

# Green Mobility



Photo Credit: Steven Sunshine

## GOAL:

Make trips within, to and from the community safe, convenient, reliable, and enjoyable, whether by foot, by bike, by public transportation, or by automobile.



The transportation choices we make every day have far reaching consequences. The environmental impacts of our transportation choices are most obvious: automobiles and trucks contribute to global warming and release harmful emissions that cause asthma and other respiratory illnesses. However, transportation also has social and economic impacts affecting easily people can get to jobs, and road congestion can impact local economies and has social impacts on safety and on the cost of living.

In this walkable and transit-centered neighborhood (within the 11372 area code) more than 60 percent of the households do not own cars.<sup>1</sup> This compares to only 34 percent of households without cars across all of Queens.<sup>2</sup> Because the community is served by a wide array of transit lines, residents can live comfortably without an automobile.

Jackson Heights is not only unique in its dependence on transit, its residents also have unique transit needs: many community members work split shifts, and work at the airports and industrial areas in Queens and Brooklyn. Poor service outside of normal business hours and north-south connections make commuting difficult for these residents. The community's many disabled residents are also ill-served by current transportation as many of the stations are not accessible to them.

Conflicts arise as a result of many users competing for the same space on the road: delivery vehicles, pedestrians, and buses are all trying to get through the same spaces, often with double parked cars and standing vehicles blocking their route. These conditions result in a high level of congestion, frequent pedestrian injuries (especially near Roosevelt Avenue and Broadway where there were 19 crashes involving bikes or pedestrians between January 2005 and December 2007), and unreliable buses.<sup>3</sup> Heavily trafficked arterial streets like Northern Boulevard are dangerous, difficult to cross and divide the community. These unsafe conditions and the lack of bicycle lanes are no doubt contributing factors in Jackson Heights' low



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cycling rates: only 8 percent of residents report that they rode a bicycle between 2007 and 2008.<sup>4</sup>

This low rate of automobile ownership, the commuting patterns of local residents and the number of households who are struggling to pay rent (see the Affordable, Green Housing section) make providing frequent, viable, affordable alternatives to automobile travel a critical issue. Better street design and greater attention to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and transit vehicles, can address these safety and transportation reliability concerns and result in a range of transportation options that will help reduce air pollution and congestion.

1 U.S. Census, 2000

2 Ibid.

3 NYSDOT Crash Analysis, Jan 2005 – Dec. 2007

4 DOH. Community Health Survey, by UHF Neighborhood, 2008

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## 14. Make Cycling Safe and Convenient.

Expand bicycle lanes, creating a complete network of bicycle paths. East/west routes on or near Roosevelt Avenue and a north/south lane connecting the LaGuardia Airport to Roosevelt are especially needed. Partner with schools, residential buildings, institutions, and city agencies to provide secure, covered bicycle parking and to identify locations for additional on-street bicycle racks. Prioritize the creation of bicycle parking near train stations and community facilities.



Short Term



Inexpensive



Government

## 15. Improve the Pedestrian Environment.

Make walking safer and easier by: facilitating pedestrian access across Roosevelt Avenue, especially near subway stations; installing pedestrian refuge islands along Northern Boulevard, especially on cross streets adjacent to schools and parks; and creating a community-wide directional signage program.



Short Term



Inexpensive



Government

## 16. Pursue New Parking Strategies.

Advocate for the reform of parking policies in Jackson Heights. For commercial streets, explore policies to encourage higher turnover, reduce double parking, reduce standing and identify opportunities for increasing the number of metered parking spaces. For residential streets, work with NYC Department of Transportation to explore potential solutions, including creating residential permits.



Short Term



Individuals



Government



Local Businesses

## 17. Improve Bus and Subway Service.

Work with the MTA and state and local politicians to improve bus and subway reliability, frequency and safety, and to recognize the need for improved north/south bus routes and additional service during off-peak hours for the community's many night shift workers.



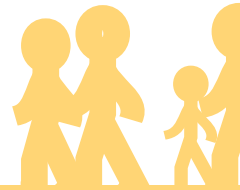
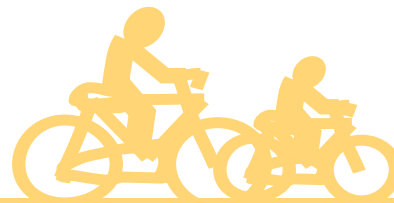
Medium Term



Government



Funding Needed



## 18. Create New Transportation Options.

Encourage alternatives to vehicle ownership by promoting the availability of off-street parking spaces for carshare vehicles, and assisting residential buildings in creating their own car and bike cooperatives.



Medium Term



Inexpensive



Community Groups



Local Businesses

## 19. Green Buses.

Expedite conversion of buses to next generation technologies that have less impact on air quality and climate change, including electric, hybrid, and hydrogen.



Long Term



Funding Needed



Government

## Next Steps

Initiative	Milestones for 2011
14 Make Cycling Safe and Convenient	Partner with cycling advocates to map existing bike parking, identify locations for new racks and covered facilities, and submit requests to NYC Department of Transportation for additional bike parking. Ensure that expanding bicycle parking is included as a part of DOT's ongoing study of the streetscape in Jackson Heights.
15 Improve the Pedestrian Environment	Install signs on 37 <sup>th</sup> Avenue and Northern Boulevard to help visitors find the nearest subway stations, and on Roosevelt Avenue to orient visitors exiting the subway system.
16 Pursue New Parking Strategies	Work with NYC Department of Transportation to expand the use of Muni-meters to other commercial streets.
17 Improve Bus and Subway Service	Work with civic groups and elected officials to increase awareness of transit needs in the community and identify funds to reverse planned cuts.
18 Create New Transportation Options	Identify suitable locations for parking car-share or bike-share vehicles.
19 Green Buses	Participate in existing coalitions of environmental and transit activists campaigning for a greener transit fleet.