

Safe Routes for Seniors: Improving Walkability for Seniors in New York City

Active Living Research Annual
Conference, February 9-11, 2010



Transportation
Alternatives


Our mission is to reclaim New York City's streets from the automobile, and to advocate for bicycling, walking and public transit as the best transportation alternatives.





Transportation
Alternatives

- Non-profit
- Established in 1973
- 8,000 members
- 25,000 street activists
- Thousands of volunteers
- 16 full-time staff

An aerial photograph of a busy New York City street. The sidewalk on the left is crowded with pedestrians of various ages and clothing. The street is filled with traffic, including several yellow taxis, a dark sedan, a white van, and a person on a bicycle. The scene is captured from a high angle, showing the layout of the street and the density of both foot and vehicle traffic.

New York City:
6,000 miles of streets
Over 12,000 miles of sidewalks
=
80% of NYC's public space

Source: New York City Department of Transportation 2008





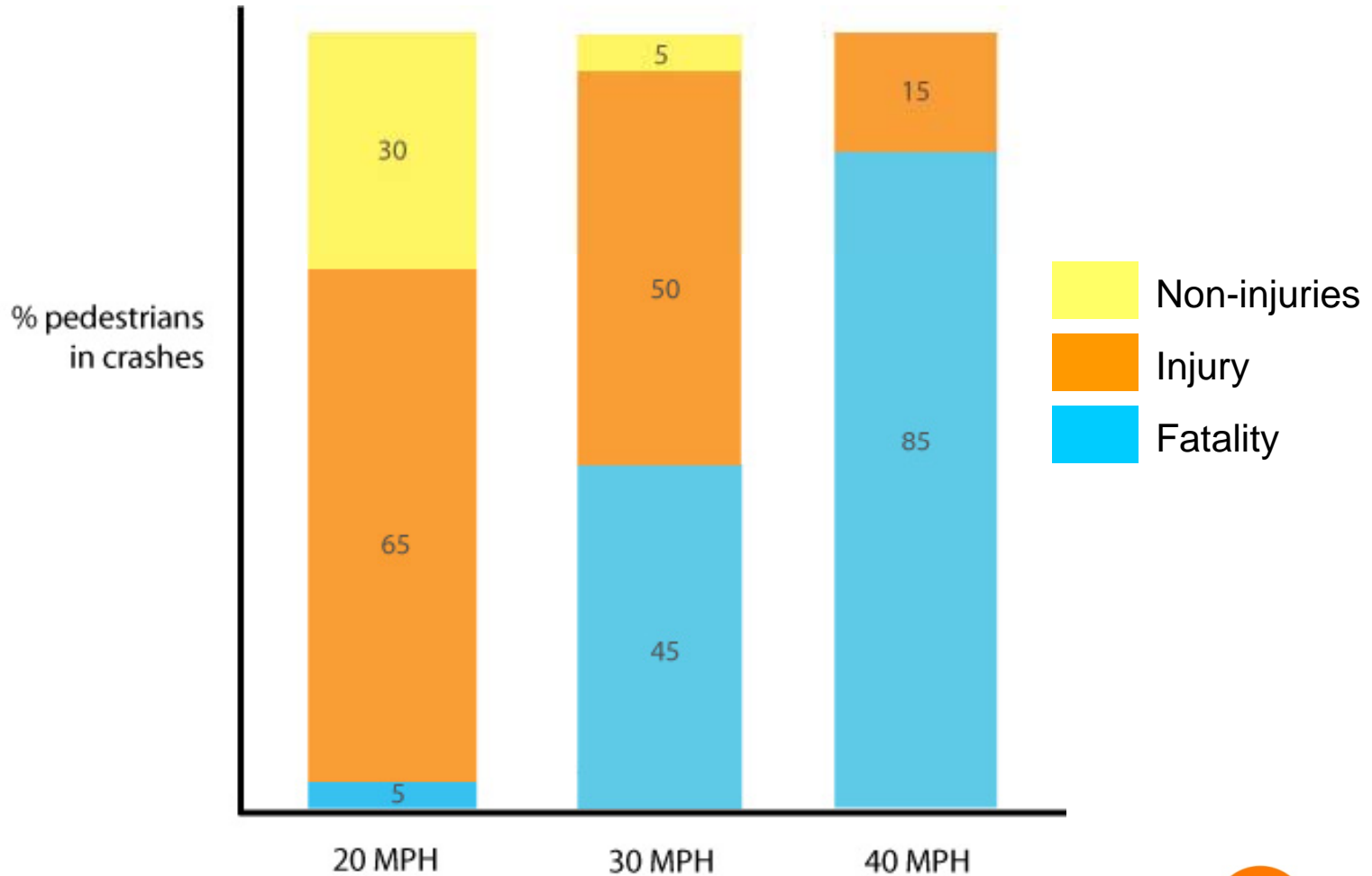
New York City Seniors:
12% of all population
yet 39% of all pedestrian fatalities

