

Transportation ALTERNATIVES

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Your Advocate for Bicycling, Walking and Sensible Transportation

Transportation Alternatives Releases the First Ever NYC Stroller Report Card 2005

The results (1029 responses) are in for the first ever *New York City Stroller Report Card*. Transportation Alternatives (T.A.) at the request of several stroller moms and dads surveyed hundreds of parents and child caregivers over a three-month period at the end of summer 2005; asking them to describe what it is like to push a stroller around the sidewalks and streets throughout the City of New York. As part of the NYC Streets Renaissance Campaign, this report is a small part of redefining mobility; creating more room for people to walk safely and comfortably and to enhance both the functionality and aesthetics of our streets. T.A. has won sidewalk expansions and re-landscaping throughout the City over the past 30 years, making it easier and more desirable for parents to raise children here. But the work is not done. Using the results of this study, T.A. hopes to continue to raise the bar for safety and access for all New Yorkers.

Methodology:

From August through October, Transportation Alternatives invited parents and child caregivers to participate in the first annual stroller report card survey. T.A. representatives talked with parents pushing strollers in parks and on sidewalks, posted the survey on several parents associations' list-serves, media outlets such as UrbanBaby.com and the Transportation Alternatives E-bulletin and website. Respondents were asked to describe walking around their neighborhoods with a stroller, with a child (or children) under 10 years old without a stroller and without a stroller or child (children) under 10 years old. In addition, respondents were asked how often, if ever, they avoided streets that were too difficult to navigate while walking with a stroller, with a child (or children) under 10 without a stroller and without a stroller or child and if they would walk for longer distances if it were easier to get around with a stroller. The last part of the survey asked participants to choose their top three problems getting around with a stroller and crossing the street with a stroller along with the top three improvements that would make walking around with a stroller easier.

Findings:

Transportation Alternatives confirmed that while most people found sidewalk and street conditions reasonable, there are many areas of concern and several street and sidewalk conditions that can be improved. When comparing ease of walking with a stroller to ease of walking without a stroller, data indicates that nearly twice as many people (73 %) found it easier to get around without a stroller than with a stroller (36 %). Nearly 20 % of participants described walking around their neighborhoods as difficult or very difficult with a stroller and nearly 30 % described it difficult or very difficult to walk around their neighborhood with a child (or children) under 10 years old. 7 % found it difficult to get around without a stroller or child under 10.

While an incredible 50 % of respondents indicated that they occasionally avoid streets because they are too difficult to navigate without a stroller or child under 10 years old, that number increases to 86 % when walking with a stroller, with nearly 20% of parents avoiding streets often or always. Over 60 % of the respondents said they would be more likely or definitely would walk for longer distances if it were easier to get around.

Parents and caregivers ranked dangerous turning drivers as the number one problem encountered crossing the street with a stroller and uneven/rough pavement on sidewalks or streets as the number one problem encountered getting around the neighborhood with a stroller.

Respondents ranked safer street crossings, more considerate drivers and fewer impediments on the sidewalks as the top three improvements that would make walking around with a stroller easier.

Analyzing the data according to borough (542 Manhattan, 285 Brooklyn and 53 Queens) reveals differences in what parents consider problem areas. Respondents in Manhattan (64 %) and Queens (66 %) rated dangerous turning drivers as one of the top problems crossing the street with a stroller, while Brooklyn rated uneven or rough pavement as their biggest problem (63 %).

Queens respondents rated problems that caused difficulty crossing the street higher than their counterparts: dangerous turning drivers, difficulty crossing the street, not enough time to cross the street and no place to wait in the middle of a crossing.

Manhattan respondents rated problems that affected their walking experience higher than Brooklyn and Queens: crowded sidewalks, obstacles on sidewalk, even rude pedestrians.

