

Manhattan Cruise Terminal

Community Traffic Mitigation Plan



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Executive Summary

In 2024 the City passed Local Law 54, part of which requires New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) to work with residents, New York Police Department (NYPD), and New York Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) on a Community Traffic Mitigation Plan (CTMP). The plan, updated annually on July 1, “outlines proposed measures to reduce private or for-hire vehicle usage and encourage use of public transportation in a neighborhood where a cruise terminal is located in order to address traffic congestion and other disruptions resulting from the loading or unloading of cruise ships or similar vessels as a cruise terminal.”

The Manhattan Cruise Terminal (MCT) experiences pedestrian/cyclist congestion where the facility intersects with the Hudson River Greenway. While NYCEDC has generally maintained a traffic enforcement agent (TEA) presence at the cruise terminal to manage flows and enforce traffic laws, the outdated structure of the terminal continues to exacerbate challenges for the surrounding neighborhood along the West Side Highway.

Responding to a need to accommodate the evolving cruise industry, the public realm, and multi-modal transportation, NYCEDC released a Master Plan in late 2025 to modernize MCT. For the traffic element of this plan, NYCEDC consulted local community, cruise passengers, and traffic engineering consultants to collect data on traffic inefficiencies and pedestrian safety.

In March 2025, traffic engineering consultant GPI published a report identifying traffic inefficiencies on all three levels of the terminal and both short-term solutions (for the terminal as it stands today) and long-term solutions (requiring capital infrastructure changes in accordance with the Master Plan). Short-term solutions included signalized greenway crossings, clearer pedestrian wayfinding and enhanced signage at pick-up/drop-off zones, among other ideas. Long-term improvements contemplated more frontage at each new pier, separation between provisioning trucks and coaches/buses, conflict-free pedestrian access, and enhanced ground transit service providing connections to/from nearby subway stations.

In July 2025, NYCEDC published its first Community Traffic Mitigation Plan (CTMP) report detailing the traffic challenges identified and categorizing the solutions based on what is in NYCEDC’s direct control and what will require interagency coordination with New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), NYC DOT, and Hudson River Park Trust (HRPT). Last year, NYCEDC met with NYSDOT and NYC DOT to elevate traffic issues that touch their jurisdictions, primarily congestion on the Hudson River Greenway as cruise passengers wait to cross 12th Avenue, and insufficient signal time to cross 12th Avenue.

Traffic data collected for the GPI report was limited in that it was only collected on a single weekday (Wednesday October 2, 2024). To get a clearer picture of traffic challenges on cruise days, NYCEDC is conducting a follow-up to collect a more robust dataset over the 2026 peak cruise season (August to October). This effort will help build a set of expectations about traffic issues caused by various cruise ship sizes on certain days, help scale interventions accordingly, and establish baseline conditions to assist with long-term Master Planning efforts. It will also account for traffic volumes after congestion pricing went into effect.

In addition to the data collection effort, the following measures will continue this year:

- 1) Work with NYPD to deploy traffic enforcement agents (TEAs) at West 46th, West 48th, West 50th, West 55th, and West 59th Streets and 12th Avenue crossings to assist with traffic flow and safe crossing of pedestrians on cruise days
- 2) Work with terminal operator Ports America to deploy flaggers at 12th Avenue taxi stands
- 3) Coordinate with NYSDOT and NYC DOT on shared safety priorities at MCT intersections as part of Route 9A Mobility and Safety Enhancements Study

Background

The Manhattan Cruise Terminal (located in Midtown West between West 47th Street and West 54th Street along 12th Avenue) was originally known as the New York Passenger Ship Terminal, which opened in the 1930s and was rebuilt in 1974. In 2004 the City of New York purchased the 18-acre site from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) and redeveloped it as the Manhattan Cruise Terminal (MCT). The MCT is a multi-level facility which consists of three piers: Piers 88, 90, and 92. Currently only Pier 88 is operational. Vehicular access to the facility consists of a single entrance at West 55th Street and two exits: one for passenger vehicles at West 46th Street, and one for buses, vans, and trucks at West 48th Street. Pedestrian access points are located opposite the two piers currently in service at West 48th Street (Pier 88) and West 50th Street (Pier 90). Additionally, pedestrian access points are also separated from 12th Avenue by the Hudson River Greenway, a bidirectional, multi-use path along the waterfront.

