



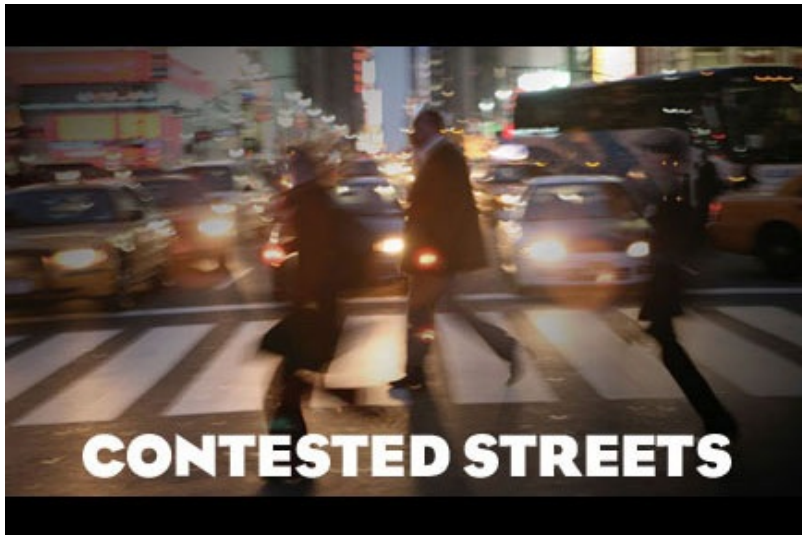
NYC's Contested Streets

Posted by [Glenn](#) on June 28, 2006 - 7:39am in [The Oil Drum: Local](#)

Topic: [Environment/Sustainability](#)

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Editor's Update: After seeing this twice now, once at home and once at the premier, I can say that I am very impressed with this nice one hour piece they have put together. This movie should be considered up there with Ken Burns' History of New York in terms of quality of the historical context and on par with the point of view documentaries like [Super-Size Me](#) and [Why We Fight](#). It's a must see for lovers of environmentally friendly transportation and urban advocates alike...



Years from now, when people look back on New York's history, they will look for pivotal moments that defined NYC's transition to a less car dependent and more bike/pedestrian friendly city, I think they will point to the Summer of 2006 as a critical moment. All the elements for success seem to be in place and now it's time start making a big push for the types of improvements that generations of New Yorkers will thank us for.

First, Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff is now fully asserting the importance of pedestrian and biking improvements to the slow moving city Department of Transportation. I expect his influence will finally breakthrough and start real changes from the top-down.

Second, there are all sorts of local civic and business groups that are getting very active from the bottom-up in calling for less traffic, less pollution and more clean transit options. From the call for Congestion pricing, to more bike lanes and greenways to opposition to vast parking lots at Atlantic Yards and New Yankee Stadium, people understand that automobile traffic needs to be tamed to reduce noise & pollution and promote more environmentally friendly and healthier alternatives to automobiles. The new [NYC Streets blog](#) will be tracking these, along with others on the NY Blogroll on the left sidebar.

Third, it is becoming clearer that that gridlock traffic and high gas prices are starting to have an [inflationary impact](#) on everyday goods in NYC. All over the city, retail prices are increasing as the cost of commercial truck deliveries are rising.

And finally there is the release of a [new one hour movie "Contested Streets" by Transportation Alternatives](#) which provides a new way to educate the mass public about these issues and activate public debate.

Co-producers Mark Gorton, successful entrepreneur, founder and director of the Lime Group and Paul Steely White, seasoned advocate for livable streets and director of the New York-based thirty-three year-old non-profit Transportation Alternatives announced today that they are releasing a new documentary, Contested Streets: Breaking NYC Gridlock. The film explores ways cities around the world are breaking free from the chokehold of traffic, enhancing quality of life and environmental sustainability and allowing room for their economies to grow and flourish. The unusual partnership between the two producers and their organizations has allowed for access to a diverse group of interviews that are collected in this film, which features some of our generation's the brightest minds from the business, transportation and urban planning arenas.

Luminaries and experts appearing on camera include: Kenneth T. Jackson, President, New York Historical Society; author, Encyclopedia of New York, Majora Carter, Executive Director, Sustainable South Bronx, recent recipient of MacArthur Genius Award, Bob Kiley, former CEO, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority and recent Commissioner of Transport for London, Kathryn Wylde, President and CEO, Partnership for New York City and Fred Kent, President, Project for Public Spaces.

The film will premiere at the IFC Center on June 27th to an audience of elected officials, business leaders, architects and urban planners. The film will be broadcast to a wider audience using a grassroots screening model, recently made popular by such films as Wal-Mart: The Movie. Many local groups and private residents are already signed up to host screenings later this summer. And there have been requests for the film from other cities from Philadelphia to Chicago to as far away as Pune, India.

"To accommodate the travel demands of our rapidly growing population, and with subway expansions being so expensive, New York City must find a way to get more transportation performance from the streets. This film features best-practice examples from cities that are far ahead of New York in making this happen," says White.

According to Kathryn Wylde, head of the powerful business group Partnership for New York City and one of the film's stars, "The main complaint in the business community is congestion. I have recently traveled to cities around the world that are getting serious about addressing the problem of congestion. This film showcases how some of these cities have made real strides towards reducing congestion and will spark important conversations about what New York City can do to ease our traffic problems."

I encourage everyone to [buy a copy](#) and [hold a showing in your neighborhood](#). Future generations of New Yorkers will thank you for it!



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