

Mayor Mamdani should rescind the 15 MPH Limit for Bikes in Central Park

On 2/24/26, Justice Moyné of the New York Supreme Court, in response to an Article 78 Proceeding filed by the New York Cycle Club, issued a temporary restraining order to block implementation of an [11th-hour proposal](#) by the outgoing Adams administration to reduce the cycling speed limit on Central Park Drive from 20 mph to 15 mph.

The judge granted a temporary restraining order from enforcing the new 15mph speed limit against riders of pedal bikes (non electric). He agreed that the risk of being issued as criminal summons could constitute irreparable harm.

Why This Matters

Safety in Central Park matters deeply—to pedestrians, runners and cyclists alike. But the new rule does nothing to improve park user safety. Rather, it disenfranchises cyclists who've trained safely in the Park for decades and sets a terrible precedent that could be used to exclude cyclists from the very facilities they need to bike safely.

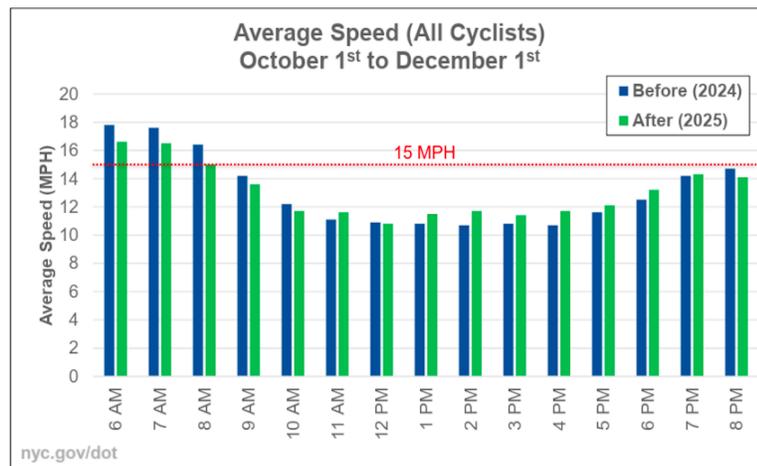
Worst of all, it deflects from the real problem. It is not reckless cyclists. It is scarcity.

DOT's own data contradicts the rationale for a 15 mph speed limit

- 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.
- In January, DOT reported that some [20 pedestrians are injured on the Drive each year](#). Twenty divided by 40 million annual Park visitors equals 0.000005. Which raises the question of how much incremental safety the lower speed limit is expected to achieve.

- A grading system developed by the [Federal Highways Administration](#) to evaluate a shared-use path's "level-of-service" holds that *user volume*, not cyclist speed, is a key predictor of conflict.

This model projects that most injuries on the Drive are apt to 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 appear that the clubs' practice of limiting group training to off-peak periods beneficially draws down cyclist speed *and* volume during peak periods.

- The CP Study further states that Park visitors arrive by bike and on foot in roughly equal numbers—48%. So-called "fast" cyclists comprise 13% of total. Yet pedestrians get full access to all 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.

- The CP Drive includes [downhills](#) steep enough to propel even casual cyclists past 15 mph. Which means that lower speed limit functionally criminalizes *all* 20 million cyclists who visit the Park each year.
- If sustained in Central Park, Adams' rule sets the terrible precedent that Sammy's Law, which was created to protect vulnerable road users, could be used to exclude cyclists from the very facilities they need to bike safely.

Real Solutions - In and Around Central Park

- 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.
- Education: Since 2012, racing and recreational cycling clubs have counseled members to limit group [training to off-peak periods](#), honoring Frederick Law Olmsted's vision of reducing competition between classes of users. Yet the Conservancy has never formally acknowledged their contribution to Park user safety. That recognition is long overdue.
- Engineering: The [Central Park Drives Safety and Circulation Study](#) offers a (largely unimplemented) blueprint for managing conflict. It's recommendations include:
 - Implement bikeways along CP's transverses and adjoining roads to draw down use on the Drive while improving east-west mobility for cyclists of all abilities.
 - Encourage pedestrian use of the many arches spanning the Drive. The [Greysheet Arch](#) provides an alternative to the congested crossing at West 61st Street.
 - In addition, the City should issue a request for proposals to grade-separate the crossing by the [Delacorte Theater](#), one of the most chaotic conflict points on the Drive.
 - To reduce demand and an equal allocation of resources, let cyclists use the six-mile [Bridle Path](#), which is grade-separated from footpaths so equestrians could ride at speed.

Real Solutions - Away from the Park

User conflict in Central Park is the predictable consequence of the City's chronic underinvestment in cycling infrastructure needed to serve its 800,000 active adult cyclists. By comparison, Transport for London invested [\\$100 million in its network of cycleways](#) in 2025 alone. Specific projects to address this disparity include:



- [Implement the network of arterial cycling connectors](#) long sought by the NYC Greenways Coalition.
- Designate a network of recreational bikeways connecting city parks to reduce Central Park congestion on weekends. The so-called [Grayways](#) proposal would employ 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 CP Bike Speed Limit A 'Real Threat' To Active Transportation, Article 78 filing](#)

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