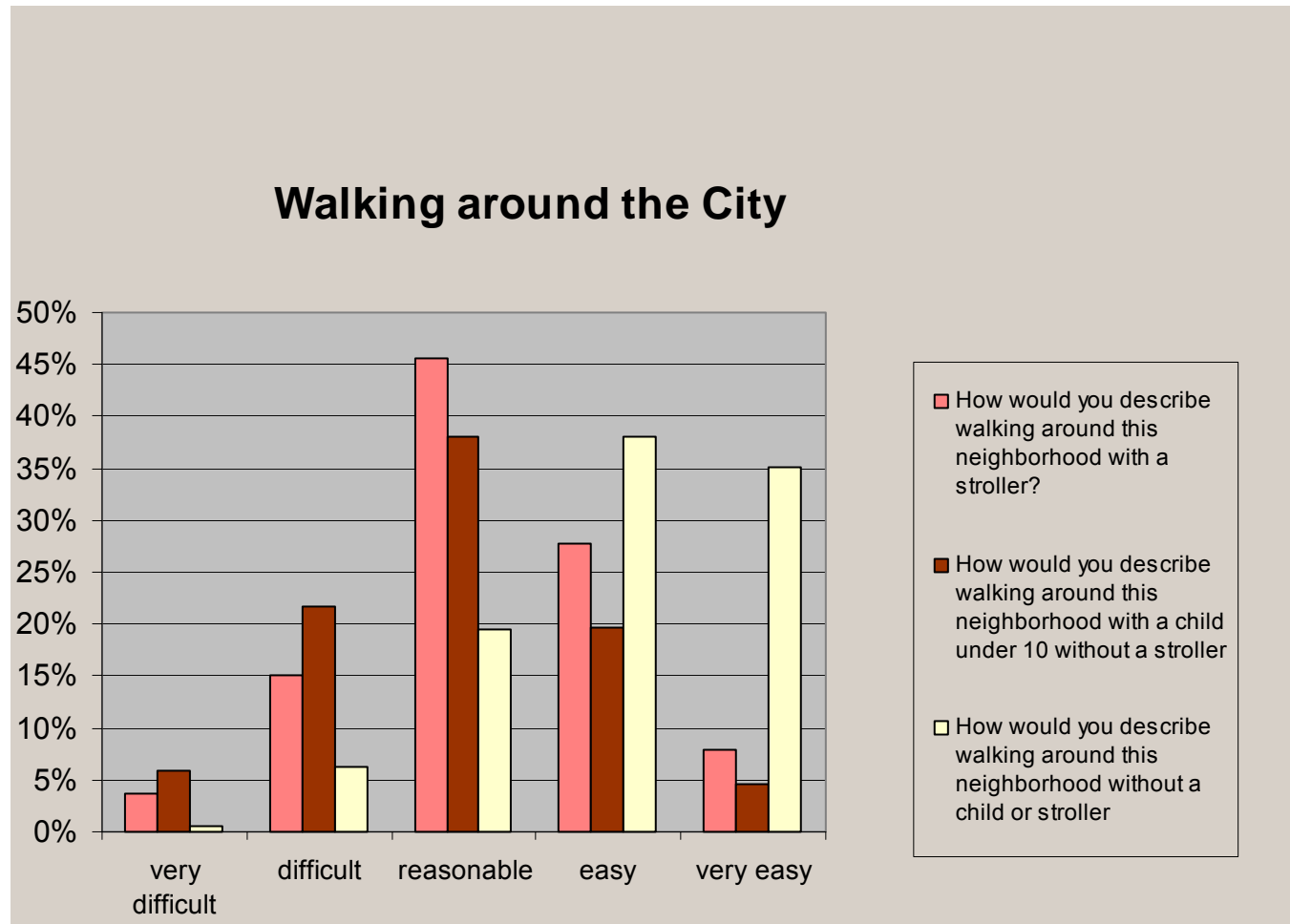
Brooklyn parents rated physical sidewalk problems higher than the other two boroughs: uneven or rough pavement and missing curb ramps.

Summary:

While most respondents found navigating the sidewalk with a stroller reasonable, the majority identified dangerous drivers as a major concern in their neighborhood. This problem, along with several others, discourages many parents from walking as far as they would like and in many cases forces them to avoid streets that they would otherwise use. Increasing crossing time, sidewalk space, sidewalk ramps and implementing traffic calming measures: narrowing driving lanes and installing medians are some ways to increase safety and access on sidewalks and streets throughout New York City. Making these commonsense improvements and redesigning streets so that drivers are forced to slow down while making turns can provide a safer more enjoyable experience not only for people pushing strollers but for all New Yorkers.