Source: United States 2000 Census; NYC Department for the Aging; NYC Department of Transportation



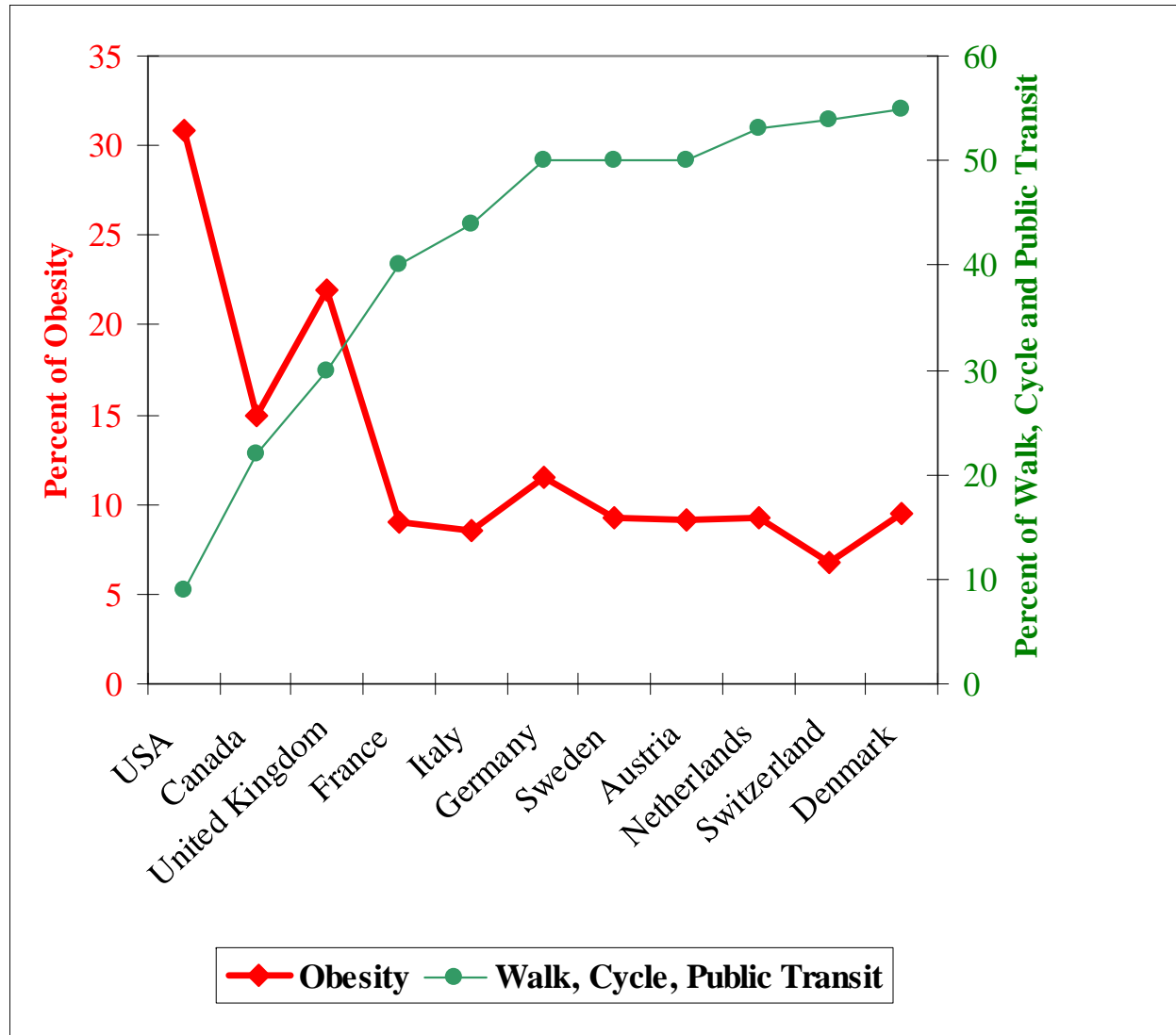
Safer streets positively impact the entire population

