



November 1, 2022

Ydanis Rodriguez
Commissioner
Department of Transportation
55 Water St
New York, NY 10041

Keechant L. Sewell
Commissioner
New York Police Department
1 Police Plaza
New York, NY 10038

Dear Commissioners Rodriguez and Sewell:

We write to recommend that the Department of Transportation implement a Rockefeller Center pedestrian congestion mitigation plan that includes the pedestrianization of 49th and 50th Streets between 5th and 6th Avenues during the upcoming holiday season, as the agency did to much success in 2019 and 2021.

DOT's original plan in 2019 was long overdue. For years, the area saw a crush of pedestrians during the holiday season, with as many as 800,000 pedestrians visiting the area during the holidays. As we work toward regaining those numbers with additional tourists visiting New York and aiding our recovery from the pandemic, it is paramount that we push forward on a policy that creates a pedestrian-friendly area around Rockefeller Center. Important too is that DOT and other relevant agencies create programs to manage these crowds and changes, including addressing bus route diversions, vendor regulations, and public bathroom use.

Pedestrian-friendly streets are known to be a stimulus for businesses and can serve as a strong recovery tool. DOT's own report 'The Economic Benefits of Sustainable Streets' found that pedestrian-friendly changes can increase retail sales. At present and especially during the holiday season, our street space allocation around Rockefeller Center does not sufficiently prioritize pedestrians.

Thank you very much for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough President

Keith Powers
City Council Member