advocate, Forbes contributor and speaker with cerebral palsy and mobility disability.

Before the Access-A-Ride same day E-Hail revolution, 20 years of my life and schedule revolved around AAR booking times, waiting on hold for reservationists, and the busier I got, missing the 5pm cut off time to book my trip for the day ahead, and therefore having to cancel or make my own way. Would you ask every New Yorker to book their subway or bus ride 24 hours in advance?

If not, then cutting us (down to an embarrassing 8 round trips a month) or underfunding the same day ehail program from Access a Ride & rendering the MTA's most celebrated, equitable transportation program useless is calling us all second class citizens. Therefore, this not simply a budget issue, but one of basic access and civil rights. And so far, 6,275 people from all over the world agree. They all signed the petition to stop cuts and expand the program:  
<http://chng.it/pzMm5Phk>.

Since social distancing, we all know what it's like to feel isolated. For many in the disability community, this is their everyday with access to transportation or financial resources. The city always finds money for things it deems important like for Covid-19 relief. Please stand with us and help us fund this civil right.

Suppression of demand is illegal and suppression of an often isolated population like ours, inhumane. We are a pivotal point in history where we will define how people with disabilities will be treated for generations. We will either slide backwards or catapult forward and inspire all to join us. New York is the greatest city in the world. Please show us that our New York minutes count as much as everyone else's.

As city council members, I ask to consider what you want your legacy to be? How would you like to be remembered?

And:

What side of history, civil rights, and justice do you want to be on?

I'll let you decide.

God bless you and keep you safe. Thank you!

My name is Robert Isaacs, and my family and I live in Council Speaker Johnson's district, though like many New Yorkers we spend time in other districts as we live on the "borders," notably of Council Member Rivera's district as well as Council Member Chin's district.

I have been taking the social distancing and PAUSE measures very seriously, and have been leaving my home only to handle the essentials (grocery shopping, etc.) and to take occasional walks with my family. On those walks, in particular, I have noted how challenging it can be to maintain social distancing. First off, I will say that there is a real problem with community members who do not wear masks and / or are not respectful of the "six foot" guidelines – joggers and bikers, in particular. However, there are also real logistical challenges on our sidewalks and adjacent space that make it hard even for those of us who try to be highly respectful of those guidelines – notably accumulated trash, scaffolding & sidewalk bridges, LINK NYC access points, Citibike stations, joggers and bikers on sidewalks.

As such, I am very much in support of the proposed legislation to open more street space to pedestrians and cyclists during the current pandemic, so that we may enjoy time outside on our streets & sidewalks without excessive worry and in accordance with proper social distancing. I am pleased to see Council Speaker Johnson, Council Member Rivera and many other City Council Members in support of this legislation and I hope the Council will do everything in its power to quickly and rationally get us the space we need on our streets and sidewalks. Thank you very much.



From: Wendy Brawer, 30 year resident of the Lower East Side

Testimony re: Legislation to Open City Streets

4/22/20

In 1993, I took part in a team rethinking mobility in Manhattan\*. This 17-year plan reduced the societal cost of mobility by 50% by 2010. Our plan opened a lane of parking on every street.

Fast forward to today - there's evidence\*\* showing that particulate matter from cars exacerbates COVID-19 deaths, so the societal cost is rising. Distancing is a powerful preventative, yet too many heavily impacted neighborhoods don't have wide enough sidewalks\*\*\*.

It's time to create distancing space by removing stored vehicles and reduce (and enforce) speed limits. #OpenStreets will have a profound benefit to our health and well being.

#OpenStreets is something we can live with.

Thank you,



\*The [Manhattan 2010](#) team included Charles Komanoff, George Bliss, David Bergman, et al.

\*\* <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-52351290>

\*\*\*see <http://sidewalkwidths.nyc>

Note: My family has a car in Manhattan that's always been stored in a city garage, where private property belongs.

April 24, 2020

## **Oversight Hearing - Open Streets Intro 1933-2020**

*Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Transportation*

*Testimony by Marco Conner DiAquo, Deputy Director, Transportation Alternatives*

##

Thank you Council Members, Speaker Johnson, and Committee Chair Rodriguez for convening this important emergency hearing, and for Council Member Rivera for sponsoring Intro 1933. For 46 years Transportation Alternatives has advocated on behalf of New Yorkers for safer, more inclusive, and more livable streets. With more than 150,000 people in our network and over 1,000 activists throughout all five boroughs we advocate for biking, walking, and public transportation as alternatives to the car.

Transportation Alternatives strongly supports the legislation of today's hearing as a critical first step to rebalance New York City's streets. If successfully and equitably implemented, Intro 1933-2020 can help defeat COVID-19 and save lives, improve New Yorkers' health, alleviate overcrowded parks and public transportation, and help jumpstart New York's economy.

New York City is in the midst of a viral pandemic that demands physical distancing until, at least, a vaccine is developed and widely administered. New York City's Department of Health is constantly and rightfully reminding all New Yorkers that "six feet saves lives." Unfortunately, few New York City sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate the need to maintain a safe physical distance. One researcher found that 74 percent of New York City sidewalks were not wide enough to pass at a safe distance to avoid potential coronavirus exposure. Frankly, our city is failing us by forcing New Yorkers to make the dangerous decision between risking possible transmission or stepping into a traffic lane to maintain six feet distance to others.

By emulating what many cities around the country have done in the last few weeks, this legislation would be a critical first step to help prioritize people over cars. New York City's streets should provide safe opportunities for our essential frontline heroes to commute and for others to reach essential businesses such as grocery stores and pharmacies.

