



Streetscapes of New York

pocket zine
by the NYC Public Design Commission

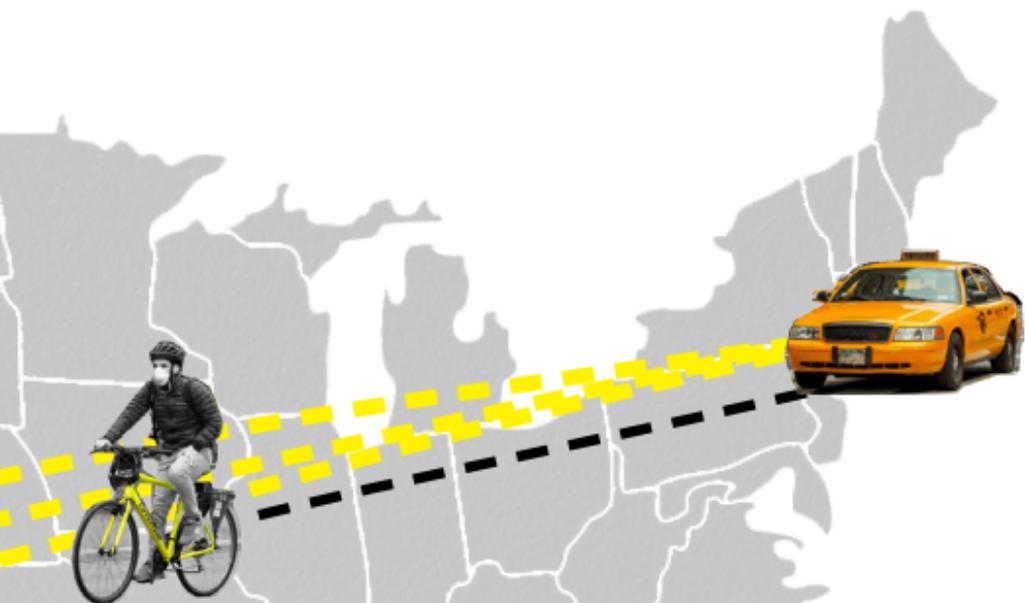
What are streetscapes?

Streetscapes do not only consist of roadbeds where vehicles drive and park. They also consist of the sidewalks and plazas where people walk and socialize. Moreover, streetscapes are made of the bike lanes, the street furniture (including benches, lampposts, and bike racks) and the trees planted along the streets. Streetscapes ensure that people can move around the city and connect with one another. They help to make the city more resilient and sustainable by managing stormwater with bioswales (see p. 8) and by limiting the negative effects of heat waves with shade provided by street trees. Streetscapes promote healthy lives and wellness by allowing people to exercise and come together. Most importantly, streetscapes are the places where community thrives and where people can express their right to protest and assemble. Finally, streetscapes are part of the public good: they belong to everyone.

NYC has around 8,000 miles of streets!

That's a distance that could stretch between NYC and Los Angeles three times!

