Street Design Manual

New York City
Department of Transportation

2020
Third Edition
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Dear Fellow New Yorkers:

I am thrilled to bring you the third edition of the New York City Department of Transportation’s Street Design Manual. In the six years since I became Commissioner, the city’s record employment, tourism, and e-commerce have continued to push the limits of our street network. This growth, in conjunction with the city’s ambitious climate, equity, safety and mobility goals, has made efficiently accommodating a wide variety of users ever more urgent. To do this, we must continue to transform our city’s streets and push the boundaries of safe, multimodal street design.

With its arrival in 2009, the Street Design Manual broke ground for the unprecedented clarity and guidance it provided to numerous agencies and organizations involved in projects on New York’s streets. The Manual included standardized techniques and combined formerly separate silos of the street design process into a single resource for practitioners and citizens alike. As policies and best practices have advanced—from our expanded toolkit of bike and bus lanes to our growing portfolio of street furniture and our redoubled emphasis on accessibility—the Manual has evolved with them. This Third Edition represents a significant undertaking to ensure that agencies and public stakeholders have current information at their disposal. And with our new, fully interactive website, they can access it more easily than ever before.

These things matter. Working from the same playbook and codifying best practices not only encourages and streamlines the use of proven street safety techniques, it saves time and money for all the entities that work in our streets, and fosters award-winning design excellence in projects across the City. And the results are clear: a public realm that emphasizes high-quality design for users of all ability levels helps create a vibrant city, where New Yorkers and visitors feel comfortable walking, riding their bike, and spending time outdoors with friends and family. A street designed for pedestrian comfort and access is more likely to be an inviting, and therefore safer, street for all users.

I want to acknowledge Assistant Commissioner Wendy Feuer and her tremendous team who have distilled the great work of the agency and our partners as we continue to experiment, innovate and build expertise in so many areas of street design. DOT’s practices have become a model for public realm enhancements around the country – and the world; I’m proud that each new edition of the Manual has reflected this fast-paced evolution.

In 2009, many of the treatments in the Manual’s First Edition were aspirational: new ideas for New York with photos showcasing the techniques used in other cities. Today, these same pages document those treatments and many new installations and activities within the five boroughs, showing the ways New Yorkers are interacting with their neighborhoods.

But pictures only tell part of the story. Go out—walk, ride a bike, take a bus—experience the transformation of your City’s streets for yourself.

Polly Trottenberg
Commissioner
The Third Edition of the Street Design Manual continues the Manual’s status as a living document and reinforces its role as a critical resource for those working on projects in New York City’s public right-of-way. It provides both a thorough update to the guidance in previous iterations and a number of important additions: a new chapter on programming in streets and public spaces; a host of new entries throughout the Process, Geometry, Furniture, and Landscape chapters; and substantially expanded coverage of several key topics, including bike lanes, inclusive design, and plant selection and management. Importantly, the Third Edition is available on a new website, www.nycstreetdesign.info, to increase the reach and accessibility of this essential reference document.

Like its predecessors, the Third Edition of the Street Design Manual is the result of substantial intra- and interagency collaboration. The following agencies participated in its development: the Departments of Buildings (DOB), City Planning (DCP), Design and Construction (DDC), Environmental Protection (DEP), and Parks and Recreation (Parks), as well as the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), the Public Design Commission (PDC), and the Mayor’s Office.
The Third Edition of the New York City Department of Transportation’s Street
Design Manual is the result of substantial intra- and interagency collaboration.
Thanks to the contributions and attention to detail of nearly 150 participants
across city government, this edition is as comprehensive as possible reflecting
the latest guidance and best practices in street design. The publication also
builds on the previous two editions; to recognize those contributors, the
acknowledgments pages from the prior publications are included in APPENDIX C.

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Agency Acronyms

CECM
Mayor’s Office of Citywide Event Coordination and Management

DCAS
New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services

DCLA
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

DCP
New York City Department of City Planning

DCWP
New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection

DDC
New York City Department of Design and Construction

DEC
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

DEP
New York City Department of Environmental Protection

DOB
New York City Department of Buildings

DOHMH
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

DoITT
New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications

DOT / NYCDOT
New York City Department of Transportation

DSNY
New York City Department of Sanitation

EDC
New York City Economic Development Corporation

FDNY
New York City Fire Department

FEMA
Federal Emergency Management Agency

FHWA
Federal Highway Administration

FTA
Federal Transit Administration

LPC
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

MOPD
Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities

MOR
Mayor’s Office of Resiliency

MOS
Mayor’s Office of Sustainability

MTA
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

NYCEM
New York City Emergency Management

NYCT
New York City Transit, an MTA agency

NYPD
New York City Police Department

NYSDEC
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

NYSDOT
New York State Department of Transportation

OCPD
Mayor’s Office of Capital Project Development

OMB
Mayor’s Office of Management and Budget

Parks
New York City Department of Parks and Recreation

PDC
New York City Public Design Commission

SAPO
The Street Activity Permit Office within the New York City Office of Citywide Event Coordination and Management

SBS
New York City Department of Small Business Services

SHPO
New York State Historic Preservation Office

US ACE
US Army Corps of Engineers

US DOT
US Department of Transportation