Pedestrian injury severity vs. vehicle impact speed



Source: "Literature Review on Vehicle Travel Speeds and Pedestrian Injuries" US DOT HS 809 021 October 1999 Final Report

Obesity falls sharply with increased walking, cycling, and transit use!



Source: Pucher and Dijkstra, "Promoting Safe Walking and Cycling to Improve Public Health, *Am Journal of Public Health*, September 2003.

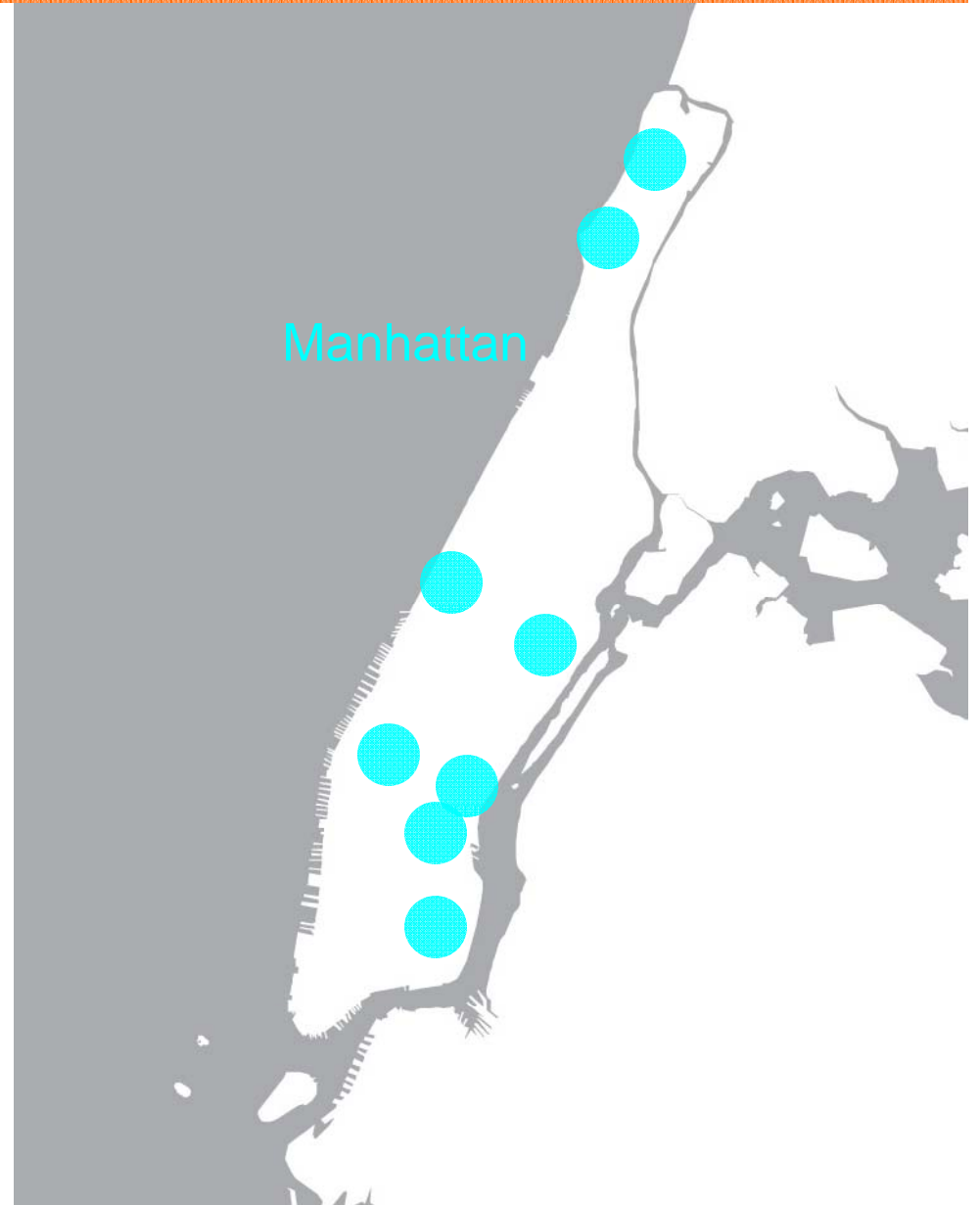
Why focus on Seniors and Transportation

- **WHY:** Although seniors are 12% of the population in NYC, they represent 39% of pedestrian injuries and fatalities.
- **WHY:** Because by 2030 there will be 44% more seniors (1.35 million seniors).
