



Green Light for Midtown

New York, NY

New York City Department of Transportation



Top: Pedestrians and bicyclists were put first in the Green Light for Midtown project. Photo by NYCDOT.
 Bottom left (before) to bottom right (after): Road diets were used to create new pedestrian plazas. Photo by NYCDOT.

The Green Light for Midtown project rethinks urban mobility on Broadway by adding dedicated pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

CONTEXT

- Urban.
- Northeast.
- Completed in 2009.
- \$700,000.



DOWNTOWN MOBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

- This cost-effective pilot project redesigned major intersections in the Midtown area of New York City to increase pedestrian and bicyclist mobility and safety.

WHAT WAS THE PROJECT DRIVER?

The New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) initiated the Green Light for Midtown **pilot project** to offer residents increased mobility options and improved transportation safety. The Midtown area contains some of the busiest tourist areas in the country, consisting of personal automobiles, public transit buses, tour buses, bicyclists, and foot traffic. As such, the traffic congestion can be severe. NYCDOT's public **design charrettes**, **stakeholder engagement activities**, and partnerships with the Times Square Alliance, 34th Street Partnership, and business

improvement districts were critical to the project's success. Three business improvement districts have agreed to maintain the new pedestrian areas and amenities.

HOW DID THIS CONNECT THE COMMUNITY?

Before the project began, the Midtown area had an extensive sidewalk network, but the volume of pedestrians mixed with the traffic at intersections resulted in "pedestrian gridlock," dangerously long crossings, and difficult-to-navigate intersections.

The project made use of **road diets**, **Context Sensitive Solutions**, and traffic changes along Broadway, including traffic signal timing adjustments, crosswalk shortenings, and road geometry alterations. With the street space revamped, the project utilized **Complete Streets** design strategies to create new pedestrian plazas with sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian refuges along Broadway in Times Square and Herald Square. The plazas include place-making elements such as public art installations and rest areas with tables, umbrellas, and chairs.



Road diets were used to reallocate the public right-of-way for pedestrian plazas and bicycle infrastructure. Photo by NYCDOT.

NYCDOT also redesigned the streets around Union Square Park to include similar pedestrian plazas. These plazas made Union Square, one of the busiest destinations in New York City, much safer and more accessible.

WHAT WERE THE BENEFITS?



REPAIR

NYCDOT collected extensive data on traffic and pedestrian volumes, travel times, and the rate of traffic accidents in the months prior to implementation and after the project was complete.

Analysis of this data showed that the project enhanced safety in the project area, as injuries to pedestrians decreased 35 percent, and injuries to motorists and passengers decreased 63 percent. In Times Square, there was also an 80 percent reduction in the volume of pedestrians walking in the street.

Mobility in the area also increased according to this data as average vehicle trip time was by reduced by 15 percent on 6th Avenue and by 4 percent on 7th Avenue. The volume of pedestrians traveling along Broadway and 7th Avenue in Times Square increased by 11 percent, while Herald Square saw pedestrian volumes increase by 6 percent. Bus travel times were improved by 13 percent on 6th Avenue and by 2 percent on 7th Avenue.

Furthermore, NYCDOT conducted a customer satisfaction survey to assess the project's effectiveness and 74 percent of the area's residents, workers, and visitors surveyed reported that Times Square was improved by the project in terms of livability, safety, and mobility.

For more information: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pedestrians/broadway.shtml>