



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** November 22, 2022  
**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**MAYOR ADAMS UNVEILS SWEEPING PLAN FOR HOLIDAY SEASON CAR-FREE  
OPEN STREETS IN MIDTOWN MANHATTAN, HIGHLIGHTS CAMPAIGNS TO  
SHOP LOCAL**

*Plan Includes NYC's Largest-Ever Holiday Season-Specific Open Street, With Fifth Avenue  
Going Car-Free for First Time in Half-Century*

*Adams Administration Bringing Back Popular Open Streets Around Rockefeller Center*

*Administration Launches Two Campaigns Encouraging New Yorkers and Visitors to Support  
Local Small Businesses*

**NEW YORK** – With the 2022 holiday season approaching, New York City Mayor Eric Adams today unveiled a sweeping plan to cement Midtown Manhattan as the premiere international holiday destination by opening 11 city blocks to pedestrians in December — the city’s largest-ever holiday season-specific Open Street. As part of the plan, the Adams administration is launching two marketing campaigns encouraging New Yorkers and visitors to shop at local small businesses in Midtown and across the city. Through a partnership between the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), New York City Police Department (NYPD), and the Fifth Avenue Association, the city will — for the first time in half a century — transform Fifth Avenue, from 48<sup>th</sup> Street to 57<sup>th</sup> Street, into an Open Street on three Sundays in December, while bringing back the overwhelmingly popular pedestrianized area around Rockefeller Center and Radio City Music Hall throughout the holiday season.

This dramatic expansion of public space in one of the busiest neighborhoods in the world at this time of year will significantly ease crowding, facilitating access to the iconic holiday window displays and creating a more pleasant holiday environment for New Yorkers and visitors, while enhancing public safety for all. A [groundbreaking study](#) released last month by DOT, and conducted in collaboration with Bloomberg Associates, found that hospitality industry businesses on Open Streets outperformed those on nearby non-Open Streets over the first 18 months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Every year, people come from across the world to New York City, and to Midtown Manhattan specifically, during the holiday season. This year, we are going to make that experience safer and more enjoyable for all New Yorkers and visitors with more access to Open Streets,” said **Mayor Adams**. “This is the kind of bold, creative thinking that we need to ensure the city’s comeback is

strong, equitable, and inclusive. And to all those coming in from out of town, I have only two messages: Happy holidays and spend money.”



Materials from the “Shop Your City” campaign. Credit: New York City Department of Small Business Services



Materials from the “It’s Time for New York City: Bookstores” campaign. Credit: Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment

“New York City streets are one of the most valuable public assets, critical to restarting our city’s economic engine,” said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi**. “Transforming iconic Fifth Avenue into a pedestrian paradise during this holiday season shows that, once again, New York City is leading the country with bold initiatives that reimage and activate our public spaces.”

“Time and again, we’ve seen that Open Streets and holiday events drive foot traffic, increase economic activity, attract tourism, and contribute to safer, more exciting, and more prosperous commercial corridors,” said **Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer**. “Transforming Fifth Avenue into a car-free Open Street this holiday season will be a boon for local businesses and is yet another example of how government can work with communities to transform streets for people.”

“There is no place better in the world than New York City during the holidays,” said **Deputy Mayor for Public Safety Philip Banks III**. “This initiative takes the destinations that make it the best and makes them even better, more accessible, and more safe. We look forward to seeing our residents and visitors at these landmark areas and wish everyone a happy, healthy holiday season.”

**Fifth Avenue:** On December 4, 11, and 18, from 12:00 PM until 6:00 PM, Fifth Avenue, from 48<sup>th</sup> Street to 57<sup>th</sup> Street, will only be open to pedestrians. In addition, throughout the entire holiday season, moveable barriers will be placed on the east and west sides of Fifth Avenue, between 48<sup>th</sup> Street and 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. On days the street is not designated an Open Street, beginning in the early afternoon on weekdays and in the morning on weekends, these barriers will be used to repurpose a lane of traffic on each side of the avenue as additional pedestrian space. To accommodate high pedestrian traffic, westbound vehicle right turns will be prohibited from Fifth Avenue onto 47<sup>th</sup> Street, 49<sup>th</sup> Street, or 51<sup>st</sup> Street.

