Bureaucrat of the Year: In just a year-and-a-half, Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan has transformed New York City's Department of Transportation into the envy of city transportation agency officials across the country (OK, maybe Portland, Oregon where the former DOT commissioner was elected mayor isn’t envious). In this Streetfilm, Sadik-Khan shows off and explains some of the most recent developments...

Activist of the Year: With so many outstanding livable streets advocacy projects popping up across New York City, it’s hard to single out just one community activist for praise. Transportation Alternatives' Queens Committee Chair Mike Heffron did a great job in 2008 organizing activities and drumming up support for livable streets in a borough where it can often be tough to find allies.

Teresa Toro wins a big honorable mention for helping to organize this summer’s Williamsburg Walks event, for winning approval for Community Board DOT’s Kent Avenue bike lanes and for her years of hard work as chair of CB1’s transportation committee. Working on a Community Board can be a thankless task and Teresa did it well.

This year's winner is Florent Morellet. Proprietor of the recently closed Meatpacking District restaurant that bore his name, Florent was a key instigator and steward of the Gansevoort Plaza project, a leading voice for the protected bike paths on 8th and 9th Avenues, an eloquent defender of the Grand Street bike lane and an important behind-the-scenes political player, in general. Even as he was being priced out of his restaurant of 23 years (rent was going to jump from $6,000/month to $50,000!), Florent continued to work to make his neighborhood and his city better for pedestrians, cyclists and, unfortunately, landlords too.
**Favorite Streetsblog Commenter:** There's a real glut of worthy candidates for this honor, but we're giving it to 'Marty Barfowitz.' The deciding factor? It could be the consistently insightful, pull-no-punches mini-essays on topics such as NIMBY opposition to bike lanes and the State Assembly's culpability for killing congestion pricing. Or it could be the pseudonym that appeals to both our outer political cynic and our inner eight-year-old.

**Most Effective LSN Member:** Honorable mention goes to Dave 'Paco' Abraham, whose achievements in 2008 included a successful one-man lobbying effort to sell Duane Reade on the benefits of bike racks. The top spot belongs to Susan Donovan (below), who could be spotted drumming up support for Amtrak funding in a widely read Daily Kos diary, and, in an impressive media coup, leading NY1 through the automobile-clogged sidewalks near Yankee Stadium on game day — proof that livable streets advocacy and local TV news are a great match.

**Best Lenswork:** Goes to Jacob-uptown for his photographic documentation of conditions on New York City sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus routes, the best of a bumper crop submitted to the Streetsblog Flickr pool this year.

**Best LSN Group:** With 47 members, LSN's Inwood and Washington Heights Livable Streets group is doing a great job of making use of our online organizing tools. Let's hope that 2009 brings a redesigned Dyckman Street and some new Community Board members to northern Manhattan.

**Most Weirdly Effective and Totally Accidental Online Advocacy Effort:** State Farm pulled one of its TV advertisements from the air after a Streetsblog-incited Internet mob told them that their attitude towards bike commuting needed a major adjustment. Here's a description of the ad. And here's State Farm's response.

**Best Advocacy Campaign:** Michael O'Loughlin and the crew at M+R win a huge honorable mention for the Campaign for New York's Future. Though they weren't able to bring congestion pricing across the finish line in Albany, the Campaign put together an unprecedented coalition of business, labor, environmental, public health, religious and community groups and won approval for congestion pricing in City Council, something that many said would be impossible.

Honorable mention also goes to Joan Byron and Brad Lander at the Pratt Center for Community Development for their Transportation Equity Project. The idea of bringing together lower income communities to advocate for better bus service is an absolute no-brainer. But no one was doing it until Joan and Brad stepped in to fill the void.

The winners are the Prospect Park Youth Advocates because no other advocacy campaign employed the Brooklyn Steppers Marching Band to such great effect.

**Best Livable Streets Education Initiative:** After fifth grader Michael Needham, Jr. was killed by a reckless, speeding motorist while riding his bicycle, P.S. 76 in the Bronx might have decided to discourage students from riding bikes (like this New Jersey high school principal did...)

in May). Instead, P.S. 76 began working bike safety, skills and street awareness into its curriculum. With the help of Bike New York, P.S. 76 implemented a month-long, bike-oriented physical education program for students and their parents and even raffled off a brand new bicycle to one student — a bold move for school administrators and a fitting tribute to Michael.