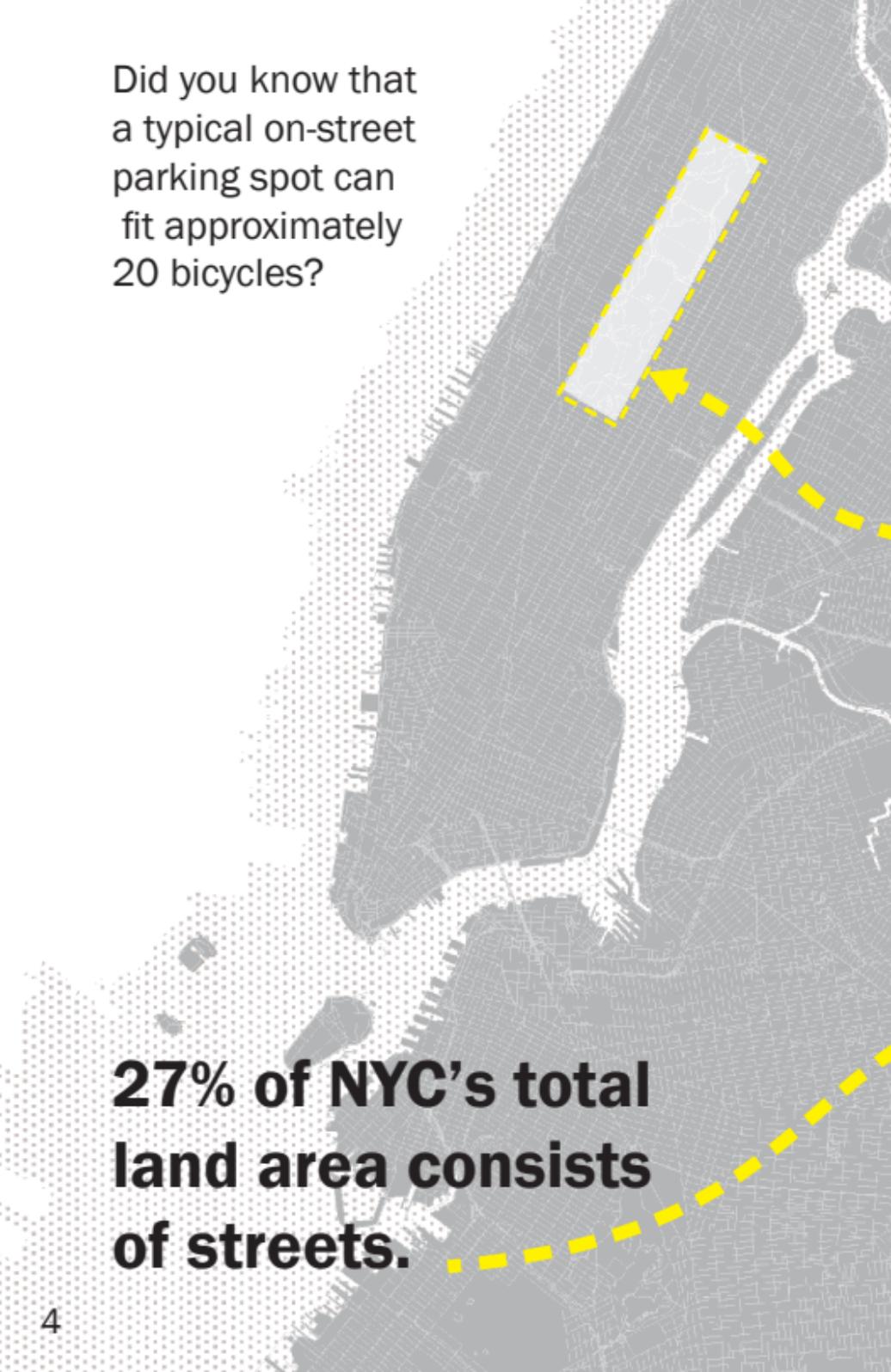




Compare that distance to the 1,250 miles* of bike lanes in NYC, which stretched out would only reach halfway to L.A., but could still extend from NYC to Florida!

* NYC has nearly ten times the amount of bike lanes it had twenty years ago. This number does not include the nearly 100 miles of Open Streets or approximately ten miles of temporary bike lanes that have been installed since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020.

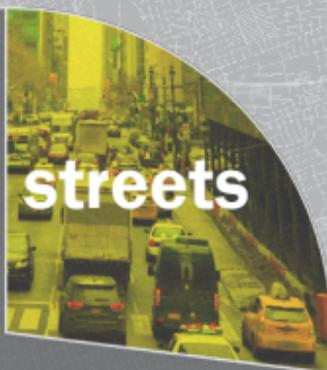
Did you know that a typical on-street parking spot can fit approximately 20 bicycles?



27% of NYC's total land area consists of streets.



NYC's approximately 3 million on-street parking spaces amass to an area equivalent to more than a dozen Central Parks, or over 8,200 football fields!

