

Cycling News

8th Avenue Bike Lane is on the Map

IN APRIL, THE 8TH AVENUE bike lane became a reality! The DOT's route from 14th Street to Columbus Circle makes neighborhood cycling safer for current cyclists and more inviting for would-be riders. It is a safer alternative to the sub-standard 6th Avenue bike lane and will be well-used by "greenway graduates" coming from the Hudson River Greenway and cyclists who live, work, study, shop or visit Chelsea, Hell's Kitchen and Midtown West. It fills a missing link in the bike network, connecting the Hudson Street buffered bike lane to Central Park and the Central Park West bike lane.

Over the three years since Community Board 4 first asked the DOT to stripe the 8th Avenue bike lane, the project earned the support of City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, Councilmember Gale Brewer,

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, Community Board 5, the Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association, T.A., local businesses and cyclists. As the design was finalized, all asked the DOT to stripe a buffered bike lane on the 70-foot wide avenue.

From 14th Street, where the Hudson Street buffered bike lane ends, to 23rd Street, the City removed a motor vehicle travel lane and replaced it with a buffered bike lane—a five-foot bike lane separated from moving traffic by a five-foot striped buffer zone. Not only will this strong design invite more New Yorkers to cycle, but it will greatly improve cyclist and pedestrian safety by slowing drivers and reducing traffic. The DOT installed an *unbuf-*



NOAH BUDNICK

The new 8th Avenue bike is already well-used by commercial cyclists and will encourage many to ride.

ferred bike lane from 23rd to 57th Street, with a gap around the Port Authority Bus Terminal between 39th and 42nd Streets. In this gap, and from 57th Street to Columbus Circle, the DOT installed its new shared lane marking—a standard bike lane pavement symbol placed in a travel lane—to remind drivers of cyclists' right to the street and lead cyclists to connecting-bike lanes. While the DOT installed a less robust bike lane on the more heavily trafficked section of 8th Avenue, simply having the unbuffered bike lane and shared lane markings north of 23rd Street will make drivers more aware of the presence of cyclists and help reduce driver-bicyclist crashes. □

TakeAction!

Thank Speaker Quinn for supporting a buffered bike lane on 8th Avenue!

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn
224 West 30th Street,
Suite 1206
New York, NY 10001
E-mail: nyccouncil.info/constituent/email_form.cfm?con_id=3

Make the East River-North Shore Greenway Entirely Car-Free!

AT A PUBLIC HEARING IN January, the Departments of City Planning and Parks unveiled the draft master plan for the Queens East River and North Shore Greenway, a biking and walking route that will run from Newton Creek, along Queens' East River waterfront, into northern Queens to the Flushing Bay Promenade. Of the ten-and-a-half miles proposed in January's draft master plan, only two-and-a-half miles are car-free biking and walking paths. The remaining eight miles are a mixture of mostly signed routes and some unbuffered bike lanes.

The City must ensure that the entire

greenway is car-free to provide safe space where cyclists of all ages can bike for transportation, exercise and recreation without fear of motor vehicles.

The greenway will connect bikers and walkers to parks and museums on Queens'

TakeAction!

Contact the Parks Department and ask them to make the Queens East River and North Shore Greenway car-free:

Commissioner Adrian Benepe
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
The Arsenal at Central Park
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10021
nyc.gov/html/mail/html/maildpr.html

waterfront, the biking and walking paths on the Queensboro and Triborough Bridges, the Flushing Bay Promenade and the future-Queens Plaza greenway. It has the potential to be a heavily-



DAVID SNETMAN

A real car-free greenway will make make biking safe for all.

used biking and walking route. However, it remains to be seen if the final route, like its proposed 20th Avenue on-street greenway, will be entirely car-free or if the Queens East River and North Shore route will be a "greenway" in name only. □

East Side Greenway Opportunities

THREE PROJECTS ON THE east side of Manhattan, from 38th to 63rd Street, present real opportunities to complete Mayor Bloomberg's Manhattan Waterfront Greenway, the car-free biking and walking path around the island. The Administration must play an active role to ensure that the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway is included in and connected through each project.

City Planning must require the developer of the decom-



The FDR detour showed that an East Side Greenway is possible.

missioned ConEd site, between 38th and 41st Street, to include a publicly accessible waterfront greenway and park in the new development.

To the north, City Hall must work with the State legislature to ensure that any UN development plan it approves includes publicly accessible parkland between 41st and 51st Street. This is a major opportunity to build this section of the greenway, which had been considered unbuildable due to security concerns.