On the designated Sundays, visitors to the Fifth Avenue Open Street will be able to enjoy a range of performances, including choirs, drum lines, and a samba group. Food and beverage vendors will also serve the area, and public seating will be provided. A full list of activities and amenities will be available [online](#).

**Rockefeller Center:** Starting with the lighting of the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree on Wednesday, November 30, through early to mid-January, the city will pedestrianize the streets surrounding Rockefeller Center and Radio City Music Hall, using movable barriers to partially or fully close streets to cars and alleviate foot traffic along sidewalks. With the support of Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine and New York City Councilmember Keith Powers, West 49<sup>th</sup> Street and West 50<sup>th</sup> Street, between Fifth Avenue and Sixth Avenue, will only be open to pedestrians during the most congested hours, between 11:00 AM and 12:00 AM midnight every day. The NYPD will help ensure that vehicle traffic does not enter those streets.

**Sixth Avenue:** Also beginning with the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree lighting on November 30 through early to mid-January, moveable barriers will be placed on the east side of Sixth Avenue between 48<sup>th</sup> Street and 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, reallocating one lane of traffic for additional pedestrian space.

**Bus Service:** All Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) crosstown buses will be rerouted during pedestrian-only hours on cross-streets. On Fifth Avenue, MTA buses will bypass all stops between 48<sup>th</sup> Street and 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, and, on Open Street Sundays, buses will be entirely rerouted to southbound avenues.

The NYPD will conduct round-the-clock monitoring of the area to adjust the barriers if needed during times of unusual pedestrian activity or extreme weather.

**Shop Your City:** “Shop Your City” is a marketing and social media campaign run by the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS), encouraging New Yorkers and visitors to support small businesses on Small Business Saturday, November 26. The campaign is advertised on LinkNYC kiosks, Google, Facebook, Instagram, Pandora, and Spotify, as well as in local community and ethnic print and online publications, subway stations, and convenience stores and bodegas. More information is available [online](#).

**Supporting Local Bookstores:** The New York City Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) has launched a marketing campaign called “It’s Time for New York: Bookstores,” promoting local bookstores this holiday season. Running from mid-November to late December, campaign messaging can be found in the subway and on social media. To support the campaign, New Yorkers can use the hashtag #NYCLovesBookstores on social media. A list of bookstores is available [online](#).

The two campaigns together will invest nearly \$200,000 into supporting local businesses at a critical time of year.

“We expect that New York City this December will see the largest crowds since the pandemic began, with Midtown Manhattan and the Rockefeller Center tree once again serving as major destinations for New Yorkers and tourists flocking to our city,” said **DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez**. “Creating more space for pedestrians around Rockefeller Center will keep people safe while minimizing disruption to the rest of the city. I am especially excited to see Fifth Avenue transformed into our newest Open Street on Sundays. For their part, New Yorkers should avoid unnecessary driving in Manhattan during the holiday season — and remember that public transit is always the best way to get to Midtown. These pedestrianized streets will create a safe, spacious, and welcoming environment for everyone who enjoys the holiday season.”

“The NYPD will be deploying patrol and transportation bureau personnel, and other assets, to support the city’s efforts during the upcoming holiday season,” said **NYPD Commissioner Keechant L. Sewell**. “The work of the women and men of the NYPD, in tandem with our government partners in and around Midtown Manhattan, will ensure that the public can safely and securely participate in this approaching festive time of year.”