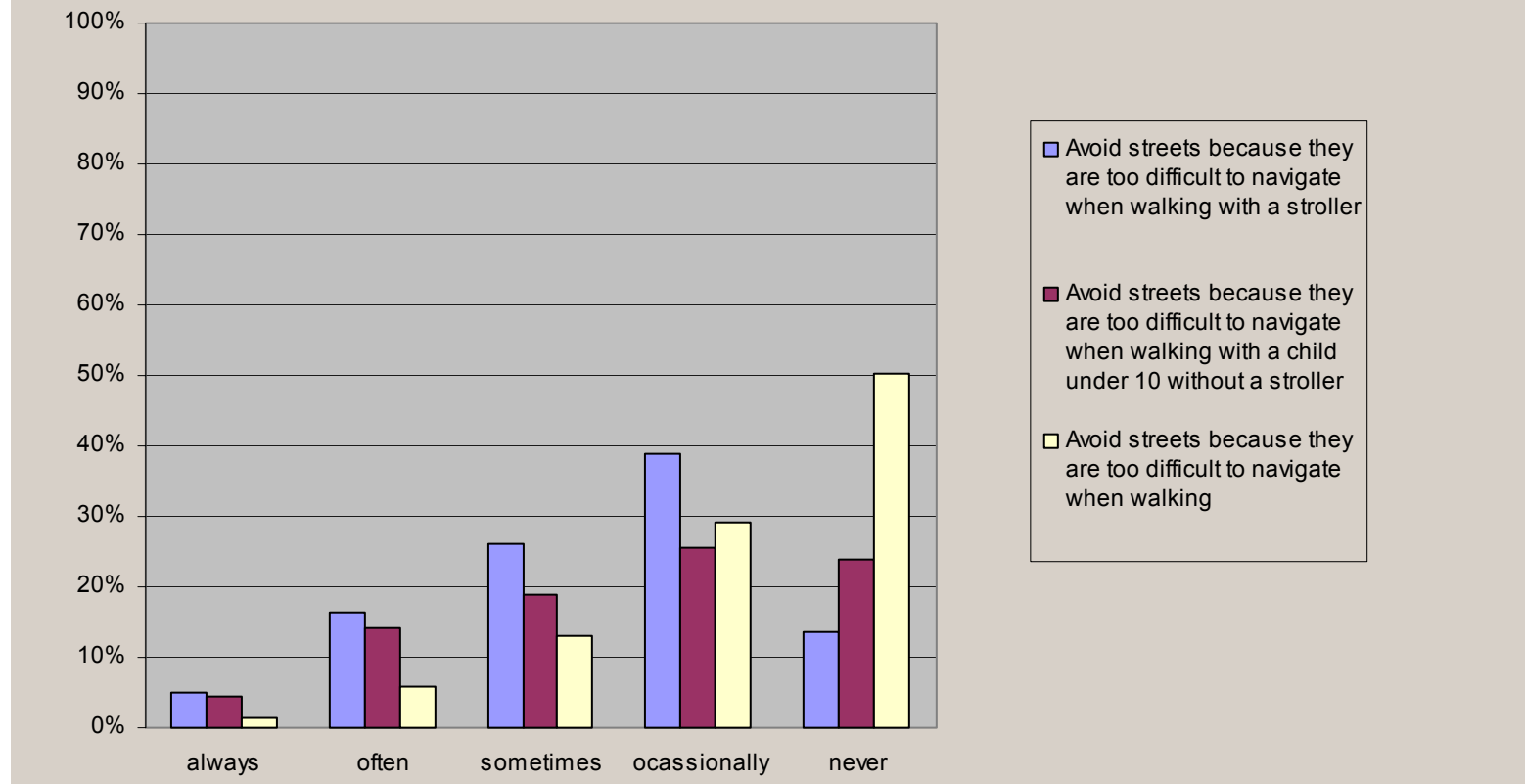
An area to be further explored is the small sample size from Queens and low level of responses from Staten Island and the Bronx in the survey results. Initial speculation leads one to believe there is a correlation between increased rates of driving and less walking within neighborhoods. There is no way to know whether parents and caregivers are not walking on sidewalks or crossing streets because they are driving to and from their destinations or actually taking less trips in general and opting to remain indoors with their children. We hope to shed some light on this later in the year with the release of the second generation Appleyard Study results.