Over the past four years, the the State DOT's floating FDR Drive detour from 54th to 63rd Street has inspired many to envision a biking and walking path along the water. Though the State must demolish the detour, elected officials from Midtown East and the Upper East Side want to work with the Mayor to build the waterfront greenway. □

TakeAction!

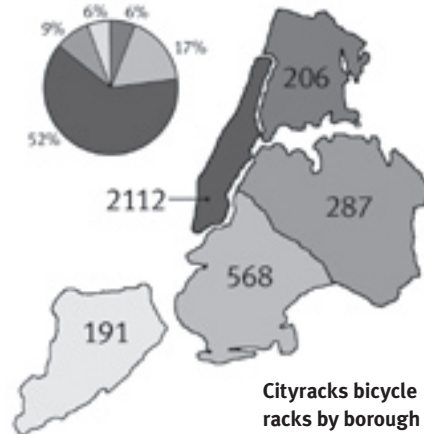
Write the Mayor and ask him to complete the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway on the East Side:

Mayor Michael Bloomberg
City Hall
New York, NY 10007
nyc.gov/html/mail/html/mayor.html

City Should Expand Abandoned Bike Tagging Programs

IN SEPTEMBER, THE NYPD's 9th Precinct (East Village, Manhattan) launched a program to tag and clear abandoned bikes from bike racks, street signposts, parking meters and other street fixtures. This commonsense program, which allows people to park their bikes at bike racks and City-owned street fixtures, only removes bikes that are clearly abandoned and gives adequate notice before removing them. The program should be expanded citywide.

Police officers from the 9th Precinct tag bikes that have elicited complaints or show signs of abandonment like stripped parts, flat tires, rusted chains or a layer of dirt. The tag notifies the owner that the City



CityRacks bicycle racks by borough

will impound the bike in two weeks if it is not moved. After two weeks, officers return to the location with Department of Sanitation agents and, if the bike is unmoved in the same dilapi-

dated condition, clip the lock and remove the abandoned bike.

In March, Councilmember Annabel Palma (Bronx) proposed City Council Introduction 234, the abandoned bike tagging bill, which will establish a citywide tagging policy that identifies abandoned bicycles and requires the police and other City agencies to provide owners with at

least 36 hours to act on this notification before a suspected abandoned bicycle is removed. Furthermore, this bill expressly affirms cyclists' right to lock their bikes to City-owned street fixtures. City Council should ensure that this bill, like the 9th Precinct's program, allows two weeks before suspected abandoned bikes are impounded and pass the bill into law.

The success of 9th Precinct's tagging program has prompted the 6th Precinct in Greenwich Village and the 20th Precinct on the Upper West Side, in conjunction with the Columbus Avenue Business Improvement District, to institute tagging programs, and State Assemblyman Joseph Lentol of north Brooklyn has publicly asked the 94th Precinct to do the same.

With only one City-installed bike rack per 35 cyclists, abandoned bikes exacerbate the chronic parking shortage by monopolizing scarce parking spots. Abandoned bicycles also annoy pedestrians and mar the visual landscape. The cycling reality is that New Yorkers

often have no choice but to park their bikes at City-owned sidewalk fixtures, like sign and lamp-posts. Fortunately, there is no law that expressly

prohibits this practice.

Bike tagging is an effective way for City agencies to identify and remove truly abandoned bicycles and increase bike parking availability. □

TakeAction!

Contact Your City Council member and ask them to support Int. 234. Visit nycouncil.info/ constituent to contact your Council member.

RACKSTAT There are 3,364 CityRacks installed on sidewalks and in parks all over New York City, or one rack for every 35 cyclists. Yet, the DOT's CityRacks Program will not receive more bike racks to install until Spring 2007, despite a backlog of over 500 requests! Write to Commissioner Weinshall and ask the DOT to increase funding for the CityRacks Program

Commissioner Iris Weinshall, NYC DOT, 40 Worth Street, New York, NY 10007 nyc.gov/html/mail/html/mailldot.html

More Bike Parking For the Bedford L?

THE BEDFORD AVENUE L subway station in Williamsburg, Brooklyn is notorious for its crowded sidewalks and overflowing bike racks, but a City Planning-DOT proposal could change all that. Last spring, Brooklyn Community Board 1 unanimously approved the City's plan to widen the sidewalks around the Bedford Avenue L subway station at Bedford Avenue and North 7th Street and add as many as a dozen bike racks there. City Planning developed the design as part of its Subway

Sidewalk Interface project, which developed walking and biking improvements around 30 heavily-used subway stations in Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. Now, T.A. and neighborhood residents are asking State Assemblyman Joseph Lentol, who represents north Brooklyn, to secure funding for the DOT to build these bicycle and pedestrian improvements in Williamsburg.