**Best Celebrity Livable Streets Endorsement:** Step aside David Byrne. It’s **Jay-Z**.

**Best Out-of-the-Box Transportation Policy Thinking:** With regrets to Councilman Lew Fidler and his 9 CARAT STONE Plan, we’re going to have to give the award to **Charles Komanoff** for the Kheel Plan and his Balanced Transportation Analyzer. Honorable mention goes to TOPP’s own Mark Gorton, for his four-part Smart Para-Transit opus.

**The Old College Try Award:** Goes to **Paul Newell** for running a Democratic primary campaign challenge against State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. If nothing else, it forced Shelly to campaign for the first time in ages, and may have provided the nudge that pushed the Speaker to stop obstructing the traffic-reducing Gansevoort Waste Transfer Station. It’d be great to see a dozen Paul Newell’s taking on State Assembly Democrats come 2010.
Joan · 8 years ago

Related thanks and "aw shucks" - because the credit for our advocacy work on transportation equity truly belongs to the stalwart members of COMMUTE! http://prattcenter.net/comm..., who carve out the time from the many issues they work on to bring their home communities, and the electeds who represent them, on board the BRT bus. And here at the Pratt Center, the hard work gets done by Elena Conte, Organizer for Public Policy Campaigns, and by our former colleagues Michale Amabile and Justin Kray, who made the maps that make the case. Uh-oh, I hear the 'get off the stage' music playing...

b.nyc · 8 years ago

How is Gansevoort Plaza a success? The installation presents an obstacle course of ill-placed balls, slabs, planters, and constant line of traffic for pedestrians crossing 9th. It's also hideous. Bring back the open flow of the triangle by omitting the useless clutter.

Paul Newell · 8 years ago

Thanks Streetsblog, for the award and all your efforts in 2008. We may not have achieved everything we wanted last year, but I think New Yorkers began thinking about real, systemic transit solutions for the first time. That alone is a victory.

Looking forward to working with you all in 2009 and beyond.

Happy New Year!

Heffron · 8 years ago

Looks like I’m in good company with Teresa, here’s to 2009

teresa toro · 8 years ago

Thanks, Streetsblog! We'll see what 2009 brings -- it will include my plans to continue pushing the city for smart transportation planning for Williamsburg and Greenpoint.

Eric McClure · 8 years ago

Jay-Z? That couldn’t be the same Jay-Z fronting for the building of a basketball arena with tons of parking spaces and no real transit plan in Prospect Heights, would it?
Better recount those ballots.

Cap'n Transit · 8 years ago

Better recount those ballots.

Cap'n Transit · 8 years ago

on your trike ... then I suggest you STFU.

Classy. Where do you get off commenting on someone else’s blog and telling the other commenters to Shut the Fuck Up?

If it really is impossible for emergency vehicles to get through, I’d expect we would have heard something from the fire department by now.

The loading zones are precisely the point. Sorry to mess up your false dichotomy.

Liam · 8 years ago

Granddame,

I ride through the Grand Street lane daily and I live in the area. How is the Grand Street lane a safety nightmare? Oh wait it’s not.... There’s simply no space to double park illegally in the bike lane anymore. I think I’m gonna cry.

Urbanis · 8 years ago

Inwood and Washington Heights Livable Streets are honored by the mention!

Granddame · 8 years ago

Cappy,

Evidently, you’re misinformed regarding the installation of the bike route on Grand Street. There was no public hearing held, the community was blindsided by it. Whether or not there are 24 hour loading zones are beside the point; the street is choked and is virtually impassible by emergency vehicles at times.

Soho, believe it or not, is where people live. If you’re merely passing thru on your trike, then you don’t really know the situation. Unless you’re willing to put in some time with the DOT to help, then I suggest you STFU.

Cap'n Transit · 8 years ago

The bike lane on Grand Street doesn’t affect his charmed life, for the rest of us living on Grand it’s a nightmare, to our sanity and safety.

A nightmare that could be brought to an end with a few 24-hour loading zones, right? But you won’t ask for the loading zones because you don’t want to inconvenience a few overnight parkers? And you’d rather scapegoat “the cyclists”? Good luck with that.

This nightmare is of your own making, and you have the key to ending it. Stop scapegoating and start looking for real solutions.

Granddame · 8 years ago

Florent is rather like Soho’s Evita. He hails from a petit bougeoisie French background, a loft in Soho bought and paid for by his parents. His restaurant was backed by the same, and ran for years, completely cash based at a cut rate rent.

Florent has had his struggles, however they have never been financially based, so don’t cry for him New York.