### **What are Open Streets?**

Open Streets are streets with space for people to walk, bike, to be safe from traffic, and in the era of COVID-19, to keep a safe physical distance. In general, an Open Street is a length of roadway closed to cars and opened to people, while remaining accessible for essential services and emergency vehicles. Open Streets are simple and low-cost to implement, usually requiring only traffic cones or other cheap, light, and easily procurable barricades.

In the last few weeks, dozens of cities around the world have implemented this decades-long practice and

launched Open Streets programs. This list includes cities both smaller and larger than New York, cities much more reliant on cars, and cities as close as Philadelphia and as far as Sydney.

Here in New York City, a clear precedent for temporary street closures can be found in Summer Streets. However, while this annual program creates a city-wide draw and encourages lingering and celebration, the goal of this new Open Streets program must be *volume*: a large network of open streets distributed throughout the five boroughs to alleviate crowding. For a city of 8.6 million residents spread across 303 square miles on a network of over 6,000 miles of streets, New York City must look far beyond the 7 mile-long Summer Streets. A city-wide Open Streets program would mitigate overcrowding of our current parks and sidewalks, and would eliminate the effect of creating a “destination” to which people might travel to and over-crowd, defeating the purpose of the concept.

### **Physical Distancing**

Open Streets have been successfully launched in every major city in the United States and around the world for decades. Years of research have made it clear that Open Streets have many benefits and a city-wide network would include but not be limited to creating more space for physical distancing, addressing inequity, health and safety, and economic benefit.

A successful city-wide network of Open Streets would create more and easier opportunities for New Yorkers to physically distance themselves from others. Safe conditions would encourage more people to commute by bike or foot, alleviating crowded conditions on public transportation and allow essential employees to safely commute to work. Open Streets would also allow New Yorkers to safely reach essential services and businesses without needing to decide between breaking physical distancing guidelines and walking in a traffic lane. With more space for people, Open Streets would also alleviate overcrowding of our parks and greenways, which will become more important with warming temperatures.

### **Addressing Equity**

COVID-19 has highlighted the extreme inequity that was already present in our society. Maps highlighting neighborhoods with the most COVID-19 cases are strikingly similar to the same maps showing neighborhoods with the highest percentage of residents living in [overcrowded conditions](#), less access to open spaces, and on average narrower sidewalks. This legislation affords the Department of Transportation to directly respond to these issues of equity by locating Open Streets in these areas. The DOT can also address equity issues surrounding imbalanced ratios of residential density to park availability, [playgrounds per child](#), and neighborhoods with [low car ownership rates](#).

Over 6.5 million New Yorkers do not own a car, yet the 6,000 miles of roads and 3 million free on-street parking spaces benefit a small minority of car owners. Open Streets can directly address all of these equity issues and rebalance our largest public space asset to the majority of New Yorkers.

### **Health**

In the past two decades more than 6,000 people, including children, have been killed in traffic on New York City streets. Every year thousands have been injured and generations have been denied the

opportunity to walk, bike and access reliable, efficient transit to get to work, school and visit loved ones. The emotional and family loss is unimaginable and the economic loss to New York City is over \$4 [billion](#) of loss every year. High speeds are the leading cause of traffic fatalities and today, as we struggle to combat a pandemic, some parts of New York City are experiencing incidents of speeding up [288 percent](#).

Open Streets can help save lives as the DOT's own research on pedestrianization has shown. Some of DOT's largest pedestrianization projects in and around Times Square showed a 40 percent reduction in pedestrian deaths and injuries and a 63 percent reduction from occupants of vehicles while pedestrianization surrounding Herald Square saw pedestrian injuries drop 53 percent ([Source1](#)) ([Source2](#)) ([Source3](#)).

Walking and biking are sustainable, healthy and efficient modes of transportation that are vital for lowering air pollution levels which research has long linked to serious and chronic diseases. Open Streets will also encourage New Yorkers to walk or bike instead and with fewer cars on the road New Yorkers will see health benefits both in the immediate and long term. Researchers at the Harvard University T.H. Chan School of Public Health have also found that higher air pollution resulted in higher COVID-19 deaths. Their research found that if Manhattan had lowered its average particulate matter level by just a single unit, or one microgram per cubic meter, over the past 20 years, the borough would most likely have seen 248 fewer COVID-19 deaths in just the first couple weeks of the pandemic ([Source](#)). With some [1.6 million people](#) traveling into Manhattan every day, if even a small portion of public transit users begin driving to work in fear of COVID-19 transmission, it would easily gridlock already congested streets and further pollute our air. New York City must plan for the future and create incentives through a city-wide Open Streets program that discourages needless driving for the health benefit of all New Yorkers.

### **Economic Benefits**

Open Streets, particularly in neighborhood business districts, offer new economic opportunities for many types of businesses. City leaders are already in discussions about slowly re-opening New York's economy. Although there are likely to be restrictions at first, businesses will need as much help as soon as possible.

Dozens of studies have shown the positive impact Open Streets and pedestrianization projects have on businesses. New York City's Department of Transportation conducted at least three studies showing that pedestrianizing space and creating safe infrastructure for bikes helps businesses. In one study the DOT notes that "[s]mall businesses also see a huge benefit. Businesses on Pearl Street in Brooklyn, for example, saw a 172 percent increase in retail sales as a result of the implementation of Pearl Street Plaza, which transformed underused parking [space]" ([Source](#)). Another DOT study found that streets with safe bicycle infrastructure "saw significantly higher increases in retail sales than streets without them" ([Source](#)). And in a third study, the DOT found success for businesses by using tax data from the Department of Finance. The DOT analyzed the impact of street re-design and transportation enhancements on retail businesses in two different locations. Although the study did not research areas that banned cars outright, the DOT study did analyze areas that saw significant pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements that eliminated space from cars. The study found that retail revenue was up 20 percent over the baseline. The DOT study also found that a different pedestrianization project found retail sales up 50 percent compared

with 18 percent in the nearby area “all while area injuries were reduced and vehicle travel times and volumes were maintained” ([Source](#)).