The MCT serves as one of the three cruise ports for the greater New York City region, the other two being the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal (BCT) in Red Hook, Brooklyn, and the Cape Liberty Cruise Port located in Bayonne, New Jersey. Several cruise lines operate out of the MCT as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: MCT Cruise Calls (2026)

Cruise Line	Ship	Capacity (passengers)	No. Of Ship Calls	Cruise Season
Carnival	Venezia	4,100	21	May - October
Crystal	Symphony	960	3	September - October
Hapag-Lloyd	Europa / Hanseatic Inspiration	400 / 230	2	October - December
Norwegian	NCL Aqua	3,600	29	Year-round
	NCL Breakaway	4,000	12	
	NCL Escape	4,300	6	
	NCL Bliss	4,000	6	
	NCL Sun	1,900	1	
	NCL Gem	2,400	1	
	Oceania Vista	1,200	4	
Seabourn	Ovation	450	1	October
Silversea	Shadow	390	1	November
Viking	Mars	930	1	April - October
	Polaris	380	2	
	Octantis	380	1	
	Vela	1,000	1	

Work Accomplished & Ongoing

In 2024, as part of the MCT Master Plan's traffic section, NYCEDC gathered data and worked with stakeholders to understand traffic conditions and develop short-term solutions, along with long-term plans to reduce vehicle trips. The following table summarizes the main traffic challenges identified in the traffic report and indicates whether each challenge can be addressed in the short term or requires interagency coordination and more capital investment. For details on traffic challenges, data collection methodology, and how interventions were chosen, see the 2025 MCT Community Traffic Mitigation Plan at cruise.nyc/manhattan-terminal.

Shorter-term challenges (identified in green) may be addressed through ongoing deployment of NYPD traffic enforcement agents and private flaggers at key intersections, coordination with Ports America on improved wayfinding and greater circulation within the terminal, and ongoing stakeholder coordination and data collection about traffic volumes, passenger mode split, and passenger origin. Longer-term challenges (identified in pink) require additional data collection and coordination efforts with partner agencies to be addressed.

Table 2: Traffic Challenges, Interventions, and Phases

Challenge	Intervention	Phase
Bikes rarely yield to pedestrians crossing greenway	Deploy traffic managers at key greenway crossings	Short-term – Ongoing
	Study feasibility of bike-oriented signals at key greenway crossings	Shared with City/State DOT Requires NYCEDC data collection
Insufficient time for pedestrians to cross 12 th Avenue and greenway, causing clusters on medians, sidewalks, and crosswalks	Deploy traffic managers and NYPD TEAs at key intersections	Short-term – Ongoing
	Install pedestrian wayfinding signs within terminal and at MCT exit and entrance	Short-term – Work with Ports America
	Extend signal timing to cross 12 th Avenue during peak periods Study feasibility of Leading Pedestrian Interval Phasing (LPI)	Shared with City/State DOT Requires NYCEDC data collection Shared with City/State DOT Requires NYCEDC data collection
Congestion at the protected left-turn signal at W. 55 th Street, causing spillback from the left-turn bay into the adjacent through lane	Close the left-turn bay and divert northbound traffic to make a right on West 56 th Street, right again on 11 th Avenue, and right onto 55 th Street	Paused - raises public concerns about traffic on local streets
Taxis and FHV's on northbound 12 th Avenue use one drop-off more than the other	Improved taxi and FHV signage to evenly distribute passengers between the two drop-off zones on northbound 12 th Ave	NYPD TEA to guide vehicles
Traffic congestion within MCT on all three floors	Deploy Traffic Managers at drop-off zones efficiently	Short-term – Ongoing
Insufficient and inconsistent vehicle signage within MCT creates confusion and congestion	Signs with uniform names and appearance, placed to guide vehicles toward the appropriate entrances for each vehicle type	Shared with City/State DOT
	Signal head to increase visibility for exiting vehicles	Shared with City/State DOT
Lack of industry and public sector coordination on traffic management	Stakeholder coordination	Short-term – Ongoing
Lack of understanding of passenger travel pattern	Data collection and impact analysis	Short-term – Ongoing
Lack of convenient and alternate mode of travel to MCT	Increased airport transfers and shuttle buses	Informed by NYCEDC data collection on passenger origin

MCT Master Plan

The Manhattan Cruise Terminal Masterplan, released in November 2025, is a comprehensive vision to modernize MCT for years to come. This work has involved significant planning of the piers, cruise terminal, traffic, and public realm impacts to develop a plan for significant infrastructure changes in the long term. As ships have increased in size and call frequency, the ground transport area and viaduct no longer provide adequate staging and queuing capacity, exacerbating congestion and overflow that disrupts the West Side Highway.

