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WILLIAMSBURG WALKS DOUBLES FOOT TRAFFIC ON BEDFORD AVENUE

Elected officials to open this week's pedestrian event

Who/What: Borough President Marty Markowitz, Assembly Member Joseph Lentol, Council Member Diana Reyna, Transportation Alternatives, business owners and community leaders kicking-off Williamsburg Walks with a saunter down Bedford Avenue

Where: Bedford Avenue and North 3rd Street, Williamsburg, Brooklyn

When: Saturday, July 26th, 12 noon

Williamsburg Walks, Bedford Avenue's pedestrian street experiment, is giving North Brooklynites some much-needed room to breathe. Last week witnessed the first of four Saturday events converting Bedford Avenue into a pedestrian street, and it proved an incredible success. Foot traffic on Bedford Avenue was 96% higher than the average Saturday, based on pedestrian counts. The number of children and seniors using the street also increased. And because so much more space was available for walking and sitting, the street felt open and uncongested.

Not a street festival or street fair, Williamsburg Walks is an experimental pedestrian street intended to promote the enjoyment of Northside Brooklyn by encouraging the community to come together to shop, stroll and socialize in an area unobstructed by traffic.

"There is so much happening in Williamsburg—and the residents are so dynamic, mere sidewalks can't contain them! This event is a welcome chance for walkers and cyclists to enjoy a quiet day without exhaust and automobile noise on one of Brooklyn's most colorful and thriving thoroughfares," says Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz.

"This is a chance for fast-paced New Yorkers to slow down and enjoy a leisurely walk along Bedford Avenue, the busiest street on the North Side," says Assembly Member Joseph R. Lentol. "It's hard to imagine Bedford without any car traffic, but I think it is good to shake up the status quo once in a while and look at life from a different perspective. Williamsburg Walks will give the community a chance to do just that."

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“This is a great opportunity to find out what happens when we free up street space for pedestrians. I am excited, and I want to encourage community members to come out and take advantage,” says Council Member Reyna, “I hope we can build on this experiment to create more safe spaces like this in our community into the future.”

“Bedford Avenue doesn’t need street vendors or big stages to be vibrant. We just need room to breathe, and Williamsburg Walks is giving us exactly that,” says Connie Colvin of billburg.com, one of the event’s organizers.

“Williamsburg Walks is relieving Bedford Avenue’s notoriously cramped sidewalks,” says Paul Steely White, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives. “This is one of the City’s great walking streets, and its pedestrians are finally getting their share of street space.”

“NAG is enthusiastically supporting Williamsburg Walks as a strategy to expand the amount of space available for leisure and recreation in North Brooklyn, and we look forward to collaborating with event organizers, the Dept. of Transportation, our elected officials, local residents and businesses throughout the neighborhood to continue make this event work well for everyone on and off Bedford Avenue,” says Michael Freedman-Schnapp, Co-Chair of Neighbors Allied for Good Growth (NAG).

Williamsburg Walks is a celebration of the Williamsburg community, centered around a pedestrian-only Bedford Avenue, occurring four Saturdays, from July 19th to August 9th, noon to 7pm.

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