“New Yorkers don’t have to travel far to find the perfect holiday gift. With wonderful small businesses on every corner, New Yorkers across the five boroughs are lucky and should take the opportunity to shop small and local this holiday season,” said **SBS Commissioner Kevin D. Kim**. “By creating an Open Street along Fifth Avenue, we are creating a pedestrian paradise benefiting storefronts as well as shoppers.”

“We are proud to spotlight New York City’s wide variety of local, independent bookstores this holiday season with the launch of the ‘It’s Time For New York: Bookstores’ marketing campaign,” said **MOME Commissioner Anne del Castillo**. “Bookstores are an integral part of New York City’s identity, culture, and community that inspire creativity, wonder, and discovery of new worlds and ideas. We encourage all New Yorkers and visitors alike to support local bookstores as they are looking for the perfect holiday gifts for friends and family.”

“FDNY is proud to support local businesses and the economic recovery of our city by ensuring the safety of all New Yorkers and those who come to visit and shop during the holiday season,” said **New York City Fire Department (FDNY) Commissioner Laura Kavanagh**. “We will accomplish this important mission by deploying additional fire and EMS resources to the area and working closely with our partners at the NYPD and the Department of Transportation.”

“As millions of visitors travel in to enjoy the holiday season, shopping will be high on their list, so making the iconic destinations of Fifth Avenue and Rockefeller Center car-free on select Sundays will enhance the experience while improving safety,” said **NYC & Company President and CEO Fred Dixon**. “This plan offers more space for visitors to explore the remarkable holiday décor in Midtown Manhattan, while also increasing foot traffic to local shops and businesses in the area. We encourage visitors to make the most of these car-free Sundays along New York City’s iconic Fifth Avenue throughout December and support small businesses across the five boroughs.”

“Fifth Avenue is the heart of New York City, welcoming over 10 million people during the holiday season alone,” said **Ed Hogan, board chair, Fifth Avenue Association**. “Visitors from all over the world come to Fifth Avenue to shop the most iconic shopping street in the world and take in the city’s finest cultural institutions including MOMA, St. Patrick’s, and Central Park. The Fifth Avenue Association is excited to introduce Fifth Avenue for All in conjunction with Mayor Adams. For the first time ever, Fifth Avenue will be transformed into a pedestrian-only space, and the streets will be handed over to all, allowing everyone ample space to stroll up and down, taking in the holiday windows and enjoying the season. Food kiosks, seating areas and live music will add to the holiday cheer on the avenue. We are grateful to Mayor Adams and his team for working with us on this concept so together we can provide a comfortable and engaging experience for everyone to enjoy all the avenue has to offer.”

“The holiday season brings more New Yorkers and larger crowds to Rockefeller Center and the surrounding area, and ensuring our streets are safe for all these visitors must be our top priority,” said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “I am extremely excited that the city is taking these commonsense steps to create more space for New Yorkers and tourists to the area, and I applaud the mayor, Councilmember Powers, and Commissioners Sewell and Rodriguez for their work and leadership to make this happen during the holidays.”

“Every holiday season, people flood into Rockefeller Center to spend time under the lights, admire the tree, and shop around,” said **New York City Council Majority Leader Keith Powers**. “But when there are over 800,000 people crushed into the area, the most wonderful time of year becomes a bit daunting — and dangerous. I’m proud to have joined Borough President Levine to call on DOT to pedestrianize these streets for the holidays and look forward to enjoying this car-free area all winter long.”

“I commend Mayor Adams, Commissioner Rodriguez, and Commissioner Sewell for prioritizing public safety and local businesses this holiday season,” said **U.S. Representative Adriano Espaillat**. “This Open Streets project will allow New Yorkers and visitors to enjoy the city’s food, culture, and holiday décor this holiday season while supporting brick-and-mortar Midtown shops that are the backbone of our community.”

