

Mayor Adams, Commissioner Rodriguez Announce More Than 100 Safe Street Redesign Projects to be Completed this Year, Majority in Underserved Communities

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Redesign Projects Will Help Improve Safety Around Schools, With Focus on Under-Resourced Neighborhoods

Partnership With Northern Manhattan High School Students Resulted in Local Student-Led Redesign With Protected Bike Lanes, Other Traffic-Calming Measures

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez today announced that the city is on track to complete more than 100 safe street redesigns in 2022, with most projects located in historically underserved communities and many near schools. One of the projects — on Amsterdam and Saint Nicholas Avenues between West 188th Street and Fort George Avenue — was led by Northern Manhattan high school students participating in the ‘I Challenge Myself’ afterschool program, in collaboration with DOT. Once an area of speeding and reckless driving, the students worked with DOT to develop a redesign of the street with traffic-calming measures, including two-way protected bike lanes, pedestrian islands, speed cushions, and curb extensions to reduce speeding and improve pedestrian and cyclist safety.

“We will never compromise the safety of our students and young people, and equity will always be at the core of our work to protect them,” said **Mayor Adams**. “We are investing over \$900 million in street safety and redesigning 1,000 intersections because every New Yorker should be able to travel across this city without fearing for their life. We have focused relentlessly on the most dangerous intersections and historically

underserved neighborhoods, and we will continue to move that work forward as quickly as possible.”

“As a former schoolteacher, I know we have much to learn from our students — and so I am grateful for one project that puts many of their brilliant ideas into motion,” said **DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez**. “Under the administration of Mayor Eric Adams, we have committed to improving school traffic safety — especially in communities that have been historically forgotten. From speed cameras to street redesigns like the ones we are unveiling today, DOT is using every tool we have to ensure all students are protected from speeding and reckless drivers. We are proud to have worked closely with the ‘I Challenge Myself’ students and staff, as well as the administrations of the nearby schools, to improve traffic safety in their community. The students were instrumental in crafting the street improvement project’s proposal and in securing Community Board 12’s support of the project. We will continue to work with community partners throughout the five boroughs to ensure we’re reducing the number of New Yorkers lost to traffic violence.”

“Our students know their communities best — down to how to stay safe on their way to and from school,” said **New York City Department of Education Chancellor David C. Banks**. “It’s vital that we invest in projects that equitably address street traffic safety, and student voice is the most powerful and essential tool we have at our disposal in this work. I am so proud to see our students driving positive change in their communities working in partnership with DOT to create a safer future with fewer incidents of traffic violence for us all.”



A map of the street improvement project led by local high school students with DOT on Amsterdam and Saint Nicholas Avenues between West 188th Street and Fort George Avenue.

Credit: New York City Department of Transportation

DOT worked closely with students from the 'I Challenge Myself' afterschool program throughout the process, meeting for a series of field and design workshops to study the area, collect data, and develop a traffic safety proposal for the street. Their research found frequent speeding and reckless driving along Amsterdam Avenue, which the redesign aims to address. The students presented to Manhattan Community Board 12, helping win the unanimous support of the board's transportation committee.

The Amsterdam Avenue project will deliver much-needed traffic safety improvement measures to seven schools located near the corridor: the College Academy, the Equity Project Charter, High School for Health Careers and Sciences, High School for Law and Public Service, High School for Media and Communications, P.S. 138, and P.S. 189.

Along with the improvements on Amsterdam Avenue, the city is slated to complete dozens of other street improvement projects in underserved communities this year. The

city is actively working to improve the safety of streets around schools, especially those located in historically under-resourced communities throughout the five boroughs.

Other street safety improvement projects near schools include:

- Bronx: East 165th and 167th Streets between Prospect Avenue and Simpson Street
- Bronx: Boone Avenue between West Farms Road and Freeman Street
- Bronx: East 158th Street and Cauldwell Avenue
- Brooklyn: Chauncey Street and Malcolm X Boulevard
- Brooklyn: Linden Boulevard and Atkins Avenue
- Queens: Rockaway Boulevard between Sutphin Boulevard and Farmers Boulevard
- Queens: 34th Avenue (Open Street) from 69th Street to Junction Boulevard
- Staten Island: Martha Street and Howard Avenue
- Staten Island: Elson Court and Jules Drive

“Every student in New York City deserves access to safe and direct school routes,” said **U.S. Representative Adriano Espaillat**. “I commend Commissioner Rodriguez and the New York City Department of Transportation for working in collaboration with the ‘I Challenge Myself’ afterschool program and Northern Manhattan high school students to launch this initiative to help prioritize street safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Together, we can each make a difference to build safer roadways and pathways for our students, residents, and entire communities.”

“Coming off the deadliest year for traffic violence since 2013, it’s of the utmost importance that we redesign streets across New York City, especially around schools, to make them safer for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists, and I’m grateful to Commissioner Rodriguez for making this a priority,” said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “Using tools like pedestrian and bus boarding islands, hardened bike lanes, and painted curb extensions to improve visibility will bring us closer to Vision Zero.”