The new racks and increased sidewalk space will reduce crowding and improve pedes-



GARY LINGARD

The DOT needs funding to build wider sidewalks and more bike parking at the Bedford L.

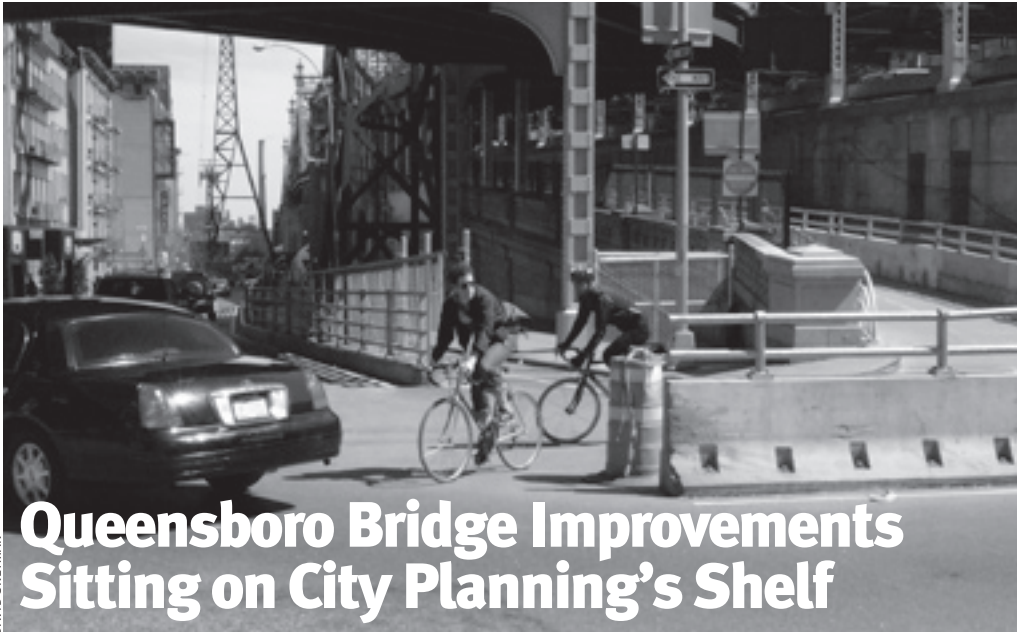
TakeAction!

Contact Assemblyman Lentol and ask him to secure funding for the Bedford Avenue bicycle and pedestrian improvements: NY State Assemblyman Joseph Lentol, 619 Lorimer Street Brooklyn, NY 11211 718-383-7474 lentolj@assembly.state.ny.us

trian safety and make biking to the subway more convenient thus encouraging more people to ride. The less cluttered sidewalks should also appease the NYPD's 94th Precinct, which is concerned about pedestri-

ans tripping on parked bikes and have clipped locks and impounded bikes that were parked at sidewalk fixtures at the Bedford Avenue subway station once a year for at least the past three years. □

Cycling News



DAVID SNETMAN

Queensboro Bridge Improvements Sitting on City Planning's Shelf

IN SEPTEMBER 2000, AFTER a 30-year campaign led by T.A., the City converted the north outer roadway on the Queensboro Bridge to the bridge's permanent biking and walking path, ending decades of intermittent, often-nonexistent, dangerous and discouraging bridge access. Elated, bridge path users immediately saw the need for safe and direct bridge path access through the traffic-choked streets and avenues on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Today, little has changed.

In 2002, the Department of City Planning began developing plans to make biking and walk-

ing to the bridge safer and more convenient, but it has yet to release them. It needs to.

In March 2002, T.A. surveyed bridge users and found that 75% of bikers and walkers coming on and off the bridge in Manhattan travel to and from the west towards Midtown and Central Park, while the path entrance forced all users east through four extra blocks of dense traffic without protection from drivers. This past March, T.A. surveyed users again to update the 2002 data and to motivate the City to release its four-year old study and make access and safety improvements.

T.A.'s recent survey found that 72% of bridge path users go to and come from west of the bridge. Furthermore, three-quarters of the 233 survey respondents rated access to the Manhattan side of the path "dangerous" or "intolerable" and half have had a "close call" with a driver on the Manhattan-side of the bridge. For comparison, one-third of all path users felt the Queens side was "dangerous" or "intolerable," whereas only one-fifth have had a close call traveling to the bridge in

Wanted: safety improvements. The City has not released its plans to make Queensboro Bridge path access safer in Manhattan.

