



Rescind the 15 MPH Limit for Bikes in Central Park. Fix the Real Problem.

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.

Last week, Justice Moyné of the New York Supreme Court, responding to [New York Cycle Club](#) and individual cyclists, plaintiffs in [Article 78 Proceeding](#), agreed to issue a temporary restraining order to block enforcement—citing irreparable harm if cyclists were forced to choose between receiving a criminal summons or riding in traffic.

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 misapplies state law, disenfranchises cyclists who've trained safely in the Park for decades, sets a terrible precedent, and deflects from the real problem. It is not reckless cyclists. It is scarcity.

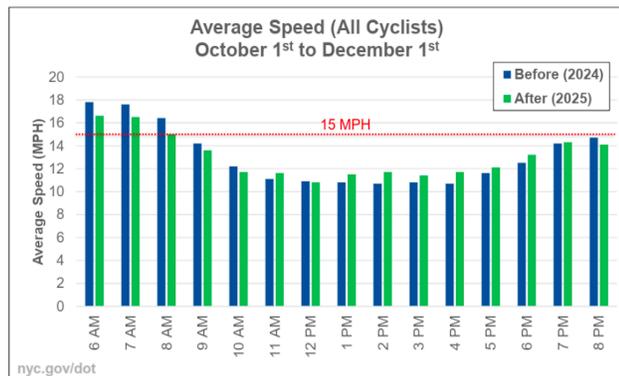
The City's decision also discounts the significant value of training rides as a public health intervention. Using the World Health Organization [HEAT](#) tool, these rides are estimated to [prevent ~26 premature deaths annually or \\$343 million in economic benefit](#).

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](#). Central Park attracts some 40 million visitors annually. $20 \div 40 \text{ million} = 0.000005$

• A grading system developed by the [Federal Highways Administration](#) to evaluate a shared-use-path-level-of-service (“SUPLOS”) 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 in 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 self-limiting of group training to off-peak hours beneficially draws down cyclist speed *and* volume during periods of peak use.

• The CP Study further states that 45% of Park visitors arrive by bike. Additionally, so-called “fast” cyclists comprise 13% 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.

- The CP Drive includes multiple downhill sections that are steep and long enough to induce the gravitational acceleration needed to [propel cyclists past 15 mph](#).
- 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 cited as authority for the City to summarily exclude cyclists from the very facilities they need to bike safely.

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 draw down peak demand on the Drive and address the unequal allocation of resources, let cyclists use the six-mile [Bridle Path](#), which was grade-separated from footpaths so equestrians could ride at speed.

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. Proposed projects to address this disparity include:



- [Implement the network of arterial connectors](#) long sought by NYC Greenways Coalition.
- Designate the so-called [Grayways](#) network of recreational bikeways to draw down weekend CP demand and drive neighborhood tourism.
- [Increase bike capacity on NYC Ferry](#) on morning outbounds 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 Isn't Speed — It's Scarcity](#), [Cycle Club Sues City Calling CP Bike Speed Limit A 'Real Threat' To Active Transportation](#)