### **Enforcement and Infrastructure**

One of the longest-running Open Streets programs in New York is the pedestrianization of Central and Prospect Parks’ streets. Since 1966, the program slowly expanded its hours until 2018 when the ban on private cars was extended to 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. We commend this administration and the DOT on finally seeing this victory secured. Just as Central Park and Prospect Park’s streets do not require anything but minimal and occasional enforcement by the New York Police Department (NYPD), neither should the streets in this Open Streets program. In addition, the dozens of cities that have implemented Open Streets in recent weeks have successfully not relied on police enforcement. Transportation Alternatives encourages the City to first lean on partner agencies and organizations that have precedence on enforcing Open Streets, including agencies involved with Summer Streets, Business Improvement Districts, NYC Parks Department’s staff historically assigned to Play Streets, School Crossing Guards, school safety agents, and neighborhood groups. Transportation Alternatives calls upon the administration of NYC Mayor de Blasio to minimize NYPD presence on Open Streets.

Open Streets infrastructure should be cheap, light, and quick to purchase and move. Permanent bollards and metal fencing are typically not required and most cities have deployed low-cost cones, caution tape, paint and clear signage to get the job done. New York City is among their ranks finding success with such cheap, light, and quick materials on the perimeter of Central and Prospect Parks street entrances and other open Summer Streets. Barrells and paint were implemented on W 32nd Street for temporary curb extensions even on busy Midtown streets in partnership with Vornado. These materials prevent private car usage while allowing access for emergency vehicles and essential services. Such materials should be used throughout New York City.

### **Conclusion**

A successfully implemented Open Streets network has the potential to unleash many short term benefits, first and foremost reducing COVID-19 exposure, as well as improving health, addressing inequities, jumpstarting New York’s economy, and improving safety. That is why Transportation Alternatives strongly supports Intro 1933-2020 as a critical first step toward defeating the pandemic, rebalancing our streets and prioritizing New Yorkers over cars. We thank the Council, in particular bill sponsor Council Member Rivera, Speaker Johnson and Committee Chair Council Member Rodriguez, for their leadership.

Thank you.

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**Testimony of Kendra Hems**

*On Behalf of*

**Trucking Association of New York**

*Before the*

**New York City Council  
Committee on Transportation  
April 24, 2020**

*Regarding*

**Int. 1933-2020: Temporary Space for Pedestrians and Cyclists**

I would like to thank Chairman Rodriguez as well as the members of the committees for the opportunity to testify before you today. For over 85 years, the Trucking Association of New York (TANY), a non-profit trade group, has represented the trucking industry in New York, advocating for the industry at the local, state and federal levels. We provide educational programs to our membership, which enhance their safety and maintenance efforts and offer numerous councils and committees to meet the diverse needs of our membership. TANY comprises over 600 member companies from New York, Canada, every border state, and other states across the country and is the exclusive New York affiliate of the American Trucking Associations (ATA).

Along with our healthcare workers, law enforcement personnel and many others, professional truck drivers are on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis. Our drivers are working overtime to ensure that critical deliveries of food, water, toiletries, pharmaceuticals and medical supplies get to healthcare facilities, businesses, and consumers in a timely manner. In fact, it has recently been cited that approximately 90% of New York City's food supply is delivered by a truck. With that said, we understand the Council's intentions behind Int. 1933 to open up streets and other public spaces for pedestrians and cyclists but we must balance this with the ability for trucks and other delivery vehicles to be able to continue to serve their customers.

To that end, we would ask that the Council and the Administration take into account certain commercial and residential corridors that rely on a constant stream of deliveries of crucial supplies. Due to the restrictions put in place by Governor Cuomo, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of online orders and residential deliveries. We want to make sure our members can continue to meet these demands without being hampered by a series of complicated street closures.

The trucking industry has been asked to step up to meet the increase in demand for essential supplies and services necessary to combat COVID-19 and they have responded. We ask that the Council take this into consideration and include the trucking industry when deliberating on potential street closures.

We look forward to working with the Council on this important issue.

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**TRUCKING ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK**

New York City Council Committee on Transportation  
Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chair  
April 24th 2020  
Re: Intro 1933

Good Morning Chairman Rodriguez and Members of the Committee on Transportation,

My name is John Sanchez and I'm the District Manager of Bronx Community Board 6. I fully support Intro 1933. It requires DOT to provide a plan for open and shared streets using the same criteria that is used for street closures approved by the city's Street Activity Permit Office (SAPO).

As a District Manager, I review several dozen street activity permits yearly and also assist organizations with play street applications. This is one of the few areas where community boards have significant power, and one we're uniquely familiar with.

The guidelines for play streets and street activities require that safety be considered. The guidelines for play streets require that the street does not have high traffic, the street is not on a bus route, not adjacent to a hospital, and does not have commercial establishments or activities that would be curtailed or adversely affected. This legislation requires that DOT use these same factors when determining which streets can be opened and which traffic lanes can be removed.

This legislation is also important to protect resident safety.

Tickets issued by speed cameras jumped in the month of March even as traffic has dropped dramatically. This endangers pedestrians, cyclists, and other drivers. On Monday April 19th, the vehicle miles travelled in The Bronx decreased 80% Pre-COVID 19 crisis, The Bronx would normally see more than 14,500,000 miles traveled, but now that number has gone down to 2,900,000 miles. There is no reason that a few lanes of traffic can't be removed to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists to follow social distancing guidelines. Removing a lane of traffic not only helps slow down traffic but also is less felt by drivers because less drivers are on the road. Our city needs to share the sacrifice required of its residents.