The transportation element envisions the terminal as a multimodal transportation hub that improves mobility, accessibility, and sustainability along Manhattan's West Side waterfront. The plan proposes new ferry connections, expanded pedestrian and cyclist pathways, widened sidewalks, and a pedestrian bridge linking the terminal directly to DeWitt Clinton Park to reduce conflicts with vehicle traffic along the West Side Highway. In addition, the project incorporates "Blue Highways" infrastructure for marine freight delivery, which would help reduce truck congestion and support cleaner last-mile transportation throughout New York City. These transportation upgrades are intended not only to improve the movement of cruise passengers but also to better integrate the terminal with the surrounding urban transportation network and public waterfront spaces, creating a safer and more connected experience for residents and visitors.

Figure 1: MCT Master Plan Streetscape Improvements (illustrative)

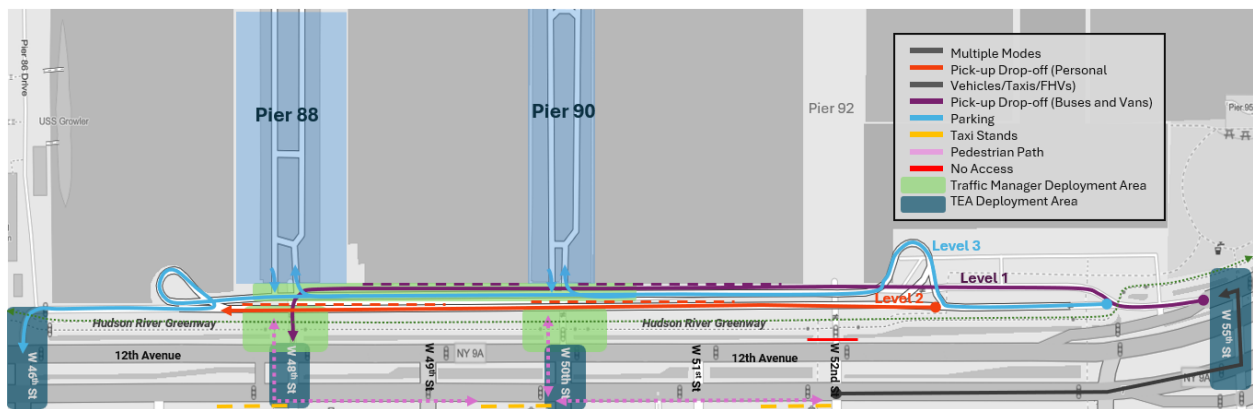


What to Expect This Year

Pedestrian Traffic Management

Due to the large swell of pedestrians outside the cruise terminal on cruise days, pedestrian traffic managers (TMs) and NYPD TEAs will be deployed at key locations to facilitate the safe movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. The primary locations where the TMs and TEAs are to be deployed are the crossings of 12th Avenue and the Hudson River Greenway at West 46th, West 48th, and West 50th Streets, and NYPD TEAs at West 52nd and West 55th Streets to facilitate vehicle turns. Additionally, TMs will be deployed along the east side of 12th Avenue and within the MCT. To address the safety issue of pedestrian and cyclist conflict on the greenway, TEAs will be able to manually override the greenway crossing signals as needed, while NYCEDC works with NYPD and NYC DOT on longer-term signal alignment and/or extension.

Figure 2: Traffic flow to and within MCT by vehicle type and areas for TEA deployment



Data Collection

NYCEDC onboarded an engineering consultant in May 2026 to begin data collection work at the terminal on select weekdays and weekends from August to October to understand traffic patterns, mode splits, chokepoints of cruise related traffic, and potential pedestrian and cyclist conflicts in and surrounding the Manhattan Cruise Terminal. NYCEDC is still identifying the data collection locations in collaboration with NYC DOT, but there will be particular focus on the 48th Street intersection where there is the most activity and potential conflict between cruise passengers, greenway users, and 12th Avenue vehicular traffic. Data collection will support a range of near- and long-term goals: 1) identify near-term interventions to reduce traffic and conflicts on cruise days and to understand traffic patterns and arrival/departure data for various cruise ships; 2) support the annual Community Traffic Mitigation Plan requirement per Local Law 54, and 3) establish baseline traffic/circulation conditions to assist with long-term Master Planning efforts.

Consultants will conduct data analysis in coordination with NYC DOT, and relay findings and make traffic reduction recommendations including a public presentation. Short-term and long-term improvements will be developed as part of a combined traffic mitigation strategy for both the facility and the surrounding neighborhood. NYCEDC will work NYC DOT, NYSDOT, NYPD, Ports America, and HRPT to identify the most effective strategies to meet the needs of MCT operations and local roadway users.