All Respondents:



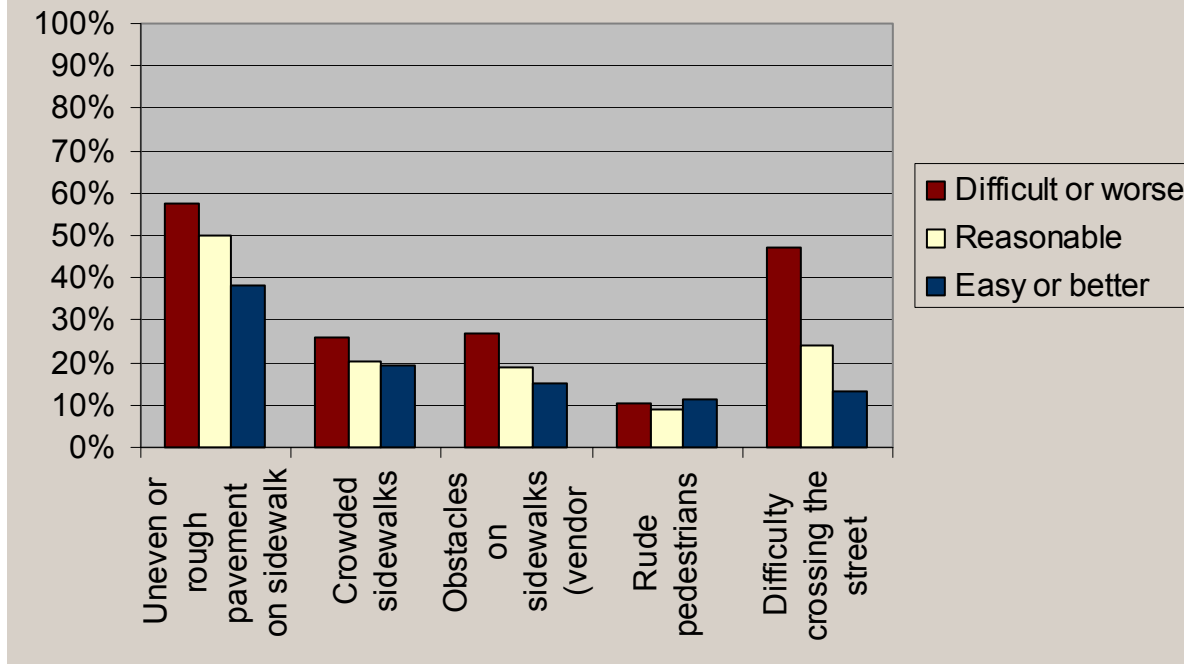
- Parents described ease of maneuverability **with strollers and/or with a child or children under 10** reasonable but reported that without a stroller or child maneuverability in these same areas was much easier.

Frequency of Street Avoidance



- **86 % of respondents reported having avoided a street because they are too difficult to navigate when walking with a stroller at least occasionally.**
- Nearly 50 % have avoided streets because they are too difficult to navigate walking without a stroller or child under 10 years old.