Queens. Additionally, 40% of respondents said accessing the path from Manhattan is "inconvenient" or "extremely inconvenient."

City Planning has released and publicly-reviewed plans for strong bike and pedestrian improvements on the Queens side of the bridge. In March, the City DOT signed-off on City Planning's Queens Plaza Bike and Pedestrian Improvement Project, and the NYC Economic Development Corporation will begin construction in 2007. The City will build an on-street greenway path on the median of Queens Plaza North. The new path will connect to the Queensboro Bridge path, Queensbridge Park, the Queens Boulevard Viaduct and the future

Queens East River Greenway.

According to the DOT, 2005 Queensboro Bridge daytime bike volumes are up 179% from 2000 levels.

The City must improve street safety and ease of

access on both sides of the bridge for the 2,500 bikers and walkers who cross the bridge each day. □

TakeAction!

Write to Commissioner Burden and ask City Planning to release the study on Manhattan access to the Queensboro Bridge path:

Commissioner Amanda Burden
NYC Department of City Planning
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007
nyc.gov/html/mail/html/mailedcp.html

Red Light Go at Williamsburg Bridge

THIS WINTER, T.A. VOLUNTEERS cataloged traffic conditions at Delancey and Clinton Streets on the Manhattan side of the Williamsburg Bridge during morning rush hour and found that, on average, drivers entering and exiting the bridge run one red light every minute. During that same time of day, some 200 cyclists and walkers cross the Williamsburg Bridge each hour,

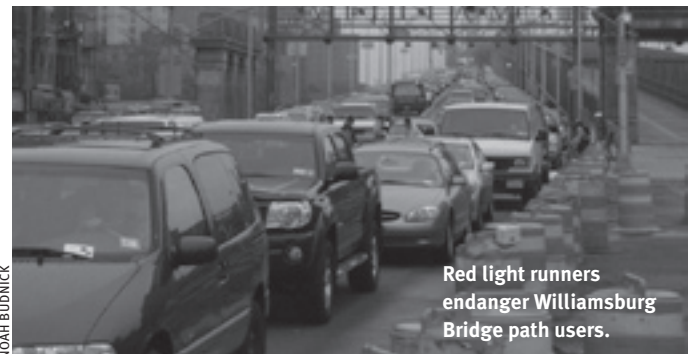
which means that every minute three to four are at risk of being hit by a red light running driver. To make the situation more dangerous, the pedestrian signal does not allow enough time—only 13 seconds—for bikers, walkers and the disabled

TakeAction!

E-mail City Planning Director Amanda Burden and ask that the City plan strong bicyclist and pedestrian safety measures on Delancey Street.
nyc.gov/html/mail/html/mailedcp.html

to safely cross the five lanes of traffic separating the path entrance and the sidewalk.

For the safety of the 3,000 people who bike and walk



NOAH BUDNICK

Red light runners endanger Williamsburg Bridge path users.

across the bridge path every day, the City must immediately increase crossing time, install red light enforcement cameras and increase police enforcement of law-breaking drivers at the bridge entrance and exit. Additionally, the Department of City

Planning's Delancey Street Transportation Study needs to include strong safety improvements like protected bike lanes, wider sidewalks and more dedicated time for walkers and bikers to cross this busy street and access the Williamsburg Bridge. □

2005 NYPD Bike Tickets Jump 28%

IN 2005, NEW YORK CITY Police Department officers issued 45,558 summonses to cyclists, compared to 35,644 in 2004. (Throughout 2005, the NYPD arrested over 250 cyclists at Critical Mass bike rides, vs. some 400 in 2004). For the sake of comparison, Police officers issued about 13,000 summonses to commercial truck drivers in 2005 for infractions like driving off-route or for over-weight or over-length trucks. Other 2004 and 2005 traffic summons data



NOAH BUDDICK

was not available as of press time. In a February 2006 *New York Post* story, NYPD Deputy Commissioner Paul Browne attributed the overall bike ticket increase to "increasing complaints last fall about delivery and messenger bicyclists posing hazards to pedestrians." Indeed, from October to early December 2005, the NYPD mounted an extensive enforcement campaign, targeting cyclists at multiple locations in Manhattan almost every weekday.

Traffic tickets for dangerous cycling, like riding the wrong way, riding on the sidewalk or not yielding to pedestrians improve public safety, but summonses for nuisance violations—like not having a bell or not riding in the bike lane—only serve to discourage bike riding and build ill will between bikers and the police.