Coordination with NYSDOT Route 9A Mobility and Safety Enhancement Study

In parallel, NYSDOT is conducting a comprehensive study on mobility and safety enhancements to upgrade pedestrian and bicycle safety along Route 9A/the West Side Highway from Battery Place to 59th Street. Focus areas are being elevated by community to ensure the project reflects the diverse needs and priorities of all who travel this route. NYCEDC met with NYSDOT and participated in a November 2025 workshop to understand overlapping priorities for the area around the cruise terminal. MCT intersections with Route 9A and the Hudson River Greenway were identified by community as priorities, with calls for a better delineation of space between greenway users and pedestrians, longer pedestrian crossing times, and vehicle traffic calming and reduction. NYCEDC will stay synced with NYSDOT on any treatments pursued in this area and share traffic data collected where helpful.

Public Comment

This year, rather than setting a time-limited window for public feedback on the Community Traffic Mitigation Plan (CTMP) before it is published on July 1, NYCEDC will collect public comments on a rolling basis for the remainder of 2026 via an online form on the NYCEDC Cruise website. The intention is for the

public to have continuous access to an input mechanism so that changes to the Community Traffic Mitigation Plan can be considered in real time over the course of the year.

NYCEDC will continue to prioritize improving the safety of pedestrians crossing and providing adequate space and wayfinding to minimize any conflicts between cruise passengers and greenway traffic.

The public may offer comments via the online portal here:

[Manhattan Cruise Terminal Operations & Contact | Cruise NYC.](#)

Cruise Traffic Management Stakeholders

Effective coordination between industry and public sector stakeholders is required to successfully manage the interactions between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists at MCT, along the Hudson River Greenway, and the surrounding streets impacted in the Midtown West neighborhood. The following are the key City agencies, including NYCEDC, and private sector stakeholders that coordinate on an ongoing basis to ensure minimal traffic impact to the community.

- NYCEDC serves as the lease administrator of the MCT on behalf of the City.
- Ports America serves as the operator of MCT. Ports America provides terminal management and stevedoring services for the facility. They are also responsible for traffic management within the facility, including frontage operations and pedestrian assistance, as well as coordination with cruise companies to ensure traffic disruptions are reduced to a minimum during cruise days.
- Multiple cruise companies currently have operations at MCT. The largest of these are Norwegian Cruise Lines and Carnival Corporation. Most of the cruise companies operate private shuttle and transfer services from key origins of the city and surrounding areas including nearby airports, hotels, and train stations, providing a convenient alternative to personal vehicles to and from MCT.
- The New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) oversees the operation of the roadways surrounding the MCT, including determination of parking regulations and traffic flow including signal timings.
- New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has jurisdiction over 12th Avenue and co-manages it with NYC DOT.
- The New York Police Department (NYPD) is responsible for traffic management on the public roadways outside the MCT, as well as assisting with internal traffic flow when needed.
- Hudson River Park Trust operates and maintains the public park area as well as the greenway adjacent to MCT.

Next Steps

NYCEDC will collect traffic data over peak cruise season (August to October 2026) and solicit public comment in parallel. This traffic plan will be revised at the end of 2026 with public comment incorporated.

NYCEDC will work with Ports America on the effectiveness of the short-term solutions and consult interagency partners to diligence the potential for the longer-term interventions.

Glossary

- Community Traffic Mitigation Plan: As defined by Local Law 54 of 2024, *“plan, developed in consultation with the department of transportation and the police department, that outlines proposed measures to reduce private or for-hire vehicle usage and encourage use of public transportation in a neighborhood where a cruise terminal is located in order to address traffic congestion and other disruptions resulting from the loading or unloading of cruise ships or similar vessels at a cruise terminal.”*
- Cruise Terminal: Manhattan Cruise Terminal located at 711 12th Avenue, New York, NY and Brooklyn Cruise Terminal located at 210 Clinton Wharf, Brooklyn, NY 11231.
- For-Hire Vehicles (FHVs): Vehicles providing pre-arranged transportation for a fee, including app-based services such as Lyft and Uber.
- Local Law (LL): Municipal regulation or statute passed by the City Council that affects the day-to-day lives of people living in, working in, or visiting New York City.
- Operator: Terminal Operator is Ports America for both MCT and BCT
- Port of Call: Where a ship calls one of our cruise terminals without debarking or embarking passengers.
- Queue: Line in which vehicles stack up while waiting at intersections or entrances.
- Ship call: The act of a cruise ship berthing at and departing from a cruise terminal.
- Shuttle Bus: A bus service designed to transport people between set destinations.
- Traffic Enforcement Agents (TEA): Agents within a division of NYPD who enforce traffic laws and have the ability to override traffic signal indications.
- Traffic Managers (TM): Also called “flaggers,” privately hired staff that ensure safe passage for pedestrians at busy intersections.