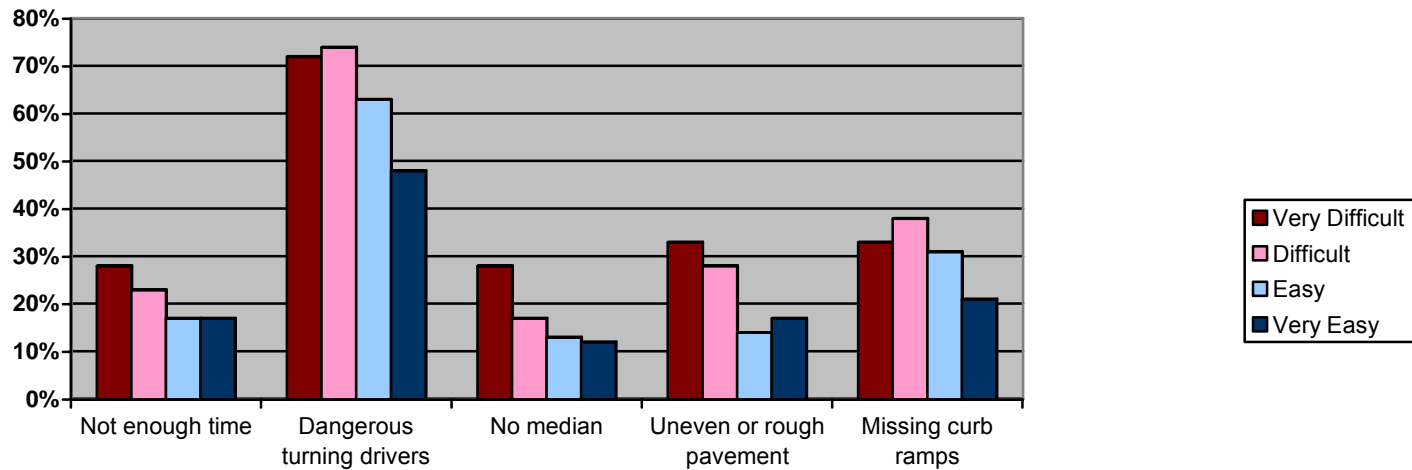
Impediments to Maneuverability



- Uneven or rough pavement and difficulty crossing the street were ranked the 1st and 2nd biggest problems getting around with a stroller by respondents who described walking around their neighborhoods as reasonable, difficult or very difficult.
- Uneven or rough pavement and crowded sidewalks were ranked the 1st and 2nd biggest problems getting around with a stroller by respondents who described walking around their neighborhoods as easy or very easy.
- All respondents ranked rude pedestrians at the bottom of the list.

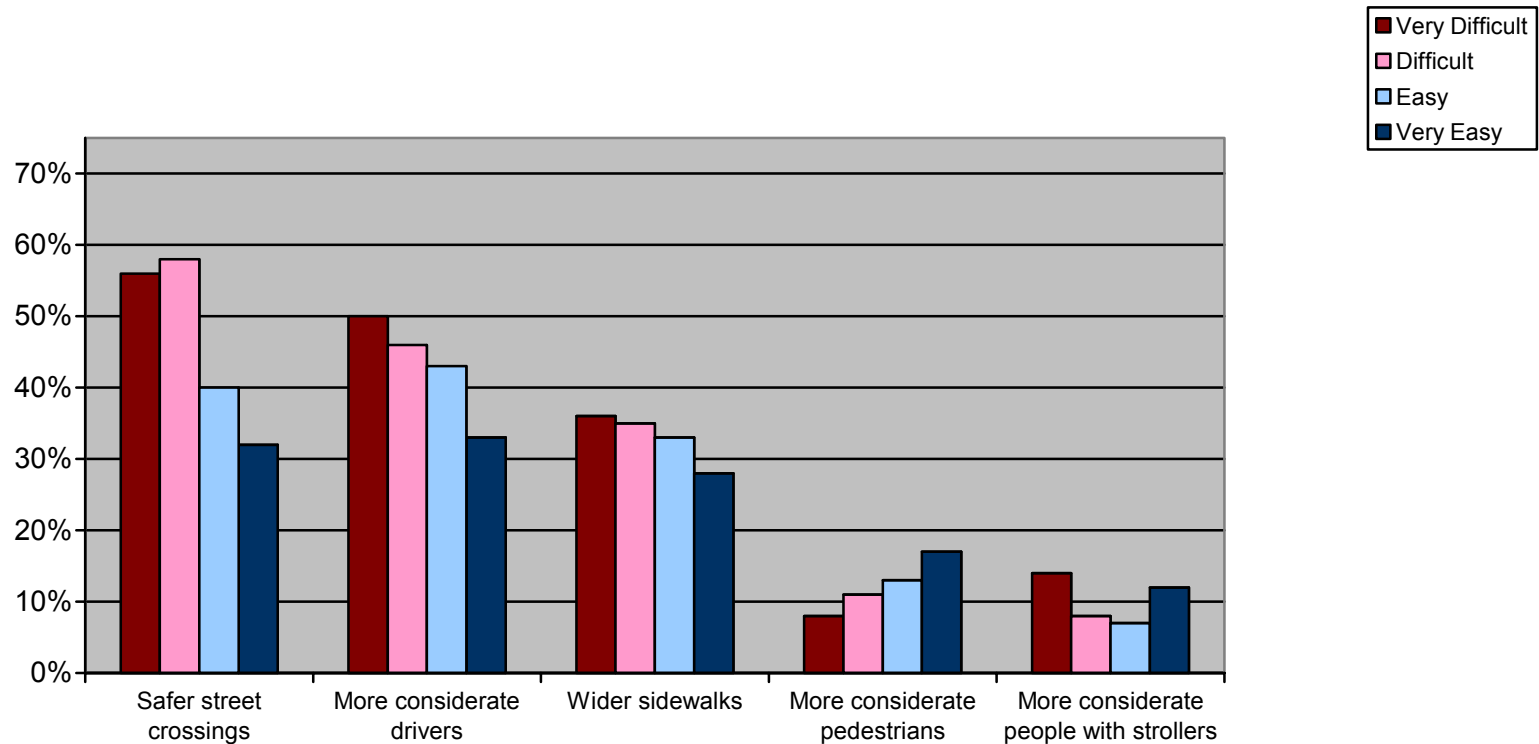
Respondents that found it very difficult, difficult, easy and very easy to get around with a stroller in their neighborhood:

