

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF NEW YORK

In the Matter of the Application of NEW YORK
CYCLE CLUB, SARAH CHUBB SAUVAYRE and
JP PARTLAND,

Index No.

Petitioner/ Plaintiff,

**VERIFIED PETITION &
COMPLAINT**

- against-

CITY OF NEW YORK, NEW YORK CITY
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, and THE
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS

Respondents/Defendants.

Petitioners New York Cycling Club (“NYCC”), Sarah Chubb Sauvayre and JP Partland (collectively “Petitioners”), for their verified petition and complaint, pursuant to Article 30, §3001, Article 63, §§6301, *et seq.*, and Article 78, §§7801, *et seq.* of the New York Civil Practice Law and Rules (“CPLR”), alleges upon personal knowledge, except as to the matters stated on information and belief, as follows:

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This hybrid (i) Article 78 proceeding for certiorari to review and (ii) action for declaratory and injunctive relief, urgently seeks the Court’s intervention to prevent Respondents/Defendants City of New York, and its New York City Department of Transportation (“NYCDOT”) and New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (“NYC Parks”), from lowering the speed limit for bicycles in Central Park to 15 mph on Park Drives.
2. The City is misapplying VTL §1642(a)(27), part of what is known as “Sammy’s Law”, to lower the speed limits for all vehicles in Central Park including bicycles – which are the primary wheeled-vehicle in the park since a 2018 ban on motor vehicles was enacted.
3. While the City has the ability to reduce the speed limit in the Park through a

rule change following the City Administrative Procedures Act (“CAPA”), the City instead chose to circumvent the requirements of CAPA and the more extensive public notice and review procedures and instead pervert the intent of Sammy’s Law to reduce the speed limit for bicycles in the Park.

4. NYCDOT, NYC Parks and the Central Park Conservancy conducted a Safety and Circulation Study in 2024 to develop recommendations on how to improve safety and movement for all park users however, none of those recommendations included reducing cycling speeds – or speed limits generally¹. Nevertheless, on December 16th former Mayor Eric Adams directed the NYC DOT to lower the speed limit for all vehicles, including regular pedal bicycles to 15mph in Central Park citing VTL §1642(a)(27) as providing the authority to do so.

5. However, that section of Sammy’s Law applies only to “motor vehicles” not bicycles.

6. Mayor Adam’s decision was not authorized by law and circumvents New York City’s rule making procedures and was thus arbitrary, improper, irrational and an abuse of discretion.

THE PARTIES

7. Petitioner NYCC, is a domestic not-for-profit corporation, organized under the laws of the State of New York, and maintains a primary place of business in Manhattan. NYCC is New York City’s largest recreational cycling club, with thousands of members across the five boroughs of New York City who rely on NYCC to organize and lead safe cycling activities and advocate and fight for safer street infrastructure.

¹ https://s3.amazonaws.com/assets.centralparknyc.org/media/documents/FINAL-Drives-Report_2024.10.21-2.pdf, pp3-4

8. Petitioner Sarah Chubb Sauvayre is a 65-year-old resident of Manhattan. She regularly rides her bicycle in the city's parks, and specifically in Central Park, for recreation, physical training and transportation.

9. Petitioner JP Partland 57-year-old resident of Manhattan. He regularly rides his bicycle in the city's parks, and specifically in Central Park, for recreation, physical training and transportation.

10. Respondent City of New York is a municipality duly established and existing in accordance with the laws of the State of New York. Respondent New York City Department of Transportation is an agency of the City of New York, duly created and existing under the NYC Charter, with a commissioner, who is responsible under the NYC Charter for overseeing the City's transportation infrastructure. DOT is responsible, inter alia, for the maintenance and management of New York City's roadways and bridges. Respondent New York City Department of Parks and Recreation is similarly an agency of the City of New York, duly created and existing under the NYC Charter, with a commissioner, who is responsible under the NYC Charter for overseeing the City's parks and greenways.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

11. This Court has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Articles 30, 63, and 78 of the New York Civil Practice Law and Rules ("CPLR"). The actions of Respondents are final and cannot be adequately reviewed by another court, entity or officer.

12. Pursuant to CPLR § 506 and § 7804(b), venue is proper in Kings County, the judicial district in which Respondents made the decisions and determination complained of and also where the matter sought to be restrained herein is located.

FACTS

13. On December 16, 2025, in the waning days of his Administration, Mayor Eric

Adams announced that the speed limit for vehicles in Central Park would be lowered from 20mph to 15mph following a 60-day comment period that expired on February 14, 2026, citing Sammy's Law for authority to make the change.