A little more than half of the summonses cyclists reported to T.A. during last fall's ticket blitz were for traffic violations like riding through a steady red light,

riding on the sidewalk and riding the wrong way, while one-third of reported summonses were nuisance violations like not having a bike bell; not riding in the city's chronically potholed, parked- and driven-in bike lanes or not having a reflector or light during the day. (Reflectors are only required on new bikes when they are sold, and front and rear lights are required from dusk until dawn.) To city cyclists, such tickets are harassing and discourage them from bicycling.

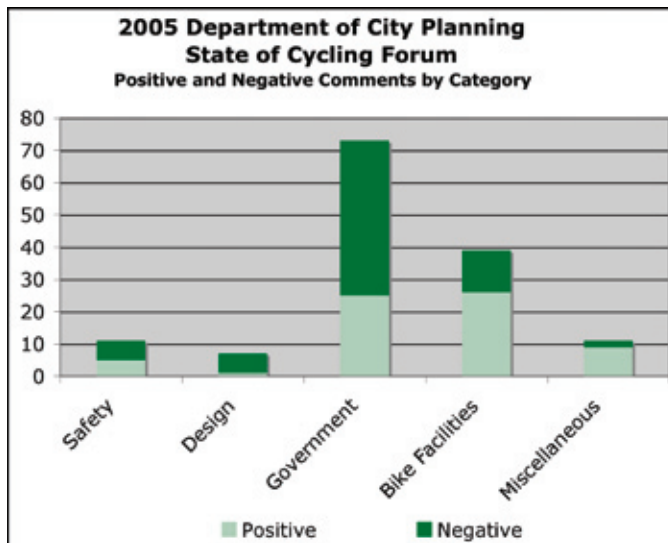
Police precincts need to focus traffic enforcement on dangerous drivers and preventing traffic crashes, injuries and fatalities and improving the safety of bicyclists, pedestrians and drivers—in fact, this is the goal of the NYPD's TrafficStat program. All cyclist and motorist traffic summons data, including breakdowns by infraction and commercial vs. non-commercial operators, as well as adjudication rates, should be made public monthly and be reviewed at precinct Community Council meetings. This will build respect between officers and bicyclists, inform local traffic enforcement initiatives and give bikers and walkers confidence that efforts are being made to make them safer.

TakeAction!

Attend your local precinct's monthly Community Council meeting and recommend streets and intersections where drivers routinely threaten biker and walker safety for targeted traffic enforcement. Find your precinct's contact information at: nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/pct/psb.html

City Planning Solicits Public Commentary on NYC Cycling

IN JANUARY, THE DEPARTMENT of City Planning released the final report based on public comments from the



City's first-ever State of Cycling in New York City forum held during Bike Month NYC 2005. At the event, members of the public were invited to identify the best and the worst aspects of New York City cycling. City Planning received 66 positive comments and 75 negative comments and grouped them into five categories (see chart). According to attendees, the best part of biking in New York City is the Hudson River Greenway and the proposed Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway. The worst aspect identified by participants is the lack of enforcement of motorists parking and driving in bike lanes. City Planning's report on the event is available on-line at nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/transportation/stateofcycle.shtml.

This year, the second annual State of Cycling in New York City forum will be held online. Cyclists are invited to submit comments on City Planning's website. See nyc.gov/html/dcp/home.html for details.

City Council Takes Pedicabs for a Spin

THE NEW YORK CITY Council is considering legislation to regulate the City's booming pedicab industry. City Council Introduction 75 would establish safety and insurance guidelines for pedicab owners and operators. The proposed leg-

islation would require pedicab owners and operators to submit to vehicle inspections every four months and to obtain a license, license plate and limited liability insurance. It is crucial that this bill not be used as a stepping-stone towards non-commercial



PAUL S. WHITE

bicycle licensing, which would be a barrier to cycling, especially for low-income bicyclists, or other measures that would discourage cycling and thus erode the proven safety benefits of increased ridership. The City Council should continue to work with the Pedicab Owners Association, the Pedicab Operators Association and advocates to create fair legislation that will promote the continued use of pedicabs as an alternative to taxis and livery cars.

TakeAction!

Contact your City Council member and ask them to support healthy, efficient and environmentally sustainable for-hire transportation options. Visit nyccouncil.info/ constituent to contact your Council member. □

**STREET
ACTIVIST**

T.A.'s Street Activist Network puts public pressure on key officials to improve walking and bicycling. Take five minutes of action to help win safer, saner streets and parks. Join the Network at transalt.org/takeaction/streetactivistnetwork.