



A SAFER PEDESTRIAN APPROACH TO THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE

The NYC Department of Transportation and the Department of Parks and Recreation have transformed the Manhattan approach to the Brooklyn Bridge Promenade, using solutions to pedestrian conflicts developed in 1994 by a team headed by Konheim & Ketcham, working for DOT as subcontractors to the URS Corporation. Analyzing time-lapse film of pedestrian and bike patterns, K&K team member, Project for Public Spaces, helped DOT see that the problems were due to funneling cyclists and a heavy flow of pedestrians (including many tourists) into a very tight space at the base of highway-type ramps onto and off the world-renowned Bridge.

The most dramatic solution, developed for K&K by Victor Caliendo, an urban designer, would have extended a spacious Promenade across Centre Street into City Hall Park. The highly popular proposal was chosen in 1999 by the Municipal Arts Society as one of “100 Great Ideas for New York City in the 21st Century.” The selected solution utilizes an alternative K&K/Caliandro concept: to replace the Brooklyn-bound ramp with a more typical urban intersection. A traffic signal and right angle turn slow cars turning onto the Bridge, and realignment of the former ramp creates a view corridor to the Bridge along its central axis.

During final engineering, K&K’s president advised on design details that appeared could worsen the very problems that the project was intended to solve. NYCDOT modified the design, instituting barriers and “bike boxes” to achieve the objectives of greater separation of cyclists and pedestrians from each other and from traffic, and relocated crosswalks to better accommodate pedestrian “desire lines.”