

A New Generation of Bikeways



City planners are increasingly installing separated bike paths as a way to accommodate smart, sustainable urban growth.

Mike Lydon, The Street Plans Collaborative

8th Ave. Cycle Track, New York City.

By G.M. Filisko

Bicycle lanes are getting an extreme makeover. No longer are new bike lanes painted strips hugging auto lanes. In a growing number of cities, bicycle lanes have achieved a status entirely independent from their car-lane kin through physical separation created by parked cars, curbs or other barriers.

The push for independence for bicyclists comes from today's combined emphasis on sustainability and enhanced quality of life in the face of continued population growth in many cities across the United States.

“New York City has a sustainability plan called PLANYC 2030 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent in 2030,” explains Commissioner Janette Sadik-Kahn of the city’s department of transportation. “There will be 1 million more people in New York City by then. How do we make a New York City with a 9 million population work better than one with an 8 million population? Getting people out of cars and onto bikes is one way to do that, and it has a dramatic effect on emissions.”

The focus is on making people who’d love to bike — but are wary of doing it on busy city streets — feel