The more than 2,000 playgrounds in our city are closed. In Bronx Community Board 6 we've lost access to nearly 9 acres of the available 29 acres of park land in our community board, which is about 30% of our total park land. Intro 1933 requires that drivers share 75 miles, which is less than one hundredth of 1 percent of the 6,300+ miles in NYC with cyclists and pedestrians. All New Yorkers pay to maintain roads, not just drivers, and pedestrians and cyclists have just as much of a right to it as drivers. This legislation is more than fair and while 75 miles is a solid start, the number should expand and open streets should exist even after social distancing orders are rescinded.

In closing, our community board is ready and willing to assist the Department of Transportation to provide examples of streets that can be shared and where traffic lanes can be removed. I fully support this legislation and urge the committee to recommend approval to the full Council.

April 24, 2020

Dear Speaker Johnson and Councilmember Rivera,

Thank you for taking the initiative to make more space for New Yorkers during this very challenging time.

As was noted in the hearing today, every week of delayed social distancing mattered to the health and safety of New Yorkers. Likewise, every week that we wait to make plans for more space dangerously imperils New Yorkers' mental and physical health.

In the East Village where I live, it is challenging to maintain social distance. But we do have a few small parks and the river (though that area is often too crowded). But in Jackson Heights where my son lives -- and one of the hardest hit communities in the city -- there is almost no green space. There are no bike paths, no Citibikes, a tiny park, dangerous traffic conditions and no way to get away except dangerously crowded trains. This is an urgent matter of public health, especially for communities shouldering an unequal burden in this pandemic.

The DOT and the police commented today that speeding drivers make this program unsafe. We should not let drivers dominate the roads. Why should people breaking the law be the ones to set the agenda? I see not just cars racing but roaming groups of motorcyclists having fun on empty streets -- as walkers desperately try to avoid each other on narrow sidewalks. Something has to give. And it should not be the majority.

Finally, it was shocking to see today how little the DOT and the police department have to say in the form of concrete suggestions. Meanwhile, many people who testified brought up excellent suggestions involving citizens' participating in keeping closed streets safe, including the possibility of offering summer jobs to young people.

Please do insist that the city government must move and move quickly. "Talking" is not enough.

Thank you for your vision.

Elisabeth Dyssegaard  
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*~ Submitted Online ~*

**April 24, 2020**

**Testimony submitted by Monica Blum, President of the Lincoln Square Business Improvement District, to the New York City Council Committee of Transportation regarding Int 1933-2020 - COVID-19 Relief Package, Temporary space for pedestrians and cyclists.**

Thank you Chair Rodriguez and members of the Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding Int 1933-2020.

I am submitting this statement on behalf of the Lincoln Square Business Improvement District in Manhattan. We are specifically addressing the potential closing of Broadway within the boundaries of our district, which extends from the north side of 58<sup>th</sup> Street to the south side of 70<sup>th</sup> Street on Broadway, and includes the east side of Amsterdam Avenue from 60<sup>th</sup> to 70<sup>th</sup> Street as well as Columbus Avenue from 60<sup>th</sup> Street to 68<sup>th</sup> Street. Although we have not seen any specific proposals regarding the closing of Broadway to vehicular traffic, we have read numerous press reports which suggest that that could be a possibility. Accordingly, at our recent Board of Directors' meeting that took place via Zoom on April 21, 2020, I specifically raised this issue and our Board had an extensive discussion. Subsequently, we polled the Board and they were opposed to the closing of Broadway for a number of reasons directly related to COVID-19.

We are opposed to closing Broadway to vehicular traffic for a number of reasons: in light of COVID-19 and our hope that some business will resume operations gradually, we believe that closing Broadway will be a deterrent to curbside pick up and delivery should that be something that our businesses decide to do to provide their customers with the goods they need and to stay in business during an uncertain economic climate. Whether we like it or not, many people will come in vehicles to pick up items that they have ordered online or on the phone. Many of our retail establishments sell large items, i.e. Best Buy, Bed Bath & Beyond, Raymour and Flanigan, to name a few. Other retailers will hopefully receive large orders that cannot be transported by bike or by hand, i.e. clothing items, housewares, etc. Furthermore, we have many garages, which are businesses as well, and many, if not all of them, are on side streets off of Broadway. Some of our garages can only be accessed from Broadway and in some cases, where there is a one-way street, there is no other way to get to them.

Our restaurants and eateries will also be negatively impacted by closing Broadway to vehicular traffic - a pick up for a family of four again may be too heavy to carry and there may be a need for a vehicle. Although our district includes a bike lane on Columbus Avenue, speeding bikes without traffic will undoubtedly come into conflict with pedestrians. Several years ago, as part of Vision Zero, DOT undertook an extensive streets redesign, which expanded pedestrian space and improved pedestrian crossings in the 65<sup>th</sup> Street bow-tie area of our district to make it safer and more pedestrian friendly. Even in normal times, our sidewalks are not overly crowded by pedestrians although normally there is lots of sidewalk clutter.

The southern boundary of our district is 58<sup>th</sup> street on the north side and also includes Columbus Circle; Broadway in our district is for the most part one short block from Central Park. A portion of our district includes Central Park West from 60<sup>th</sup> to 62<sup>nd</sup> Street. The west side of our district is bounded by and includes Amsterdam Avenue. Further west, we have Riverside Drive and portions of Riverside Park South. We also have Damrosch Park on 62<sup>nd</sup> Street, which is open to the public daily, and two small Parks – Dante Park between 63<sup>rd</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> Street and Richard Tucker Park between 65<sup>th</sup> and 66<sup>th</sup> Street which remain open. Dante Park is surrounded by benches. We are responsible for maintaining these two latter parks, as well as the ten Broadway Malls that run along the spine of our district, which also contain benches for the public's use. We also normally have tables and chairs in both of these parks, but since COVID-19 we have removed them to insure social distancing.