“The mayor’s Open Streets plan is a Christmas gift to the millions who will descend upon Midtown Manhattan next month,” said **New York State Assemblymember Jenifer Rajkumar**. “In a month where each day will see 342,000 visitors to Times Square and 750,000 to the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree, additional open spaces will allow for an enjoyable holiday experience for everyone. Even better, SBS and MOME will promote our world-class small businesses during the biggest shopping season of the year, delivering much-needed revenue to shops that are vital to the vibrancy of our neighborhoods and create jobs. Under the leadership of Mayor Eric Adams, this holiday season will feature unprecedented energy throughout the five boroughs, part of the year-round energy he brings to New York City.”

“Whenever people watch some of the classical New York holiday scenes, one cannot forget the importance that New York City currently plays both for locals and strangers alike. Therefore, as more people begin to travel to experience the New York holiday scene, it is important to ensure that we have the space to accommodate both tourists and natives,” said **New York State Assemblymember Yudelka Tapia**. “Open Streets in Midtown Manhattan allow for that to happen, and I personally look forward to not only seeing the great effects myself but also experiencing them with my family.”

“Open Streets add to the vibrancy of neighborhoods and local economies. I commend Mayor Adams for his ambitious plan to open 11 city blocks to pedestrians in Midtown this December and for his continued commitment to expanding public space,” said **New York City Councilmember Carlina Rivera**. “The holiday season in New York City is magic — and this decision will add to the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. I am proud to have been the prime sponsor of the legislation that passed in May 2021 that made the successful Open Streets program permanent and look forward to working with the Department of Transportation and advocates to expand pedestrian spaces on the Lower East Side.”

“No city does the holidays like New York,” said **New York City Council Majority Whip Selvena N. Brooks-Powers, chair, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**. “Opening more public space in Midtown Manhattan during the holidays will ease crowding and improve safety, and as a member of the Council’s Committee on Small Business, I applaud the administration’s efforts to direct traffic to small businesses and support local bookstores during the busiest shopping season of the year.”

“The expansion of public space during the holiday season will increase substantial pedestrian foot traffic for our small businesses during the busy holiday season,” said **New York City Councilmember Julie Menin, chair, Committee on Small Business**. “I thank Mayor Eric Adams and Small Business Services Commissioner Kevin Kim for supporting small businesses by providing dedicated resources and tourism campaigns that encourage shopping local and invest in the heritage and culture of our city.”

“Open Streets add to the vibrancy of neighborhoods and local economies. I commend Mayor Adams for his ambitious plan to open 11 city blocks to pedestrians in Midtown this December and for his continued commitment to expanding public space,” said **New York City Councilmember Carlina Rivera**. “The holiday season in New York City is magic — and this decision will add to the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. I am proud to have been the prime sponsor of the legislation that passed in May 2021 that made the successful Open Streets

program permanent and look forward to working with the Department of Transportation and advocates to expand pedestrian spaces on the Lower East Side.”

“People from all over the world come to Midtown during the holidays to enjoy the vibrancy and beauty of New York,” said **Tom Wright, president and CEO, Regional Plan Association**. “This new Midtown Open Street is long overdue and will support safer and more enjoyable tourism, shopping, and celebration. Congratulations to the Adams administration for advancing this initiative!”

“Streets closed to cars are streets for people. Today’s announcement is great news for all New Yorkers as we head into the holiday season,” said **Danny Harris, executive director, Transportation Alternatives**. “Car-free Fifth Avenue will give visitors, tourists, shoppers, workers, and residents much-needed space to live, work, shop, and play. We look forward to continuing to work with city leaders to Open Streets to more places across the city.”

“This is a huge gift for New Yorkers and tourists this holiday season,” says **Jackson Chabot, director of advocacy and organizing, Open Plans**. “We’ve seen the demand for more pedestrian space for years; expanding Midtown’s car-free space meets that demand and makes it much easier — and more fun — to enjoy the festive atmosphere and holiday programming. These streets are the epicenter of holiday joy in New York, and, after a difficult few years, we’re glad to see the city putting public space and people first.”

###