“The safe street redesigns being implemented in 2022 will go a long way toward protecting our city’s schoolchildren and all those who use our city’s streets,” said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** “Importantly, these redesigns will benefit neighborhoods that have long suffered from chronic underinvestment in traffic safety infrastructure. Everyone, no matter where they live or what their socioeconomic status is, is entitled to both feel and be safe when getting around our city. These street redesigns do a great deal help achieve that.”

“I congratulate the young people of this district who labored together to provide sensible solutions to street safety,” said **New York State Senator Robert Jackson.** “Their approach, creativity, and investment in our community is to be emulated. I look forward to supporting this initiative based on data, community engagement, and young voices.”

“Safe streets have been crucial in protecting the safety of our pedestrians. With summer break approaching, it’s clear that we need to find solutions that would protect our city’s youth,” said **New York State Assemblymember Kenny Burgos.** “I commend Commissioner Rodriguez for implementing these programs, which will ensure that our students can enjoy summer in the safest possible manner.”

“Speeding vehicles will continue to wreak havoc on our streets without long-term solutions,” said **New York City Councilmember Shaun Abreu.** “Our neighborhood has faced historic underinvestment, through a piecemeal approach to traffic safety, and it has cost lives. Projects like this redevelopment of Amsterdam Avenue, which will slow down vehicles and protect pedestrians and cyclists, are critical long-term steps to creating safer communities. Focusing this redevelopment around schools will help ensure that our kids can have a safe and meaningful educational experience. If kids can’t even get to and from school without the risk of being hit by a speeding car, how can we expect them to thrive at school?”

“Pedestrian safety is one of the most important issues facing uptown. Far too many of our streets are unsafe and put residents at risk, especially our most vulnerable neighbors,” said **New York City Councilmember Carmen De La Rosa.** “I applaud the New York City Department of Transportation, the students at the ‘I Challenge Myself’ afterschool program at George Washington Educational Campus, and Community Board 12 for their visionary leadership in addressing this critical issue facing Northern Manhattan residents and underserved communities across the city. I look forward to working with the partners who developed the Amsterdam Avenue street improvement

project and all residents in Northern Manhattan to reduce speeding and improve pedestrian and cyclist safety.”

“We must continue to make our streets safer for people and upgrade infrastructure to protect pedestrians across our city. With the implementation of the Amsterdam Avenue redesign, the future of Harlem is not only brighter, but safer,” said **New York City Councilmember Shekar Krishnan**. “As the Councilmember serving Jackson Heights, home to 34th Avenue Open Streets — the model of the Open Streets program in New York City, directly serving one of the most diverse districts — we support Commissioner Rodriguez, the Department of Transportation, and the students at George Washington Educational Campus in their efforts to take Amsterdam Avenue into the future.”

“Our cycling participants at the George Washington Educational Campus witness reckless driving on Amsterdam Avenue behind their school on a daily basis. Working with DOT’s school safety team this past fall allowed students to learn about street design to address reckless driving and to increase safety,” said **Ana Reyes, founder and executive director, ‘I Challenge Myself.’** “‘I Challenge Myself’ is thrilled to continue to work with DOT to provide our students opportunities to take service learning to another level by working on authentic street projects that impact an entire community. Our students have been riding on the new bike lanes and see the reduction in speeding thanks to the islands that have been added. The pride they feel knowing that they were involved in the street’s design will stay within forever.”

“Our city leaders must do everything in their power to keep our students safe. School pickup and drop-off should not be dangerous for parents and children,” said **Kate Brockwehl, member, Families for Safe Streets**. “Whether it’s closing streets outside schools to cars or building protected bike routes to schools, New York City must protect our students by investing in proven safe streets solutions.”

“Every child deserves safe streets to schools, and the student-led redesign of Amsterdam Avenue is a positive start for Upper Manhattan,” said **D’Shandi Coombs, schools organizer, Transportation Alternatives**. “New York City must invest in safety improvements that keep students safe, no matter how they get to school. Most importantly, this must include creating many more car-free school streets to completely remove the threat of traffic violence near schools. School streets are a key way that we will achieve NYC 25x25 and reach Vision Zero and we look forward to working with the Adams administration and Commissioner Rodriguez on these initiatives.”

“The new protected bike lanes will make Highbridge Park even more appealing as a destination for cyclists,” said **Christopher Trombley, trail management director, New York City Mountain Bike Association**. “Safer streets will benefit all members of the Washington Heights community, especially students, parents, cyclists, and pedestrians who are enjoying the natural beauty of Highbridge Park.”

“As long-standing members of the Washington Heights community, it has been our privilege to collaborate with the Department of Transportation on addressing the noise and street safety issues that face our community,” said **Loyola Princivil-Barnett, chief operating officer, MJHS Centers for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care**. “This project represents a giant step forward toward improving quality of life and safety for those who live, go to school, and work in Washington Heights — this includes our extremely vulnerable residents, visiting family members and staff at Isabella Center. We extend our thanks to the Department of Transportation for taking action that will lead to quieter, safer streets for our community members.”