In addition, Lincoln Square is part of the Special Lincoln Square Zoning District and as a result our district has extra wide sidewalks many of which include pedestrian arcades. These wide sidewalks were intended for uses including outside dining though not all of the sidewalks are currently used for that purpose. We also have 13 privately owned public spaces (POPS) within our district; many of which have fixed seating and a few have moveable tables and chairs. Our neighborhood is clearly not lacking pedestrian space all of which create an environment that is conducive to social distancing.

Finally, we are concerned about the danger posed by crosstown traffic going in both directions. The NYPD is overburdened with COVID-19 and we cannot expect them to exhaust their resources by managing and controlling crosstown vehicular traffic. Furthermore, our small Clean Team and small crew of Public Safety Officers are not trained nor equipped to deal with that safety issue. Just look at how much police protection is required for a ten-block street fair – there are officers stationed at every intersection. We question whether this is a wise expenditure of limited and taxed resources. The avenues in our district are all truck routes, which in normal times allow the transport of essential goods to be provided to millions to New Yorkers – eliminating Broadway would push truck traffic to the other avenues away from the commercial corridor.

We recognize that there may be neighborhoods that are not as fortunate as ours is with Central Park and a number of other parks steps away. We believe that these decisions must be made on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis, and if you consider closing streets and avenues, it might make more sense to look at avenues that do not have commercial activity so as to not further negatively impede the gradual reopening of businesses post COVID-19. For all of these reasons, we are strongly opposed to the closing of Broadway in our Upper West Side neighborhood.

**New York City Council**  
**Committee on General Welfare**  
**Hearing on Intro 1927**  
**Testimony of Winston Tokuhisa**  
**Member Leader, Neighbors Together**  
**April 23, 2020**

My name is Winston Tokuhisa and I am a “Leader in Shelter” with Neighbors Together. I have been chronically homeless since 2006. One of the biggest reasons I have not been able to escape homelessness [and poverty] is due to not having a rental subsidy or “voucher” covering New York City rent. That is why I found myself in the shelter system at the start of this crisis.

I currently live in a dormitory shelter. When I first began feeling unwell with COVID-like symptoms early this month I did not know what to do. I told my case manager, and she thought I was joking. When I told her again that I had symptoms, she told me to go to a hospital to get taken care of. I went to Kingsbrook to get tested and instead was just sent back to my shelter. If not for the advocacy of community organizers I would have remained in my shared dorm. I hope everyone can acknowledge how wrong and dangerous my whole experience was.

When I was later transferred to an “isolation” shelter, which I would come to learn was a misnomer, I wound up sharing a room with yet another noisy roommate. Naturally, this made my recovery process much more challenging. I am just grateful my flu-like symptoms were “mild,” otherwise, I could have been in serious trouble. Upon returning to my “home” shelter, I found the elevator was not working and had to schelp my belongings up five flights of stairs. According to other residents, it had not been for the duration of my ten-day stay in isolation.

Not to mention my room was in disarray and not at all how I left it. It was so bad that the newly hired cleaning lady refused to service my room until I addressed it. Cleaning and other precautionary measures had not changed since before I left. While the general public is concerned about getting back to work, people in the shelter like me are more worried about how to navigate the crisis with next to no

resources or support and - worst of all - the high chance of dying from complications with the virus due to the inability to safely self-isolate and rest.

The historic policies of the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) cannot keep people safe during the COVID-19 crisis. They do not have a scalable plan on how to care for ill clients in shelters or keep us at a safe distance from one another. And for the ones that are well, the best they can do is keep them stagnant. While it seems like the general public is over the apex of infections in New York State, the situation in DHS shelters is only going to get worse in the weeks to come. This is why I support Speaker Johnson's bill requiring DHS to provide each resident with a single room and I hope you will too.

I think the city's plan to expand 75 miles of city streets to pedestrian and cyclists walkway even if temporarily will definitely allow many New Yorkers to socially distance themselves as a way to protect themselves and others around them from spreading COVID19. As a cyclist I use this as my main form of transportation around the city and now it is probably one of the safest ways to travel around while being healthy and active. I work for OutCycling, a nonprofit that supports LGBTQ+ youth through the Fearless Flyers Youth Program, and teaches young people to cycle and live healthier lives, and can use these expanded cycle ways to get confidence and motivation to cycle on the streets of NYC. Many use the bike they receive after graduation for employment with delivery service apps which is even more essential to earn some form of income through these troubling times. I fully support this expansion and see it as a move that is necessary to get NYC moving once more and give New Yorkers more confidence as they leave their homes after weeks of being in quarantine. Just one more reason why we need to become a city that encourages and supports cycling and restricts the usage of vehicles.

[m.ullah@outcycling.org](mailto:m.ullah@outcycling.org)



April 24, 2020

Council Testimony for Intro 1933.

Hello Council Members,

Thank you for giving me a chance to speak. My name is Janet Liff. I'm Director of the Neighborhood Empowerment Project at Open Plans. We believe that streets are more than just conduits for traffic. They are where city life happens. I'm here to testify in support of Intro Number 1933 that will ensure that during this crisis, we transform our streets as necessary.

This is a make or break moment in NYC. We need to do the right thing and provide enough space for pedestrians to social distance and provide significantly more space for people to cycle to literally keep our city moving.

We have several time frames.

