

**CONTACT:**Rossana Weitekamp
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Year-Long Transportation Research and Planning Projects, Sept. 9**

NEW YORK, Sept. 1, 2026 – Six scholars from the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council’s (NYMTC) 9-11 Memorial Fellowship Program for the 2025-2026 period will present the transportation research and planning projects they’ve conducted over the past year during a [NYMTC Brown Bag public webinar](#) on Wednesday, September 9th from 12:00 pm through 2 pm.

NYMTC’s prestigious [9-11 Memorial Fellowship Program](#) annually selects six graduate-level students from competitive applicants who seek to commit 12 months to helping direct advanced transportation research and planning projects under the guidance of a mentor from NYMTC or a NYMTC-member agency. The program honors three NYMTC staff who perished in the 9-11 attacks on the World Trade Center: Ignatius Adanga, Charles Lesperance, and See Wong Shum.

Each fellow receives up to \$35,000 in financial support for their 12-month project.

“Twenty-five years after 9/11, our 9-11 Memorial Fellowship Program continues to honor the memory of our colleagues by investing in the next generation of transportation leaders,” said Adam S. Levine, executive director of NYMTC. “These scholars have undertaken some of the most vital transportation challenges facing our region, and their work demonstrates how innovative thinking and rigorous research can help build a safer, more accessible and sustainable future for everyone.”

The presenters and their presentations are as follows:

Abigail Alvarez – Rutgers University

Host Agency: New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT)

Research Topic: *Analysis of New York City’s Public Realm*

Abigail examined community use of public spaces to support the development of the NYC DOT Public Realm Health Pilot. She evaluated best practices, created program metrics, collected before-and-after data, and compiled her findings into a final evaluation report.

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Boshra Khalili – Columbia University

Host Agency: New York City Department of Transportation

Research Topic: *Developing Reliable Citywide Traffic Counts*

Boshra developed a prototype that converts traffic camera video into reliable citywide traffic counts. By creating a repeatable, scalable workflow from fragmented video, this project could help NYC DOT establish an in-house traffic counting system.

Megh Bahadur KC – University of Buffalo, SUNY

Host Agency: New York City Department of Transportation

Research Topic: *Strategic Freight Policy Model Development*

KC developed a strategic freight policy model for New York City that integrates demand, route restrictions, emissions, and policy analysis. This tool will allow policymakers to test the impacts of pricing, routing, and clean technologies.

Natalie Aramendia – Columbia University

Host Agency: New York City Department of City Planning

Research Topic: *Waterfront Infrastructure and Access to Open Space*

Natalie's research explores how transportation infrastructure affects public access to New York City's waterfront open spaces, and how to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections over, under, and across these barriers. Her work involved citywide mapping, fieldwork, and collaboration with multiple city agencies.

Sabah Usmani – Columbia University

Host Agency: New York City Department of Transportation

Research Topic: *Reimagining City Streets within the Public Health Realm*

Sabah conducted two studies to support NYC DOT's Streets-to-Health Framework. The first examined how the Open Streets program affects student health and education. The second explored the impact of citywide e-bike use on cardiovascular health and how cycling infrastructure encourages e-bike adoption.

Snigdha Sri Sai Anantharaju - New York University

Host Agency: New York City Housing Authority

Research Topic: *Street Safety Around NYCHA Campuses in Brooklyn*

Snigdha analyzed roadway infrastructure around NYCHA campuses in Brooklyn, mapping the relationship between street design and pedestrian injuries. Her findings will help identify high-risk corridors for future safety improvements.

A Q&A session with the fellows will be open to the public following each presentation.

Explore 20 years of NYMTC fellowship scholar research in NYMTC's Memorial Archive [here](#).

ABOUT NYMTC

NYMTC is the federally mandated council of governments that directs the use of billions of dollars in federal transportation funds for New York City, Long Island, and the Lower Hudson Valley. As the area's 'Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)', NYMTC provides a collaborative planning forum that addresses transportation-related issues and develops regional plans and goals through a shared vision for its regional transportation network. NYMTC has nine voting members and seven advisory members representing 2,440 square miles and serving a population of 13 million – approximately 65% of New York State's

residents. Between fiscal years 2026-2030, nearly 1,000 transportation projects will be funded in the NYMTC region totaling almost \$40 billion.

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