Top Rated Problems Navigating Neighborhoods with a stroller



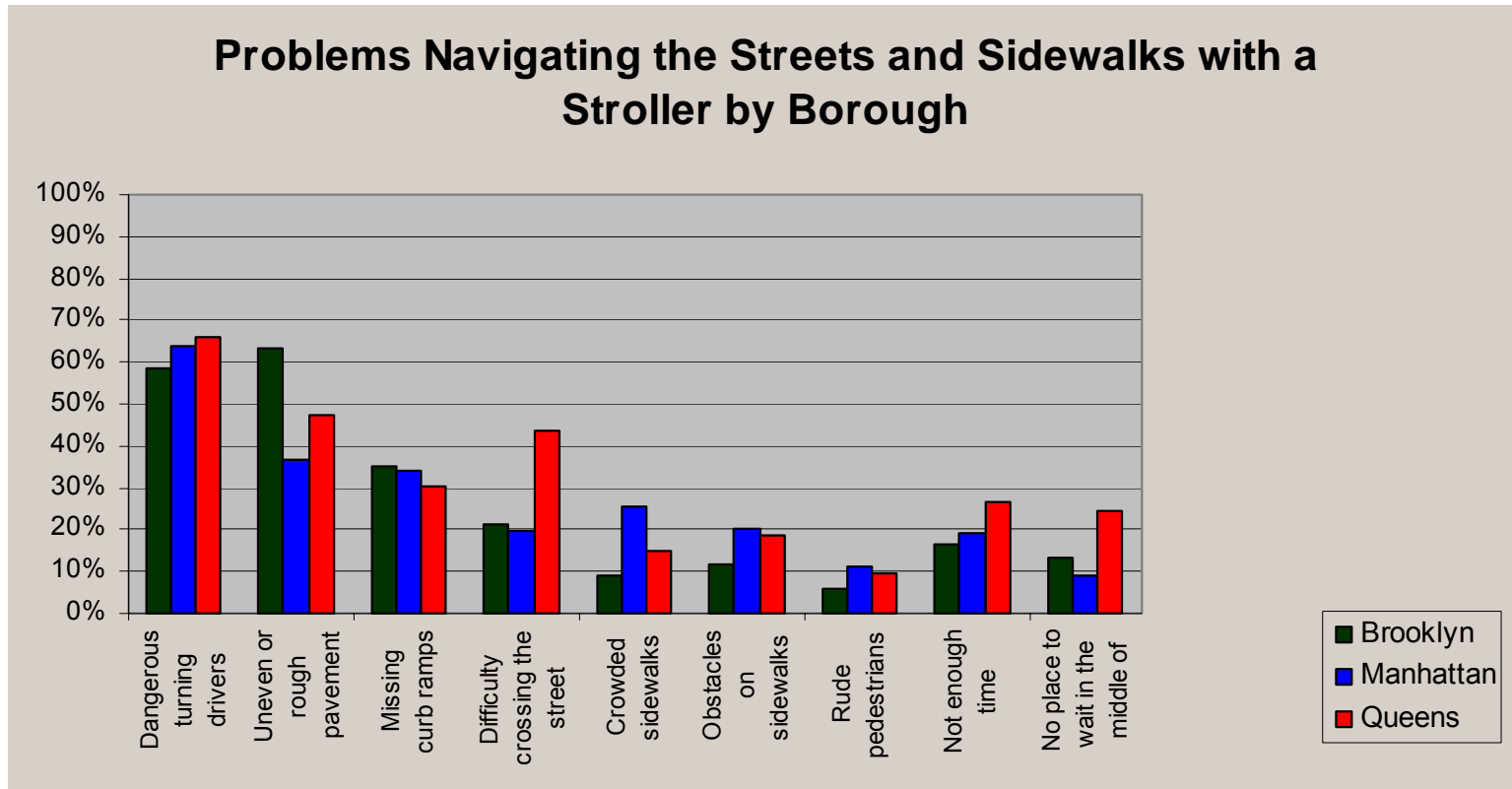
- All respondents overwhelmingly rated dangerous turning drivers the number one problem crossing the street.
- Respondents that described walking around with a stroller in their neighborhood as very difficult were split equally among the remaining problems, 33 % uneven or rough pavement, 33 % missing curb ramps, 28 % not enough time to cross the street and 28% no median to wait in between crossing.