Now, we need to provide safe and comprehensive bike routes for our essential workers. During crises, time and again, cycling arises as the safest most efficient way to commute. We need to provide immediate routes for our essential workers trying to stay sane and safe. Also, now, for our residents to stay sane and safe, we need to open streets for walking and relieve the pressure on our parks. The road beds are empty. Openings can be done quickly and inexpensively. There are plenty of models in dense cities throughout the world.

In the near and foreseeable future, when we very slowly re-open, we will need to provide even more space for cyclists. People will be leery of getting back into subways. The worst-case scenario is for driving to increase. If car use goes up, that will be costly in terms of congestion, time lost, emergency vehicles getting stuck in traffic and public health. A tiny increase in exposure to car exhaust has been proven to make a person more vulnerable to Covid. We can't afford this. We need to support and encourage efficient and safe cycling which means designating more space for wider bike lanes.

Also, during the next 6 - 18 months, when the city carefully re-opens and social distancing is still required, how do we keep people from leaving the city and encourage them to support our local businesses? How do we encourage people to re-emerge and frequent our local shops and re-start our economy? By making people feel safe. How do we make them feel safe? We have to provide room to line up on the sidewalk and room to walk. We can only do this by reclaiming roadbed and widening our sidewalks.

In this time of crisis, the city has to make choices and re-evaluate our priorities. 1) We need to wholeheartedly make space for clean, safe, efficient transportation. 2) We need to own that NYC is a pedestrian city. That is our strength. That's why people move here. We have to put our pedestrians first. To accomplish these tasks, we need to repurpose our roadbed. I applaud you for proposing this legislation.

My only concern: is 75 miles enough? When we carefully re-open, to accommodate even ½ the number of people that typically walk on our streets plus a surge in cycling, we'll need a lane on every avenue plus enough E/W connectors. If Oakland created 74 miles of shared streets for a population of 400,000, to compare, we'd have to create roughly 2000 miles for our population 9 million or reclaim 30% of our 6000 miles of streets. Please consider this.

Thank you for your time.

Janet Liff

**Design Trust for Public Space Testimony  
Intro #1933 in the Committee on Transportation April 24, 2020**

Good morning, my name is Samira Behrooz. I am the Director of Programs for the Design Trust for Public Space. I'm here today to express our organization's support of Intro 1933 in regard to creating temporary space for pedestrians and cyclists on our city streets.

Since 1995, the Design Trust has worked to unlock the potential of New York City's shared spaces throughout all five boroughs. We connect city agencies and community collaborators to advance change for the good of all New Yorkers and to evolve our public spaces with resiliency, equity, and mobility in mind. Mobility is not just about forms of transportation, however; it's also about how people move through the city and how public spaces, including streets and sidewalks, act as connective tissue throughout our vast metropolis.

Now, more than ever before, we can all recognize how valuable our limited public space is and how difficult it is to provide equitable and safe access to it during this pandemic. Opening streets for pedestrians and cyclists would allow more space for people to travel for essential services, take refuge from isolation and anxiety, and get the mental and physical health benefits of going outdoors, while still maintaining safe physical distancing to prevent the spread of the virus.

We thank Speaker Johnson and Council Member Rivera for their leadership on this issue and urge the Transportation Committee to support this bill and to center its rollout in those communities most in need, in order to best address the vast health and social disparities exacerbated by the COVID 19 pandemic.

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New York City Council Committee on Transportation Hearing  
April 24, 2020  
Testimony of Eric McClure, Executive Director, StreetsPAC

StreetsPAC strongly supports Intro 1933, which would mandate the opening of a minimum of 75 miles of city streets for use by people on foot and on bikes.

We're living in an unprecedented time. Finding enough space on a New York City sidewalk, which was merely an inconvenience less than two months ago, is now nearer to being a matter of life and death. Like many, we believe it's ideal that New Yorkers stay home as much as possible in order to stem the spread of COVID-19, but essential workers have to get to their jobs, people need to be able to restock groceries, and for their physical and mental wellbeing, many folks need to be able to go for a walk or a run or just clear their heads, especially as weather improves.

That's nearly impossible to do under current conditions. Well publicized maps circulated in the past few days show that many of our neighborhoods are nearly devoid of sidewalks wide enough for maintaining six feet of separation. At the same time, with motor-vehicle traffic having fallen by about 75% across the city, vast swaths of empty streets crisscross our communities.

We can address that imbalance by extending sidewalks into curbside lanes on wider avenues, by allowing people to open their streets block party-style to gain some breathing room, and by perhaps pedestrianizing traffic-light corridors like Broadway in Manhattan.

Mexico City, Berlin, Bogota, Montreal, Vancouver, Milan, Paris, Auckland, Denver, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Louisville and, most notably in the U.S., Oakland, among many other cities, have all opened, or are in the process of opening, streets to walking and biking. And they're largely doing it with little or no police enforcement.

The only thing that makes New York essentially "different" in this context is the Mayor's insistence that we can't do it here, or can't do it without thousands of cops. Neither of those claims stands up.

We close streets all the time for utility work or tree-pruning or block parties with a few cones and a sign or two. Further, there's just no factual basis to believe that giving people some extra space will cause a rush of unsafe clustering. Those who would ignore social-distancing guidelines are going to do so on a narrow sidewalk

or in the middle of the Great Lawn or Long Meadow. For the 99%+ of New Yorkers terrified of catching Coronavirus, we're going to self-enforce proactively.

While we know that NYCDOT has been stretched and strained by COVID-19, we firmly believe they should lead the effort to open city streets. Many organizations stand ready to assist them, including numerous BIDs. And they, like we, believe much of this can be accomplished with minimal enforcement.

Let's also make sure that we prioritize opening streets in those neighborhoods that have the least current access to green space, and in communities where the parks are being most heavily used.