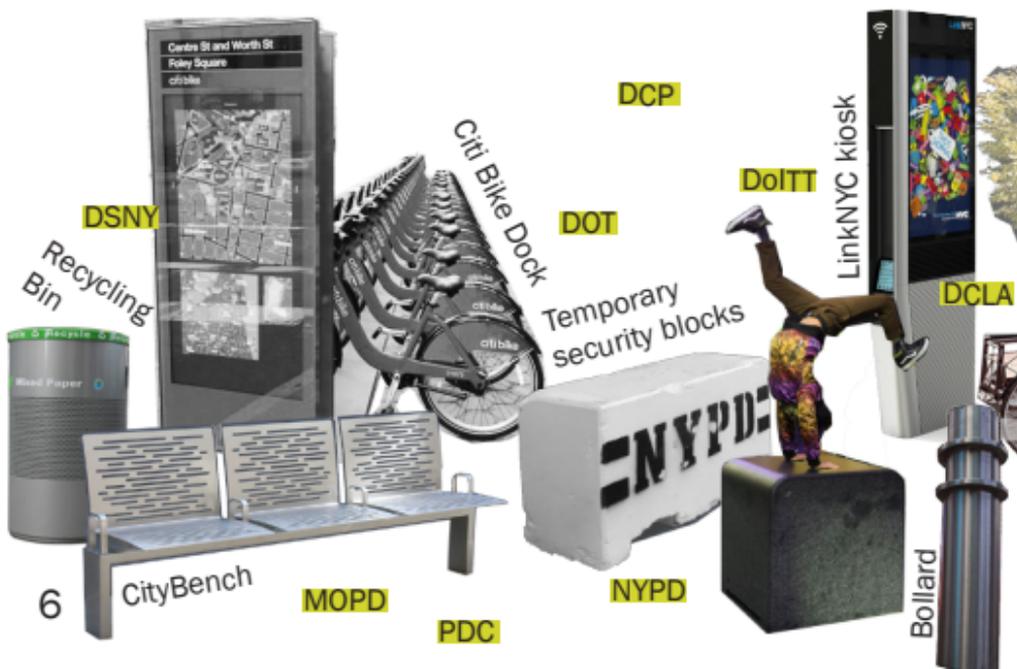


streets

(everything else)

Streets are shaped by many and affect everyone.

The NYC Department of Transportation is the primary agency in charge of NYC's streets. There are also close to 3 dozen other agencies and partners, including business improvement districts (BIDs) that are involved in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of street furniture, infrastructure, planting, and underground utilities.



NYC's streets are designed to provide:

- resilience
- sustainability
- stormwater drainage
- reduction of fossil fuels
- emergency response & access
- broadband & WiFi access
- accessibility & mobility
- health, wellness & sanitation
- safety & security
- communication



Streets should provide safe transportation options and contribute to a greener, healthier city.

Since the launch of NYC's bike share program, CitiBike has reported over 82 million rides and has contributed to a **225% increase in bicycle ridership** within NYC over the past two decades, helping to reduce citywide emissions.

Bioswale rain gardens are a type of green infrastructure that reduces stormwater runoff and sewer overflow, keeping our streets and waterways safer and healthier.



Good urban design makes this possible.

What is urban design?

Urban design is the practice that shapes the city to create good places for people to live, learn, work, play, exercise, socialize, rest, or simply walk. Urban design focuses on the relationship between the streetscapes and the buildings, and how this relationship affects people's experiences. The NYC Department of City Planning came up with four urban design principles for building a city that can be enjoyed by all:

1. Good urban design creates and reinforces the **sense of place and character** of a neighborhood.
2. Good urban design ensures that public spaces are **accessible and enjoyable by all.**
3. Good urban design cares about **details.**
4. Good urban design ensures that public spaces are **comfortable and feel safe to all.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted how we use our streets.

During a time when people must maintain physical distance to protect the health and wellness of the public, new emphasis has been placed upon public space. Cities worldwide must consider how streets can be reconfigured and rethought to allow people to safely navigate a dense urban environment, and to access food, essential services, and space for exercise, play, and fresh air. Streets should be able to adapt to differing restrictions, public health guidelines, and neighborhood conditions. NYC has implemented temporary rapid-response infrastructure to help reapportion street space for people.



How is NYC addressing these new needs?

Open Streets

To rapidly address NYC's need for additional space to allow for physical distancing among pedestrians, NYC developed a plan to open 100 miles of Open Streets throughout the five boroughs. These streets are closed to through-traffic during daytime hours and are open for to the public for walking and biking, play and relaxation.

Protected Bike Lanes

In March 2020, when NYC shut down in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Transportation noted substantial upticks in bicycle ridership. In a continued effort to ensure safer, easier cycling routes within the city, DOT has been restriping roads and creating miles of temporary cycling corridors that may have the opportunity to become permanent fixtures in our streetscapes.



Open Restaurants

Because indoor dining has been limited due to public health concerns, NYC's Open Restaurants program expands exterior seating options for food establishments by allowing outdoor dining in the sidewalk and/or roadbed. And, the Open Streets: Restaurants program allows community based organizations, BIDs, or groups of restaurants to apply for permits to temporarily close an entire street to traffic for expanded dining space.

Cool Streets

During heat emergencies, spray caps are installed on hydrants in designated shaded locations to provide cooling.

publication by the NYC Public Design Commission,
in collaboration with the NYC Department of City Planning
for WE Walk: Streets for Connection,
PARK(ing) Day 2020, New York, NY
September 2020

design and content by J. E. Miller, PDC
with K. Butler, PDC, and J. Sneck, DCP

NYC DESIGN

NYC Public Design Commission
City Hall, Third Floor, New York, NY 10007
nyc.gov/designcommission