Top Rated Improvements that Would Make it Easier to Navigate with a Stroller



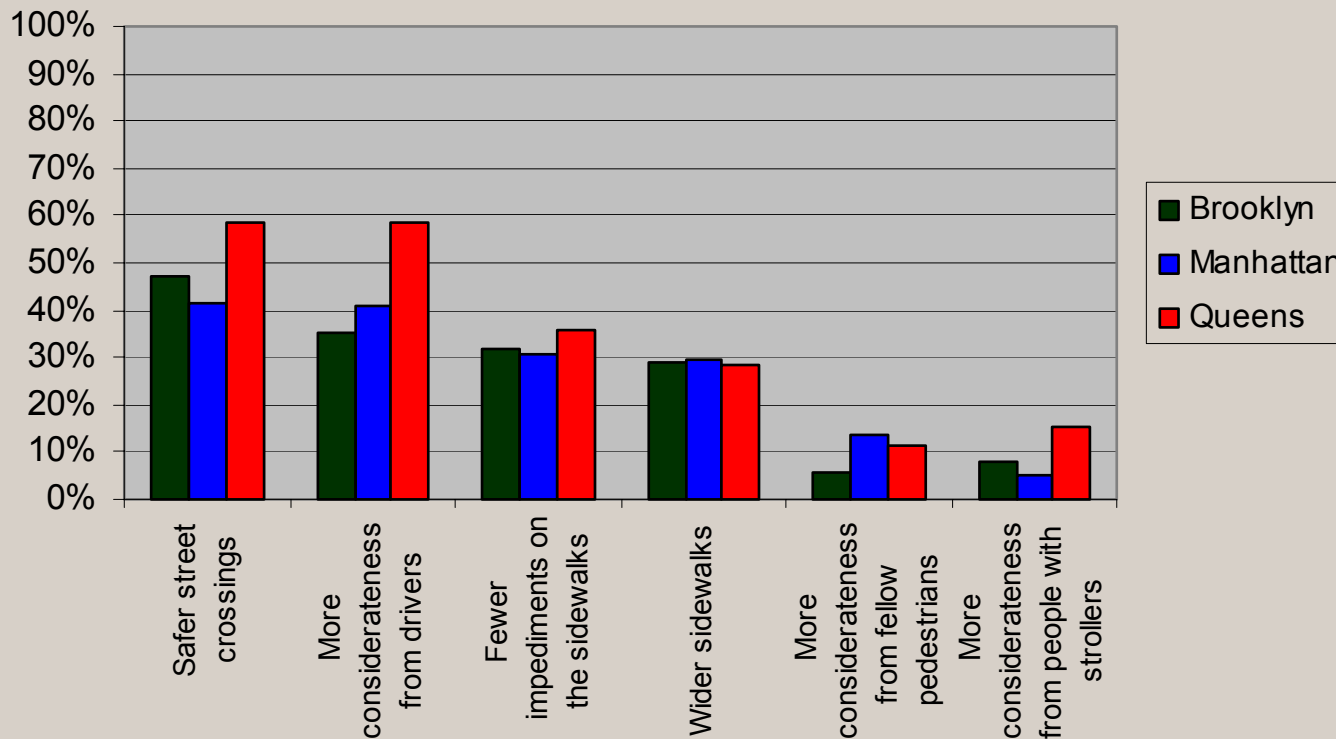
- Parents and child caregivers that found maneuvering very difficult and difficult rated improvement that would make maneuvering with a stroller safer from car drivers higher than those that found it easy or very easy.
- Respondents that found maneuverability with a stroller very easy rated more considerate pedestrians higher than other categories.

Respondents from Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens:



- In all three boroughs dangerous turning drivers are rated the biggest concern, while rude pedestrians the least worrisome.
- There are strong differences by borough with Manhattan finding uneven or rough pavement less of a problem than Brooklyn or Queens.
- Queens also rated difficulty crossing the street much higher than the other two boroughs.

Top Improvements to Make Navigating the Streets and Sidewalks in Neighborhoods Easier



- There was no significant difference in how the three boroughs ranked fewer impediments or wider sidewalks.
- However, it ought to be noted again that Queens parents and child caregivers feel safety, as it relates to considerateness from car drivers, is more important.