14. Under Sammy's Law, which amended VTL §1624(a) subsections (26) and (27), NYC was authorized to implement speed limits as low as 20mph on most City streets and was authorized to lower the speed limit on roads adjacent to schools to 15mph. The City was also authorized under subsection VTL §1624(a)(27) to implement speed limits as low as 15 miles per hours on certain roads in conjunction with physical traffic calming measures for "motor vehicles.

15. Beyond those amendments to the VTL, no new authority was granted to the City to lower speed limits below 20mph for any vehicles including bicycles.

16. VTL §1642(a)(26) authorizes the reduction of speed limits generally to as low as 20mph. The statute states specifically:

No such speed limit applicable throughout such city or within designated areas of such city shall be established at less than twenty miles per hour, except that (i) school speed limits may be established at no less than fifteen miles per hour pursuant to the provisions of section sixteen hundred forty-three of this article, and (ii) on portions of highways that consist of three or more vehicular travel lanes in the same direction outside of New York county, speed limits shall be established at no less than twenty-five miles per hour.

17. VTL §1642(a)(26) does not categorize or delimit the type of vehicle for which speed limits may be lowered.

18. VTL §1642(a)(27) however, specifically only applies to speeds "at which motor vehicles may proceed" stating:

27.(a) Establishment of maximum speed limits below twenty miles per hour **at which motor vehicles** may proceed on or along designated highways within such city for the explicit purpose of implementing traffic calming measures as such term is defined herein; provided, however, that

no speed limit shall be set below ten miles per hour nor shall such speed limit be established where the traffic calming measure to be implemented consists solely of a traffic control sign. ... For the purposes of this paragraph, "traffic calming measures" shall mean any physical engineering measure or measures that reduce the negative effects of **motor vehicle** use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users such as pedestrians and bicyclists. (emphasis added).

19. Sammy's Law, therefore, does not authorize lowering the speed limit for bicycles below 20 miles-per-hour. The lower limit applies only to "motor vehicles" and only when done in conjunction with traffic calming measures that reduce the "the negative effects of **motor vehicle** use, alter **driver behavior** and improve conditions for non-motorized street users such as... bicyclists".

20. The traffic calming measures the City relies on to justifying invoking Sammy's law to lower the speed limit come from the 2024 Joint NYC DOT, NYC Parks and Central Park Conservancy Circulation and Safety study.

21. However, while the report identifies several measures that can be taken to improve safety and movement around the park, there is no recommendation to reduce park speed limits².

22. Most of the "traffic calming" recommendations in the report have yet to be implemented, and none of these measures were proposed to "reduce the negative effect of motor vehicle use" or "alter driver behavior".

23. The lowering of the speed limit for bicycles in Central Park was the latest action taken by former mayor Adams against bicycle riders.

24. Mayor Adams first imposed a reduction in the speed limit for electric bicycles to 15mph citywide, a measure that violates VTL §1242(3)(a) which requires a local law or

² https://s3.amazonaws.com/assets.centralparknyc.org/media/documents/FINAL-Drives-Report_2024.10.21-2.pdf, pp3-4

ordinance be passed, not a Mayoral rule change.

25. He then developed a new policy in conjunction with NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch to issue criminal summons to bicycle riders for civil traffic law violations, a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the US Constitution as the drivers of motor vehicles are not similarly treated.

26. Then, just before he left office he pushed NYCDOT to implement this lower speed limit in Central Park which, although it applies to all vehicles, in fact primarily targets bicycles as all but service and public safety vehicles have been banned from the park since 2018.

27. New York City is home to 800,000 active adult cyclists, yet it offers very few recreational cycling facilities that aren't shared with pedestrians and runners. If elected officials can impose a reduced speed limit on the drives in contravention of the authority granted by Sammy's Law and without any clear evidence or stakeholder input, they can easily do so on other recreational bikeways throughout the city — reversing years of progress toward cycling access and equity.

28. The new limit will damage public health. Recreational cycling improves cardiovascular and mental health, and parks such as Central Park, Prospect Park, Flushing Meadows Corona Park and others offer uniquely safe venues for biking around. Any policy that discourages cycling, particularly that done for fitness training in parks where New Yorkers can ride continuously, far away from cars, poses a very real threat to the city's longstanding goals of promoting active transportation and healthier lifestyles.

29. Moreover, this decision forces bicycle riders into a Hobson's Choice between riding at the speeds they used to be able to in the Park but face being ticketed – which in the current era means receiving a criminal summons – or ride on City streets where the speed limit is higher but the physical dangers are much, much greater.