- **WHY:** Because if we design streets for seniors it improves public health and encourages active aging.
- **WHY:** Because if we design streets for seniors it improves safety for all pedestrians.



T.A.'s Safe Routes for Seniors

- T.A. worked with local seniors on identifying walking obstacles in eight Manhattan neighborhoods
- Target elected officials by committing resources to politically defined districts





Goals

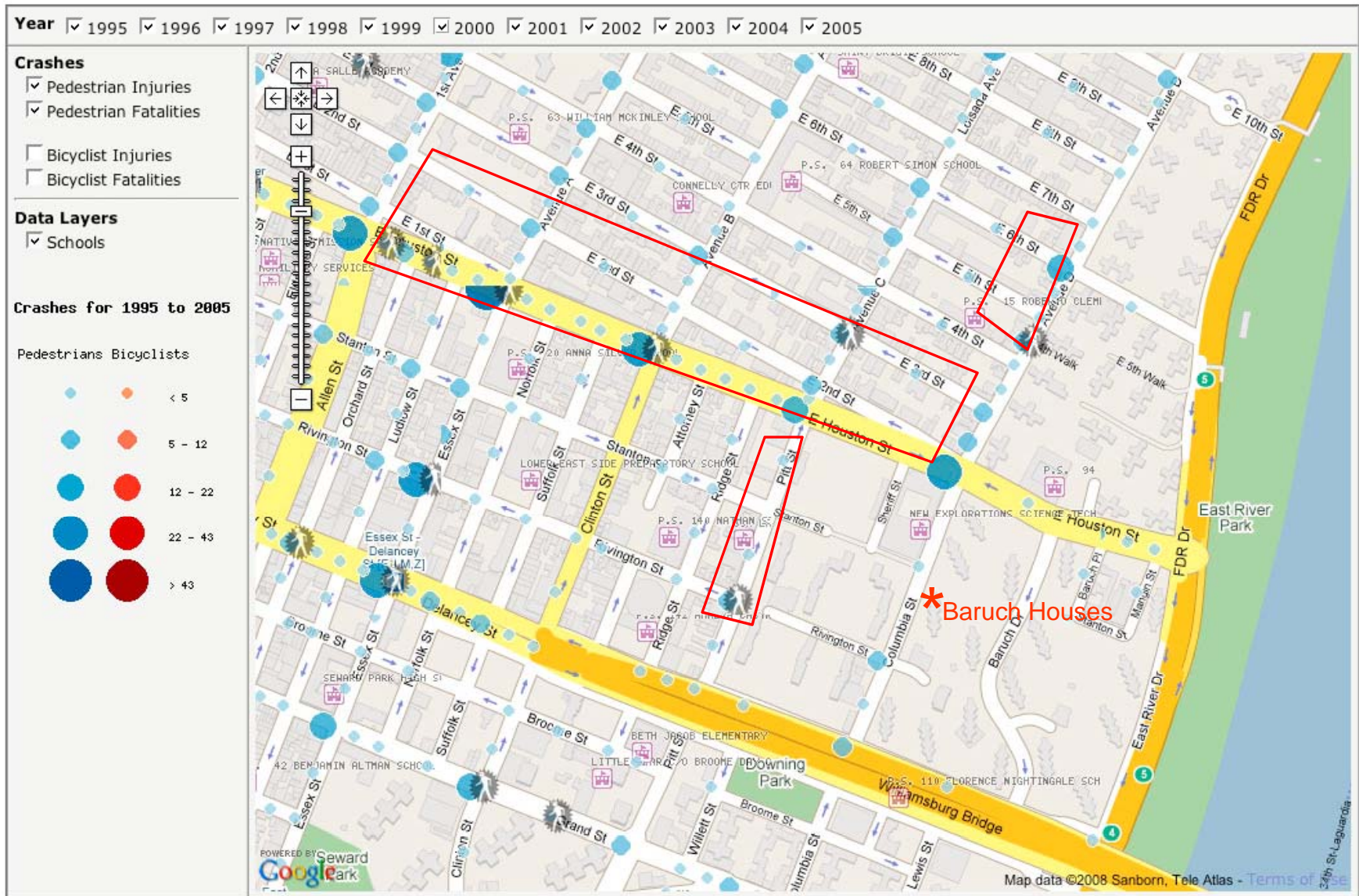
- Learn from local seniors about local walking obstacles and remove those obstacles
- Infrastructure designed specifically for seniors (Traffic Calming)
- ADA compliant recommendations
- Encouragement of active aging