Lastly, the effort to open New York City's streets to people now will help guide us as we begin the effort to shape the post-COVID future, one that tilts the balance back towards people-powered uses. That's a topic for another day, but we look forward to having that discussion with the City Council.

**Testimony**  
**Intro. 1933-2020**  
**COVID-19 Relief Package: Temporary space for pedestrians and cyclists**

On behalf of the Times Square Alliance, I would like to thank Speaker Johnson and Councilmember Rivera for introducing this important bill, and for generally supporting more progressive transportation policies that will make streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists. My name is Tim Tompkins, and I am the President of the Times Square Alliance. The Times Square Alliance strongly supports Intro. 1933 and thanks its sponsors, Council Members Rodriguez, Menchaca, Kallos, Reynoso, Levin, Cabrera, Constantinides, Van Bramer, Powers, Koo, and Levine for their ongoing leadership on improving pedestrian safety citywide.

As the weather warms, the need for New Yorkers to find places where they can walk, ride their bikes and safely run essential errands without violating social distancing guidelines will become more and more acute, and we commend you for drafting this bill and trying to address this need before this becomes a critical problem. Relieving crowding in and around our parks will be especially important.

We also believe that the creation of wider sidewalks and plazas adjacent to retail businesses will be critical as we begin to resume commercial activity along our streets. As people return to our busiest corridors, they must be able to go about their business without dangerous crowding.

We support the ambitious goal of creating 75 miles of shared and closed streets in all five boroughs, and we would be willing to work with the City to help manage any portion of these spaces within the Times Square Alliance district.

The Alliance has long supported more and better pedestrian space in our area, and has also advocated for wider sidewalks and pedestrian plazas. We have spent the last ten years documenting congestion and researching better management approaches for dense urban places.

For the last ten years, we have been the City's maintenance partner for the Broadway pedestrian plazas in Times Square. For this reason, we do want to take this opportunity to express some concerns about issues we believe must be addressed by the City in order to ensure that these additional public spaces remain free of excessive congestion and negative activity and remain safe and pleasant places for people to enjoy.

First, the Department of Transportation must have well-crafted regulations regarding the use of these spaces. These regulations must be reinforced strongly and publicly by the City as these spaces become available to the public. When the plaza program was launched, no new regulations were created that applied specifically to streets no longer used solely as traffic lanes and sidewalks. As a result, we were unable to prevent a proliferation of commercial activity that resulted in congestion, harassment and disorder. This necessitated the creation of a special Times Square Task Force at City Hall and subsequent legislation and new rules, and some problems persisted even then.

Given the extraordinary importance of maintaining distancing during a public health emergency, what activities are allowed to occupy our pedestrian areas is more important than ever. Areas where people walk must be as clear as possible, and this may require new approaches to vending and solicitation activity that is allowed in our public right of way.

It has also been our experience, working with other plaza partners, that careful management of additional and expanded pedestrian areas will also be critical, and the City must work cooperatively with its maintenance partners, including BIDs and neighborhood organizations whenever possible, to ensure a successful outcome. Because maintenance, management and monitoring will be even more important when the prospect of inappropriate gathering and crowding present a real public health danger, the City must work with and empower its partners, and respect the nature of that partnership. The City must not see this as an opportunity to shift its own responsibility and liability for its public realm to non-profit partners.

This legislation provides a rational solution to create a safe space for pedestrians and cyclists in this unprecedented time. We thank the Speaker and the Councilmembers for introducing this bill and urge its passage.

# OUTCYCLING

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My name is Graham and I am the co-founder & president of OutCycling which is an LGBT cycling network of over 1000 members, most of whom live within the 5 boroughs of NYC.

I have heard from many members since the stay at home order was enacted, all saying the same thing - they are not comfortable cycling on the bike paths or in Central Park because on most days, those areas are too crowded and a safe distance from others can not be maintained.

Some have said they would prefer riding in the streets - and I count myself in this group. However, with so little traffic, vehicles are moving so much faster and that does not feel safe either. With a higher speed of traffic comes a much higher risk of serious injury or death were a crash to happen.

On behalf of myself and our members - we could not support this legislation and the concept of open streets more strongly.

In addition, as a city-wide community group, we stand ready to do anything we can to help implement a safe program for all, including the idea of creating a Volunteer Marshaling program similar to what all large running and cycling events use as additional eyes and ears to support safety - if something like that were deemed beneficial.

A BIG THANK YOU to all council members doing this work and you have OutCycling's full support going forward.

Thank you.



# EVERGREEN

Your North Brooklyn Business Exchange

**Testimony of Evergreen on  
NYC Council - Transportation Committee  
Pedestrian Space/City Street Closure Legislation Hearing  
April 24, 2019**

Evergreen is a membership organization that helps the nearly 1,200 industrial businesses in North Brooklyn to grow in order to keep their 11,700 quality blue collar jobs in our community. This represents 14% of the City's manufacturing employment base.

I am writing to you today in regards to the **Pedestrian Space/City Street Closure Legislation** introduced and reviewed on April 24th. Although we are supportive of ensuring that all of our neighbors in North Brooklyn have access to open space and fresh air, we are deeply concerned about how this program could impact industrial businesses. We ask that closures focus on streets in and adjacent to residential communities and that truck routes or streets in and adjacent to the Industrial Business zones not be closed.

Right now, it is imperative that all of our truck routes remain open for those essential manufacturers and businesses who are receiving and shipping essential supplies. We understand the need for social distancing during this difficult time however closing these streets to trucks and businesses will create additional hardships to businesses who are trying to stay afloat. We are all facing challenging times and we need to focus on helping businesses not hurting them.