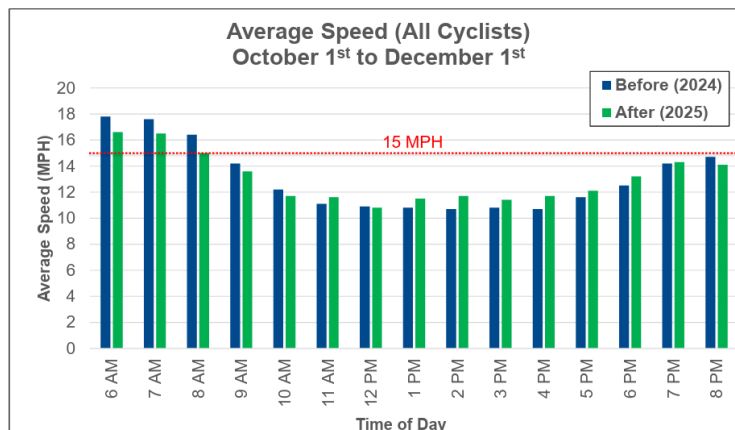
30. Further, the regulation is completely unwarranted. In Central Park the fastest cyclists, those training for competition and fitness have self-regulated, facilitated by NYCC, by developing what has become known as the “[Central Park Protocol](#)”. This protocol encourages recreational road cyclists to use the early mornings between the hours of 6am and 8am and evening after 6pm (summer) and 8pm (winter) for training rides and high speed recreational riding.

31. NYCDOT’s own data shows that cycling speeds in the Park average well below 15mph during most daylight hours, peaking in the early morning and evening hours – consistent with the Central Park Protocol³. NYC DOT also acknowledges these are times when there are fewer pedestrians in the park.

Project Evaluation

Cyclist Speed

- Average Speeds have not significantly changed
- Speeds remain slightly higher in the early morning when there are fewer people in the Park
- Data collected at the Columbus Circle entrance



Source: Viva

nyc.gov/dot

10

32. Since the implementation and popularization of the Central Park Protocol there have been very few serious crashes between cyclists and other park users.

33. Nevertheless, DOT and the City have chosen to lower the speed limit, for which

³ <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/central-park-drives-status-update-jan2026.pdf>, p.8

they have no data-driven basis for, and which was not part of the recommendations developed by their own 2024 study findings on what was needed to make the park drives safer for all park users.

34. Accordingly, lowering the speed limit as it applies to bicycles should be reversed as it is not authorized by Sammy's Law, the City has failed to follow its own rule-making procedures and it is unnecessary to lower the speed limit for people riding bicycles in the park, indeed it would likely place them in greater danger by forcing them on to City streets.

35. For these same reasons, Respondents should be both preliminarily and permanently enjoined from implementing the speed limit reduction for bicycles. As set forth herein, Petitioner has demonstrated all three elements to obtain an injunction, including: (1) a likelihood of success on the merits on its claims for declaratory relief, based on DOT's improper application of Sammy's law and avoidance of the requirements of CAPA; (2) irreparable harm based on hazards to the health and safety of riders, and potential legal liability riders will now face; and, (3) a balancing of the equities when weighing the forgoing harms against an unquantified danger that NYCDOT's own safety study did not identify reducing speed limits as being needed to solve.⁴

AS AND FOR A FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION
Judgment Annulling and Setting Aside the Decision to Proceed With the Speed
Limit Reduction for Cyclists Pursuant to CPLR 7803 on the Ground That It Is
In Violation of Law, Arbitrary, Capricious and An Abuse of Discretion

36. Petitioner repeats, realleges and reaffirms each and every allegation set forth above as if set forth fully herein.

37. Pursuant to CPLR §7803, the determination of an agency or municipal

⁴ Indeed, at no point has NYC DOT proffered any data demonstrating that this lower speed limit is necessary to improve safety.

corporation must be reversed where it is “made in violation of lawful procedure, was affected by an error of law or was arbitrary and capricious or an abuse of discretion” CPLR § 7803.

38. Here, DOT is violating Sammy’s Law and attempting to circumvent the CAPA.

39. The City is perverting the intent of Sammy’s Law, a law named after 12 yr old Sammy Cohen Eckstein who was tragically killed by a driver just outside of Prospect Park.

40. The City is doing this to avoid the more extensive public comment and deliberative process required by the CAPA, which would be the only valid way for the City to enact this change.