A photograph of a group of people, including seniors and officials, sitting around a table in a meeting. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange grid pattern. A list of steps is overlaid on the left side of the image. The background shows a room with a potted plant and a window.

The process

- Identify and select senior local partners
- Senior center outreach
- Seniors map routes and hazards
- Survey seniors for obstacles and destinations
- Map all crashes
- Collate crashes/hazards and input from seniors
- Site tours with seniors and elected officials
- Design recommendations
- Implementation
- Build community support / advocate!

Crash analysis help identify potential study areas



Crash data source: NYS DMV.

From Crashstat.org

Pedestrian barriers lower senior activity

Manhattan Senior Survey Results (N=241)

Do these problems make it difficult for you to get to where you need to go?
NR=37, N=204

Yes 46% (95)

Have the identified problems discouraged you from walking?

Yes 31.6% (63)

Would you walk more if these problems were fixed? NR=49, N=192

Yes 72.3% (139)

Where do seniors walk in their neighborhood?

Manhattan Senior Survey Results (N=241)

Do you walk regularly to the following places?

Grocery Store/Supermarket, N= 215	96.2% (207)
Senior Centers, N=224	94.2% (211)
Other Shopping, N=170	81.7% (139)
Train Stops/Stations, N=196	80.6% (150)
Church/Religious Activity, N=177	76.2% (135)
Park, N=169	73.9% (125)
School, N=125	32% (40)

How do you prefer to do your daily travels? NR=19, N=222

Bus	65.3% (145)
Walking	48.1% (107)
Subway	22.9% (51)
Private Vehicle	7.2% (16)
Access-A-Ride	5% (12)

Threat

Turning cars during intimidate crossing pedestrians



Solution

Slow Down Turning Cars.
Give people lead time to cross before cars.



Threat

Unsafe Curb Ramps



Solution

Better Curb Ramps



Threat

Long crossing distances with short crossing times



Solution

Shorten the crossing distance with refuge islands and curb extensions.
Lengthen the pedestrian crossing time.



