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A RECOVERY FOR ALL OF US: MAYOR DE BLASIO, DOT ANNOUNCE NEW APPLICATION FOR 2021 EXPANSION OF OPEN STREETS

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced that the Department of Transportation (DOT) has released the 2021 application for New York City’s nation-leading Open Streets program, which allows communities to dedicate roadway space to pedestrians and cyclists. Interested businesses and community partners can learn more and apply now at www.nyc.gov/openstreets.

“Last year, New York City seized an unprecedented crisis to totally reimagine our city streets. Open Streets was a runaway success – and now, I’m proud to deliver the framework we need to make it permanent,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “With better signage, new barriers, and more support for community partners, this program will be sustainable for the long term – and better position New York City to break free of car culture and build a recovery for all of us.”

DOT will work with community partners to develop operational plans for multiple uses, including outdoor dining and programming, while maintaining loading, deliveries, and emergency access.

“Under Mayor de Blasio’s leadership and in partnership with the Council and other City agencies, DOT launched multiple new programs to reimagine our streets in response to the pandemic, creating the nation’s largest Open Streets program, with outdoor dining corridors, play streets and open-air learning spaces,” said **DOT Commissioner Hank Gutman**. “Open Streets in communities across the five boroughs provided a true bright spot in a difficult year, and we are confident this new application will help us bring in more partners to make the initiative even better as the city continues to recover in 2021.”

This application will be open for groups interested in managing either of two distinct types of Open Streets:

- Temporary Limited Local Access – street designated for pedestrian and cyclist use, during a specified set of hours and days each week, where local vehicle access for parking and loading is permitted, and drivers are advised to drive 5 MPH.
- Temporary Full Closure – temporarily closed to vehicles for pedestrian and cyclist use, to support local businesses, and for community programming (formerly including [Open Streets: Restaurants](#)).

The Open Streets program will now replace DOT's Weekend Walks and Seasonal Streets programs. Groups of three or more eligible businesses along a corridor may also submit an application for Open Streets, but must identify one business entity to apply for and represent the group. Both new and returning partners must apply to manage an Open Street in their communities.

Open Streets applicants submitting a proposal agree to help manage all aspects of the program, which may include but are not limited to the following:

- Managing street closure barricades (setup, oversight, breakdown)
- Coordinating operations and any programming executed on Open Streets
- Regularly notifying local stakeholders and the community about hours and guidelines using social media, digital outreach, and print media outlets, and/or other forms of communication
- Facilitating Open Streets certification for all restaurants and retail/service establishments included in the temporary full street closure, and coordinating operations and any programming executed on Open Streets.

"I'm glad to see Open Streets returning in an expanded form this year. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how essential open space in our city is to so many New Yorkers. This program proved to be popular with residents and businesses alike in the neighborhoods that applied for Open Streets last year, and we must deepen our commitment to equity this year, ensuring all communities who want to can participate. The City also must dedicate real resources to the program to ensure it is sustainable, and doesn't solely rely on volunteers. I thank the Administration for recognizing the vital importance of this initiative, especially as we continue to chart an economic recovery from this pandemic," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

"It's encouraging to see DOT looking to expand the successful Open Streets program," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "As detailed in my recently-released report "The Future of Open Streets," DOT should also work to improve and refine its Open Streets program with more connected Open Streets, street redesigns in consultation with local communities, and greater funding for critical local partners. I look forward to seeing even more vibrant streets across Manhattan this year."

"The City's Open Streets Program has become not only an extraordinary way to reimagine our streets and make them more accessible but also a lifeline for our cyclists, pedestrians, families and businesses. With the pandemic interrupting our normal way of life, Open Streets became salvations for restaurants and changed the way we dine here in New York City. Open Streets have truly revitalized boulevards, avenues and more across Queens, and I look forward to seeing our streets enjoyed again this year," said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.**

"The Open Streets program has allowed so many of our restaurants to keep their doors open and our communities safer. As we rebuild our economy and continue to fight back against this virus, I am thrilled even more of our small businesses will be able to take advantage of this program," said **State Sen. Jessica Ramos**.

“The Open Streets initiative played a significant role in decreasing the spread of the virus by giving New Yorkers additional space to safely enjoy the outdoors. We must continue expanding this initiative across the city and explore the possibility of making some of these open streets permanent pedestrian plazas,” said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chairman of the Transportation Committee**. “We must continue exploring innovative ways to reclaim our streets and move towards becoming the most pedestrian and cyclist’s friendly city in the Country. I will continue working alongside Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson, my colleagues at the Council, and the advocates to ensure we continue expanding street space for cyclists and pedestrians.”

"I want to thank Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Gutman for this important commitment today to support the operation of Open Streets in 2021. When I first introduced legislation in the City Council in April of last year to launch an emergency Open Streets program, it was at the height of the pandemic when it was clear that we needed more space for socially-distanced recreation. Since then, we've seen volunteer-led Open Street efforts successfully activate and transform corridors like Avenue B in Manhattan, 34th Avenue in Queens, and Vanderbilt Avenue and Berry Street in Brooklyn into important community spaces for all New Yorkers. Now as the program moves ahead, I look forward to the Mayor working with my office to ensure the 2021 program prioritizes equity and community investment, and that we work to codify an expanded Open Streets program so these streets become a permanent part of our City's fabric well beyond 2021," said **Council Member Carlina Rivera**.

“Open Streets has given us the open space we sorely lacked in Jackson Heights, Queens, a community among those with the least amount of park space. We have exchanged pollution, noise and injuries for fresh air, tranquility, and safety, and have been thoroughly transformed by a permanent 34 Avenue Open Street. We are grateful to the DOT and the Mayor for making Open Streets a permanent part of New York City,” said **The 34th Ave Open Streets Coalition**.

"NYC's Open Streets program has transformed the way New Yorkers engage and build community," said **Michael Brady, CEO of Third Avenue Business Improvement District located in the South Bronx**. "From dining, to shopping and culture, Open Streets is now a community tool for recovery and must be earnestly supported by the administration and private sector."

“It is well documented that the Open Streets such as the one on Doyers and Pell Streets in Chinatown has brought fun and joy to so many that the program should be extended permanently,” said **Wellington Chen, Executive Director, Chinatown BID/Partnership**.

"We are very happy to work with the Department of Transportation's Open Streets Program for the second year in a row. It was just last April where the New Dorp Lane District and Council Member Steven Matteo were discussing ways to safely eat while supporting our merchants. New Dorp Lane is known as the borough's restaurant row and the program has allowed for sidewalk, curbside and street dining. We thank all of the participating restaurants and patrons for their support. Hope to see you out on the Lane,” said **Niles French, New Dorp BID Director and SIEDC Vice President of Projects**.

“Last year, the Open Street on Vanderbilt Avenue was a lifeline to twenty-two restaurants hard hit by COVID-19 restrictions,” said **Gib Veconi, chair of the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council**. “The enthusiastic embrace of the program by our community has encouraged us to bring it back this year with a goal of making the Open Street a permanent part of life in this neighborhood.”

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