



## Summer Streets a Success!

Posted by [Glenn](#) on August 23, 2008 - 11:00am in [The Oil Drum: Local](#)

Topic: [Environment/Sustainability](#)

Tags: [bicycling](#), [livable streets](#), [new york city](#), [summer streets](#) [[list all tags](#)]

For the last two weeks, NYC has experimented with an idea of making a major avenue in Manhattan car-free for no particular reason than for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. There were no streetfair vendors hawking \$3 tube socks or blended drinks from noisy & polluting generators. Nor was there any excuse like the Marathon or a parade where only invited guests are allowed to run or walk down the middle of the streets.

This was different.

---

Summer Saturdays purely for locals and anyone who happened to be in town and want to get a little exercise by taking a stroll, jogging, roller blading or biking. It was for anyone of all ages and abilities. There were little children and senior citizens. There were world class athletes and people in wheelchairs. There were people from all over the world and local residents venturing into the middle of the street for the first time without fear of automobiles running them over.

But most of all, there was peace and quiet in the middle of the city and it was not a park - it was Park Avenue, experienced as it had not been experienced in perhaps 80-100 years. No engines roaring, no horns honking, no fear for your life. Just a pleasant place to enjoy a great Summer day in the city.

For generations now, the Summer has been seen as a time to escape the heat, smell and hectic pace of the "the city". But it was not the city itself, but the automobiles (mostly from outside the city) that made the city so unpleasant.

The first two Summer Saturdays in NYC have been a huge success and show the possibilities of simply making a long continuous route car-free. There were dance classes, churches selling lemonade for Katrina rebuilding efforts, families having picnics, people exploring places that only cars previously ventured - like the elevated roadway around Grand Central terminal.

I walked all the way from my apartment on 97th street through Central park and all the way down to Union Square where I enjoyed a wonderful picnic with my wife at the greenmarket. Watch Clarence's video courtesy of [StreetFilms](#) and you'll get a little taste of what it was like.

Enjoy.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).