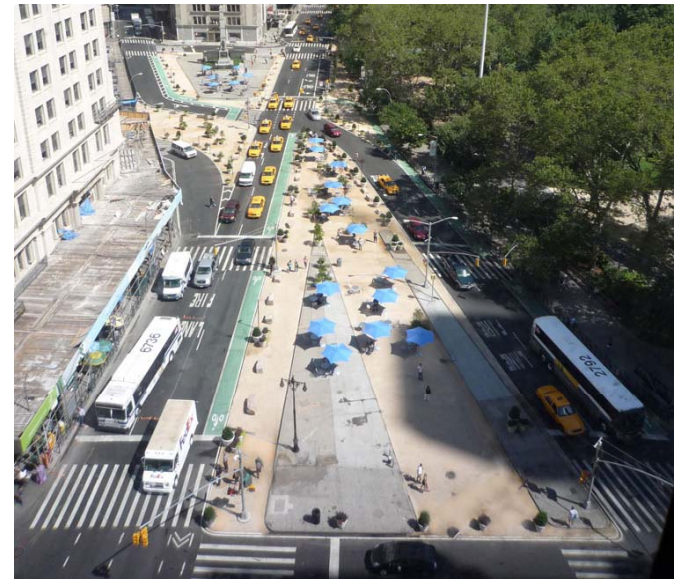
Threat

Wide Streets Promote Speeding

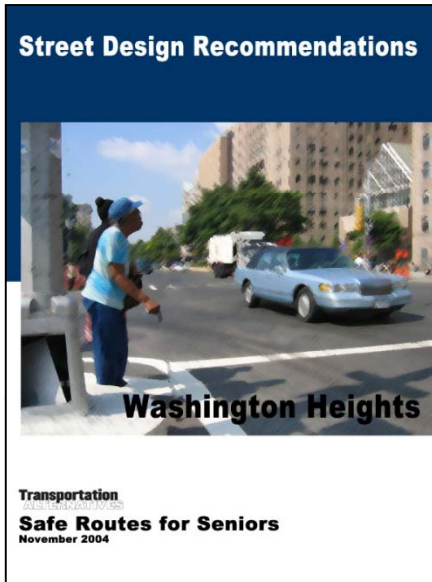


Solution

Narrower Streets Slow Down Traffic.
Excess Street Width can become Wider Sidewalks or Public Spaces.