The bike lane on Grand Street doesn’t affect his charmed life, for the rest of us living on Grand it’s a nightmare, to our sanity and safety. He doesn’t get that the Grand Bike lane is a disaster for the community because he lives high above and far away from what it reeks for the everyone on Grand Street.

Where was Florent in the struggle with the Gansevoort Hotel? Oh that right, he doesn’t sleep near there, and his little boite got the run off from the hotel filling his coffers.

Spare us the accolades to him, he’s a relic of the 80’s and La Gamelle. He’s as uniformed and ignorant as his heroine, Christine Quinn when it comes to what is good for the community.

Larry Littlefield · 8 years ago

“Seriously, I wonder what the big issue in the coming year will be?”

The worst economy of our lifetimes. I say that optimistically, hoping 2010 will be better.

How does livable streets fit in? The bicycle as a way of life that is less expensive, but not less desirable, and makes its riders winners and not losers.

Because a lot of people are going to be feeling like losers.

Leave aside the environmental and community benefits. It is a health club without a membership, and a low-cost transportation system that is the fastest up to three miles where parking is an issue and viable up to 10. And it has low public capital costs, and zero public operating costs.
Virtually all political proposals to "reduce the cost of living" are costs to subsidize something (generally while increasing its cost) and shift it to someone else. The bicycle really does cut the cost of transportation and health care, public and private alike. If the environment has been the hook for some, ar oil prices for others, home economics is the hook for 2009.

Take it from a legendary (among those who know me) cheapskate. Learn to cook your own meals. Don’t live in more space than you require. And don’t live in a place where you have to drive to work.

Susan Donovan · 8 years ago

I’d like to thank the academy, my husband and our two wonderful cats....

Seriously, I wonder what the big issue in the coming year will be?

Jessica Roberts · 8 years ago

I’m from Portland, and believe me, we’re jealous of JSK!!! We’ve got good electeds and good bureaucrats, but they haven’t delivered all that much on-the-ground stuff in the last few years. The notable exceptions are indeed notable (green bike boxes, a brand-new colored bike lane through the heart of our biggest transit center, and we do encouragement programs like SmartTrips and SR2S like nobody’s business), but our bike network has hardly even grown in the last 3-4 years. We envy the promise to build 200 miles of bikeway in just three years, your THREE Summer Streets (we got one), your 35% bike modeshare growth (we only had 28%), your separated bike lanes, your public plazas reclaimed from cars, and your model Sustainable Streets plan...and most of all I am wowed and humbled by the pace of change and the 180-degree change that JSK represents. Gil Penalosa says that sometimes it’s easier to go from bad to great than good to great, and I think NYC my be the proof of that.
All in all it was a great year for New York City's Livable Streets Movement. Here are the winners of our 2007 awards. See you in January...

**Best Livable Streets Project:** The Ninth Avenue bike lane, Chelsea.  
**Best New Public Space:** DUMBO's Pearl Street Pocket Park.  
**Honorable mention:** Chelsea's Meat Market Plaza.  

---

**A Ride Down NYC's "Street of the Future"**

*By Aaron Naparstek | Oct 4, 2007*

For years, Livable Streets advocates have pleaded with New York City's Department of Transportation to just try new things. Do street design experiments using temporary materials. Give new ideas a shot. If an experiment doesn't work, take it down, redesign it, improve it or, heck, just restore it to how it used to be. What...[

---

**A Transit Miracle on 34th Street**

*By Brad Aaron | Apr 17, 2008*

NYC DOT is proposing to turn Manhattan's 34th Street into a river-to-river 'transitway.' In what she half-jokingly called 'probably the first-ever co-presentation' between their two agencies, Department of Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan stood with New York City Transit President Howard Roberts earlier this week to unveil the city's current Bus Rapid Transit program in its...[

---

**Tomorrow: Bike to Work With Janette Sadik-Khan [Updated]**

*By Brad Aaron | May 14, 2009*

Friday is National Bike to Work Day, and to celebrate, Transportation Alternatives will have coffee, snacks and commuter bags for cyclists at six locations — two in Manhattan and four on East River bridges. T.A. will be educating bicyclists about civic riding on NYC streets, and helping riders team up with buddies who share their...[

---

**The Bicycle Uprising, Part 5**

*By Charles Komanoff | Sep 4, 2012*

This is the concluding installment of a five-part series looking back at the victory over the Midtown bike ban, 25 years ago. Read parts one, two, three and four for an overview of the bike ban, the advocacy of the 1970s and 80s, and my recounting of the activism that followed the uprising against the ban. Activists are...["..."