



Op-ed for District 4  
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## **Bikes Should be a Healthy Solution, Not a Dangerous One**

Getting around New York City can often be difficult. Our subways are in disrepair, buses are unreliable, and traffic is a nightmare. Bicycling is an increasingly popular solution that is good for both the planet and personal health. U.S. and European cities with higher rates of bicycling also have lower rates of vehicular crashes, but we need to increase bike accessibility in a logical way for cyclists, drivers, and pedestrians and doesn't impede traffic or parking.

Last year saw a tragic 18 deaths from cycling accidents, which were all caused by collisions with motor vehicles. At the same time, many pedestrians feel that the bicyclists are a threat to their safety. Almost everyone on the street has had encounter in which they have been almost hit by a speeding bicyclist. And those are the lucky ones. Earlier this year, a 62-year old woman was critically injured after she was hit by a bicycle while walking around two parked cars on 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Less than two years ago, a mother in Central Park was killed by a bicyclist who hit her in a crosswalk. There must be a way to ensure that vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians all safely share the street.

First, we must improve education for drivers and cyclists alike on how to safely share the streets. Many cyclists either do not know or choose to ignore traffic laws, leading to accidents and dangerous situations. The rights and responsibilities of bicyclists should be taught in NYC classrooms, very clearly printed on all Citibike docks and bicycles, part of driving safety in the DMV handbook, and emphasized on the DMV permit and road test. The City should launch more education initiatives for bicyclists on safe riding practices such as wearing helmets and obeying traffic laws. At the same time, we need to hold bicyclists accountable to obeying traffic laws. NYPD Traffic Enforcement Agents must crack down on individuals who ride the wrong way down one-way streets, run red lights, or weave through cars to get around them faster.

Additionally, as the City continues to develop "protected" bike lanes, lanes designated for bikes that are separated from vehicular traffic by planters, curbs, parked cars or posts, it needs to also consider pedestrian safety and education. Many pedestrians are confused, overwhelmed, and frustrated by the additional lanes to watch while crossing.

Finally, before the City begins work on new bike lanes, it should look to fill in the gaps that exist in current routes. On the East Side, there are a number of places where the bike lanes end abruptly, confusing everyone on the road. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue has a number of gaps, including at the

corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 48<sup>th</sup> Street. Routes running across Manhattan are notorious for ending abruptly or skipping back and forth on opposite sides of the street, such as on 51<sup>st</sup>, 49<sup>th</sup>, 44<sup>th</sup>, and 39<sup>th</sup> Streets. And we all know that bicyclists and pedestrians alike will rejoice when the East River greenway is finally completed.