

Rescind the 15 MPH Limit for Bikes in Central Park

In the final days of his term, former Mayor Eric Adams [announced](#) that New York City would reduce the cycling speed limit on Central Park Drive from 20 mph to 15 mph. Mayor Mamdani and the City Council should reverse this decision immediately.

In announcing the move, Adams cited his authority to regulate speed limits granted to the city under the so-called [Sammy's Law](#), and framed the change as a safety measure for all park users. The park's governing non-profit, the Central Park Conservancy, [eagerly endorsed](#) the decision.

Why This Matters

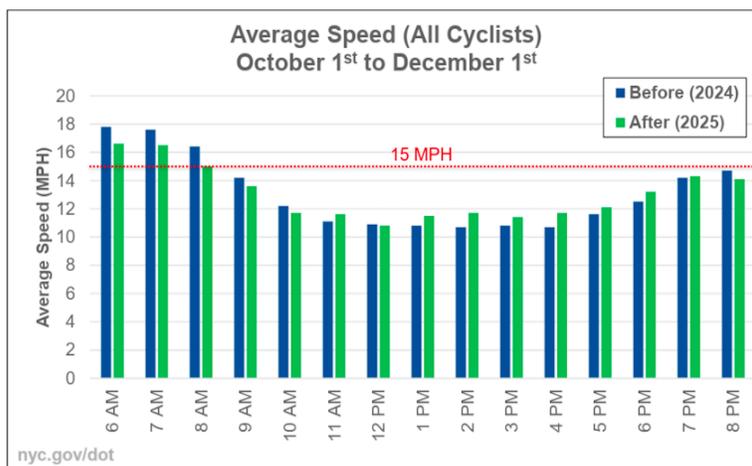
Safety in Central Park matters deeply—to pedestrians, runners, families, tourists and cyclists alike. But this policy does nothing to improve user safety, misapplies state law and disenfranchises the cohort of cyclists who've safely [trained in the Park for decades](#).

Worse, it deflects from the real problem the City needs to solve. It is not reckless cyclists. It is scarcity.

Wrong Solution to the Wrong Problem

- The 15-mph rule is framed as a safety measure under Sammy's Law. Yet that law was intended to reduce deaths and serious injuries caused by *motor vehicles on public roads*, not bicyclists on shared use paths.
- Moreover, NYCDOT has offered no evidence that lowering the speed limit for *bicycles* will meaningfully reduce injuries. The 2024 [Central Park Drives Safety and Circulation Study](#), commissioned by the CP Conservancy, and written in part by new DOT Commissioner Mike Flynn, does not recommend reducing cycling speeds.
- Further, as DOT reported to Manhattan CBs 7 & 8 in January, some 20 pedestrians per year are injured on the Drive. Twenty divided by 40 million annual visitors equals 0.000005. So, in absolute terms, the Drive is already pretty safe.

DOT's own numbers contradict the rationale for a 15 mph speed limit



The Federal Highways Administration tool used to evaluate [shared use path's "level of service,"](#) holds that *volume* (not speed) is a key input needed to predict user conflict.

We can therefore infer that most injuries on the Drive occur between the 10AM-4PM period of peak use—when cyclist speed is less than [12 mph](#).

This is compared to 18 mph between 6-8AM, a period when, as DOT concedes, “fewer people are around.” It would therefore appear that the clubs’ limiting group training to off-peak periods already helps to reduce peak cycling volume as well as speed.

Real Solutions - In and Around Central Park

- Education: Since 2012, racing and recreational cycling clubs have voluntarily self-limited [training to off-peak periods](#), honoring Frederick Law Olmsted’s vision of minimizing conflict among park users. Yet the Conservancy has never formally recognized their contribution to Park user safety. That recognition is long overdue.
- Enforcement: New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law 1151(a) already sanctions individuals who [fail to yield pedestrian right-of-way](#). And VTL 1180(a) targets those who [maintain speed not reasonable and prudent](#). These laws are far better suited to address dangerous behavior than a blanket speed limit that penalizes responsible cyclists.
- Engineering: The [Central Park Drives Safety and Circulation Study](#) offers a blueprint for managing user conflict on the drive — one that remains largely unimplemented. It’s recommendations include:
 - Build bikeways along CP’s transverses and adjoining roads to draw down use on the Drive and improve east-west mobility for cyclists of all abilities
 - Encourage pedestrian use of the many arches spanning the Drive. The [Greysheet Arch](#) in particular provides an alternative to the congested crossing at West 61st Street.
 - Issue a request for proposals to grade-separate the signaled crossing by the [Delacorte Theater](#), one of the most chaotic conflict points on the Drive.

The Study further states that it Central Park’s forty million annual visitors arrive by bike, and on foot, in roughly equal numbers (48%). Yet pedestrians enjoy full access to 58 miles of Park trails, while cyclists get only *shared* access to the 6.1 mile Drive. That imbalance is most keenly felt during periods of peak use.

- Accordingly, the Conservancy should allow cyclists to use the six-mile [Bridle Path](#)—designed to allow equestrians to ride at speed—during periods of peak demand.

Real Solutions - Away from the Park

Conflict on the Drive is not caused by “reckless cyclists.” It is the predictable result of the City’ chronic underinvestment in cycling infrastructure needed to serve its 800,000 active adult cyclists. London, by comparison, invested [\\$100 million in 2025 alone](#) in its network of cycleways. Ideas to address address this disparity include:



- [Upgrade the arterial connectors](#) long sought by the NYC Greenways Coalition.
- Designate a weekend network of recreational bikeways to connecting neighborhoods with a deficit of parks to green space across the five boroughs. The so-called [Grayways](#) proposal would use legislation and GPS wayfinding to jump-start the project at little cost.
- [Increase bike capacity on NYC Ferry](#) on morning trips from Manhattan to the robust network of bikeways spanning [Bay Ridge](#) and [Rockaway](#).

Resources: [Memo to Mamdani: Rescind Central Park’s New 15-MPH Bike Speed Limit](#), [The Real Problem in Central Park Isn’t Speed — It’s Scarcity](#), [Cycle Club Sues City Calling Central Park Bike Speed Limit A ‘Real Threat’ To Active Transportation](#), [Slowing Down Cyclists in Central Park](#), [Brian Lehrer](#), [Article 78 filing in NY Supreme Court](#)

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