During the Mayor's last street closure pilot program, Bushwick Avenue between two major truck routes, Flushing and Johnson Avenues was chosen. Bushwick Avenue is not a local truck route however it was adjacent to the North Brooklyn Industrial Business zone. During the closure, NYPD did not allow access to businesses that were essential, a food manufacturer and a waste haul company. NYPD would not allow them to receive deliveries. One business had to make the hard decision to go up a one way street to get to his facility. When Evergreen contacted NYPD 90th precinct on behalf of the businesses for assistance, we were told that they have no jurisdiction that the Mayor has rotated precincts and to contact the supervisor on sight. One supervisor said that it was not his problem and would not allow the business through. Other occasions with hours of debating they let the trucks through. This is unacceptable and should not be repeated.

We have no problem with an effort to pedestrianize streets that are NOT truck routes and are NOT in or adjacent to the IBZ. Focusing on streets in or adjacent to residential areas is a better way to ensure that community residents have access to fresh air and space--ways that won't impact pedestrian safety and important deliveries during this uncertain time. We greatly appreciate your understanding in this matter.



**CityParks**  
FOUNDATION



**Hunters  
Point  
Parks**  
CONSERVANCY

April 27, 2020

Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chair  
New York City Council Committee on Transportation  
City Hall  
New York, NY  
10007

Dear Chair Rodriguez,

The undersigned organizations submit this testimony today to the New York City Council Committee on Transportation in support of Intro. 1933, which would provide temporary access to street space for New Yorkers in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. We are seeing unprecedented pressure on our parks and open spaces. This legislation will help ensure vitally needed access to open space in neighborhoods that currently lack sufficient access to parks and gardens, or where parks are in danger of unsafe overcrowding. Open space in our dense city is critical to positive health outcomes, in good times and bad. The park and open space system provides key health benefits to New Yorkers and can be strengthened and safeguarded by opening opportunities for safe recreation in streets citywide.

As New Yorkers face the potential for a summer season in NYC without access to playgrounds, recreation centers, public pools, and beaches, we believe there will be an even higher need for this temporary street space access. As it is unclear when open space assets like playgrounds and recreation centers will be back online, we are concerned about the knock-on impacts that are and will be experienced in parks and open spaces that remain open and accessible to the public. Providing some measure of additional public open space will be critical to ensuring that the parks that do remain open can do so safely, in light of fact that parts of the open space system will likely not be available for public use during what is usually the busiest season for NYC's parks, gardens, and open spaces. To ensure that these open streets provide cooling benefits during the year's hottest months, we encourage the City to proactively expand the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)'s efforts to outfit fire hydrants that can be used by the public for relief.

Models for safely opened streets that still permit essential traffic have been piloted in other cities around the world during this crisis, and we thank the Council for taking leadership on this issue on behalf of New Yorkers. We believe low-enforcement models that already exist in NYC should be explored and could be expanded upon for the successful implementation of temporary street closures, such as those employed for neighborhood block parties. We are also heartened by

examples such as the closure of Shore Road adjacent to Astoria Park, which was spearheaded by local advocates as a means to make park access safer for residents of Western Queens. We believe these examples point to a model that suggests minimal impact on City employees for both the New York Police Department (NYPD) and NYC Parks. It is important that NYC Parks staff and the Parks Enforcement Patrol in particular can be deployed where they are needed most – our public parks. As we face dire budget projections for NYC Parks in the FY21 budget, we believe the need to keep our essential parks staff in parks themselves will be more important than ever.

Respectfully,



Paul R. Gottsegen  
Board Chair and Acting Executive Director  
New Yorkers for Parks



Connie Fishman  
Executive Director  
Hudson River Park Friends



Heather Lubov  
Executive Director  
City Parks Foundation



Rob Basch  
President  
Hunters Point Park Conservancy



Carter Strickland  
New York State Director  
The Trust for Public Land





## **Testimony to NYC Council** **Transportation Committee**

April 24, 2020

The NYC BID Association appreciates and commends the City Council for its leadership in exploring creative ways to enable more space for safe social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we begin to reimagine New York's future, we believe the City must explore creative ways to utilize public space beyond just street closures. We need look at our sidewalks (outside cafes, stoop lines, etc.), public plazas, privately owned public space, POPS program, parks and the streets around them, etc. We believe that BIDs are uniquely qualified to provide input given our role in place-making and maintenance with these types of spaces, and we want to help in this endeavor. We are willing to work with you and the appropriate City agencies as we begin to emerge from this crisis, rebuild our economy, and reinvigorate the use of public space.

As for the present legislation, many BIDs believe that the proposed legislation and street closures will improve the pedestrian experience and are supportive of this potential program, but many also have concerns about the need of closures, the proposed streets, the operational complexity of such a program, and potential legal liability involved with closing such a significant number of streets without adequate planning. The City Council should consider the impact of street closures on the gradual reopening of businesses and whether commercial corridors are the best locations.

Each community and neighborhood is different, and each BID has different levels of resources available to support such an effort. This is especially true at a time when BIDs can only have the minimum staff working to the extent necessary to perform essential work as per the State's Executive Order. All 76 BIDs we represent are trying to continue critical operations, support businesses, and coordinate with agencies while protecting their work forces from unnecessary exposure to viral transmission.

We ask that the City consult each BID providing services to streets in areas where streets may be considered for potential closure. Furthermore, closing of streets raises many other issues including, most critically, the safety of pedestrians. To the extent necessary, the City must provide adequate safeguards to ensure pedestrian safety. The BIDs remain committed to working closely with the City Council, the Mayor, and all agencies to steward our City through this unprecedented crisis.

We look forward to an ongoing dialogue about how to best increase and improve available space in a way that works for all.