41. Under Sammy’s Law the City may make the authorized speed limit changes only after providing 60 days written notice to local Community Boards, which it did. VTL §1642(a)(26)(b).

42. Public hearings and an opportunity for public comments were not required or afforded.

43. The City took advantage of Sammy’s Law’s limited public notice provision to circumvent its own City Administrative Procedures Act (“CAPA”).

44. As outlined in Chapter 45 of the NYC Charter, under CAPA the City must publish the proposed rule change, provide a means for public comments to be submitted – which is done through the City’s [Rules website](#), by email or correspondence and schedule a public hearing so that members of the community may testify regarding the rule change. This process can take upwards of 90 days to fulfill.

45. The City followed this procedure when lowering the speed limit for electric

bicycles citywide⁵ but has not followed it in this instance.

46. An actual controversy exists between Petitioners and Respondents concerning whether Respondents must consider and/or approve the Project “based on a rational documented, empirical determination” after a “reasonable or measured period of empirical documentation, assessment and evaluation.” *N.Y. State Association of Counties v. Axlerod*, 78 N.Y.2d 158, 168 (1991).

47. Petitioners have no adequate remedy at law.

48. Petitioners are entitled to a declaration that Respondents are implementing the speed limit reduction for people riding bicycles illegally and without any sound basis in reason.

49. Consequently, Petitioners are entitled to a Judgement pursuant to CPLR Article 78 that Respondents acted illegally, arbitrarily and capriciously and abused their discretion by lowering the speed limit for all vehicles, including non-motor vehicles like bicycles on Central Park drives to 15mph.

AS AND FOR A SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION
Permanent Injunctive Relief Enjoining Implementation of the
Speed Limit Reduction for Bicycles

50. Petitioners repeat, reallege and reaffirm each and every allegation set forth above as if set forth fully herein.

51. As explained in great detail above, Respondents, in developing and approving the lowering of the speed limit, have acted in contravention of law and without a sound justification.

52. Petitioners will be irreparably harmed absent granting an injunction, including compromising their safety and exposing them to greater legal liability, including criminal

⁵ As an aside, although the requirements of the CAPA were followed in that instance, that rule change was nevertheless improper as lowering speed limits for e-bikes must be done through a local law or ordinance, not a mere rule change, per VTL §1242(3)(a).

summons, along with a decreased ability to engage in training and exercise and increased personal danger as they will be shifted to using more dangerous streets outside the Park which lack safe bicycling facilities, posing a significantly increased threat to their bodily safety should the speed limit reduction move forward and be applied to people riding bicycles on the park drives.

53. When weighed against an absence of data or recommendations supporting the lower speed limit, the balancing of the equities is in favor of Petitioners and further compels an injunction. The harm to Petitioners and cyclists in the area of Central Park, as described herein, far outweighs any justification that Respondents may have -particularly in light of the fact Respondents have neither identified nor substantiated a valid justification for taking the action.

54. Petitioners have no adequate remedy at law.

55. Consequently, Respondents must be preliminarily and permanently enjoined from implementing the Removal.

NO PRIOR APPLICATION

56. No prior application for this or any similar relief has been made in this or any other Court.

WHEREFORE, Petitioner respectfully prays for an order and judgment as follows:

- a) Annulling and setting aside the decision of Respondents to decrease the speed limits for non-motor vehicles, including bicycles, on Central Park drives, because they acted arbitrarily, capriciously, and illegally, and abused their discretion;
- b) Preliminarily and permanently enjoining Respondents from lowering the speed limit to 15mph for non-motor vehicles on Central Park drives; and
- c) Granting such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper, together with costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

Dated: Forest Hills, New York
February 18, 2026

LAW OFFICE OF PETER W. BEADLE

By: _____
Peter W. Beadle
Attorneys for Plaintiffs/Petitioners
118-35 Queens Blvd, Suite 400
Forest Hills, NY 11375
917-960-8874
peter.beadle@beadlelaw.com

ATTORNEY'S VERIFICATION

I, Peter W. Beadle, an attorney duly admitted to practice before the Courts of the State of New York, affirm the following to be true under the penalties of perjury:

1. I am the attorney of record for the Petitioners/Plaintiffs.
2. I have read the annexed Verified Petition/Complaint and know the contents thereof, and the same are true to my knowledge, except those matters therein which are alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe them to be true. My beliefs, as to those matters therein not stated upon knowledge, are based upon facts, records, and other pertinent information contained in my files.

This verification is made by me because Petitioners do not reside in the County where I maintain my offices.

Dated: Forest Hills, NY
February 18, 2026

Peter W. Beadle