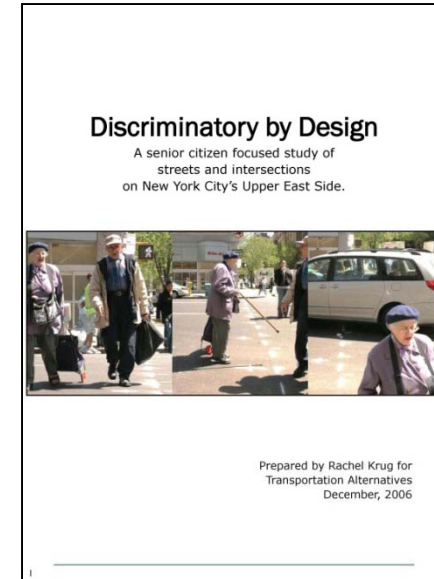
Reports are an advocacy tool



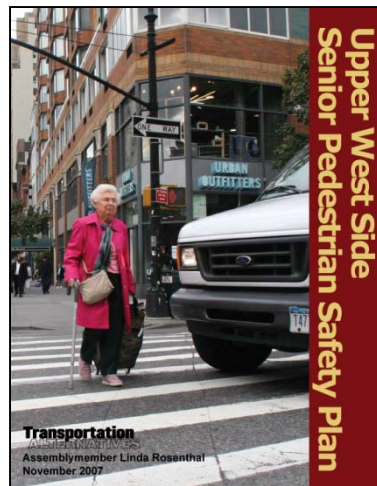
Washington Heights, 2004



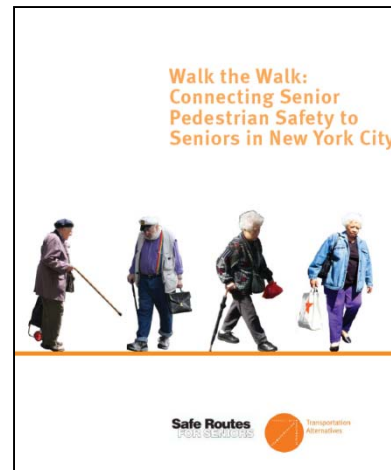
Inwood, 2005



Upper East Side, 2006



Upper West Side, 2007



City-wide policy, 2008

Case study

20th Street and 1st Avenue **BEFORE**



Improvements Implemented

20th Street and 1st Avenue
AFTER





Improvements

20th St and 1st Ave

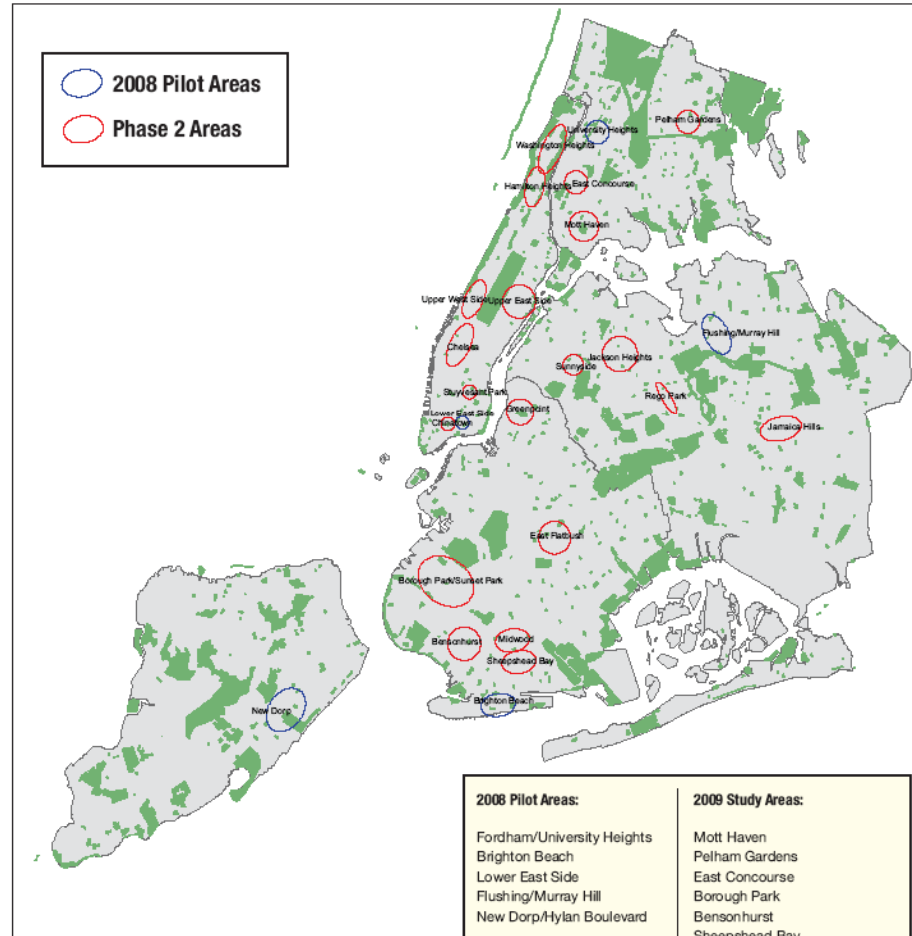
- Realignment of Crosswalk
- Leading Pedestrian Intervals
- Service Road Closure
- ADA-Compliant Curb-cut Ramps
 - New Gardens
- New Public Space

On the ground change

- **65** pedestrian safety improvements, such as Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) and ADA curbs
- Safer streets for over 26,000 seniors (Census 2000)
- Expanded DOT Safe Streets for Seniors coverage areas (Lincoln Center NORC successfully advocated to the DOT to expand the UWS area)



City-Wide Safe Streets for Seniors Study Areas



2008 Pilot Areas:	2009 Study Areas:
Fordham/University Heights	Mott Haven
Brighton Beach	Pelham Gardens
Lower East Side	East Concourse
Flushing/Murray Hill	Borough Park
New Dorp/Hylan Boulevard	Bensonhurst
	Sheepshead Bay
	Midwood
	Greenpoint
	East Flatbush
	Chinatown
	Washington Heights
	Hamilton Heights
	Upper West Side
	Upper East Side
	Stuyvesant Park
	Chelsea
	Jackson Heights
	Jamaica Hills
	Rego Park
	Sunnyside


New York City
 Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

New York City
 Department of Transportation
 Janette Sadik-Khan, Commissioner



T.A.'s Safe Routes for Seniors = NYCDOT Safe Streets for Seniors

Almost...

- 25 senior pedestrian improvement areas identified
- Program offers basic, minimum level of pedestrian safety – curb cuts and signal timing
- Program can go much further in improving street safety for seniors

THANK YOU!

Transportation Alternatives

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