

New York City Department of Transportation

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Notice of Adoption

NOTICE OF ADOPTION relating to amendments of the New York City Department of Transportation's (DOT) "Highway Rules" contained in Chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York to update various provisions of the Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) Program rules.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) by Section 2903(a) of the New York City Charter and in accordance with the requirements of Section 1043 of the New York City Charter that DOT hereby amends Chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York.

This rule was first published in the City Record on October 16, 2025, and a public hearing was held on November 17, 2025. Two people—who currently participate in the AAH program as volunteers—provided testimony at the public hearing and no written comments were received in response to the proposed rule. The testimony received was posed as questions to DOT about the impact the proposed rule would have on specific adopted segments that the volunteers currently maintain. No comments or concerns were provided related to the substance of the proposed rule. For those reasons, no changes were made to the now-adopted rule.

Statement of Basis and Purpose of the Adopted Rule

The purpose of the adopted rule is to update and clarify various sections of DOT's Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) program which have not been updated since the rule was first adopted in 2013. Specifically, the adopted amendments are as follows:

- Section 2-21(b)(5) is amended to update the definition of "maintenance services."
- Section 2-21(c)(5) is amended to include a prohibition of sponsors with political affiliations.
- Section 2-21(c)(3) is amended to include grounds for DOT to remove an AAH sponsor.
- Section 2-21(g)(1)(i) is amended to include a requirement that sponsors and maintenance providers use a Department-approved agreement.
- Section 2-21(g)(3)(i) is amended to increase the minimum sponsorship commitment to 2 years and remove 2-21(g)(3)(ii) because it is duplicative of proposed amendment to Section 2-21(g)(3)(i).
- Section 2-21(g)(4) is amended to update the registration process for maintenance providers.
- Section 2-21(g)(5) is amended to clarify and update the administrative obligations of maintenance providers.
- Section 2-21(g) is amended by adding a new paragraph (17) to include grounds for termination of an AAH sponsor or adopter by DOT.

- Section 2-21(h)(1) is amended to increase the minimum volunteer commitment to 2 years.
- Section 2-21(h)(2)(ii) is amended to clarify AAH volunteer responsibilities.
- Section 2-21(h) is amended by adding two new paragraphs (12) and (13) to include grounds for termination of an AAH volunteer and a prohibition of volunteers with political affiliations.
- Section 2-21(k)(17) is amended by updating technical requirements for AAH signage.

“Shall” and “must” denote mandatory requirements and may be used interchangeably in the rules of this department, unless otherwise specified or unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

New material is underlined.

[Deleted material is in brackets.]

Asterisks (***) indicate unamended text.

Section 1. The definition of “maintenance services” set forth in paragraph 5 of subdivision (b) of section 2-21 of chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York is amended to read as follows:

- (5) **Maintenance services** means work performed at the adopted segments that may include, but is not necessarily limited to, litter removal, tree trimming, graffiti removal, mechanical sweeping, mowing, planting flowers or trees, and other landscape maintenance.

§2. Subparagraph (i) of paragraph 1 of subdivision (c) of section 2-21 of chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York is amended to read as follows:

- (i) *Sponsors*. Any individual, business, corporation or organization who desires to participate in the Adopt-a-Highway Program as a sponsor must obtain from the Department a list of maintenance providers with whom the sponsor may enter into a maintenance provider agreement. A government official, candidate for elected office, or group affiliated with a political party or campaign may not be a sponsor.

§3. Subparagraph (ii) of paragraph 2 of subdivision (c) of section 2-21 of chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York is amended to read as follows:

- (ii) The Department [will] may maintain waiting lists for adopted segments in order of the date the request for an adopted segment is received by the Department. Upon termination or relinquishment of the adoption of a particular segment, if there is a waiting list for such segment, the Department will give the prospective adopter at the top of the applicable waiting list the opportunity to adopt such segment.

§4. Paragraph 3 of subdivision (c) of section 2-21 of chapter 2 of Title 34 of the

Rules of the City of New York is amended to read as follows:

- (3) *Compliance.* Adopters and maintenance providers must comply with any agreement the adopter or maintenance provider enters with the Department related to the Adopt-a-Highway Program, the terms of the permit issued by the Department, the Adopt-a-Highway technical guidelines published by the Department, any other terms and conditions as required by the Department, and all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. The Department may remove an adopter or sponsor from the Adopt-a-Highway Program for any reason, including but not limited to, failure to comply with this section, the NYC Adopt-a-Highway Sponsorship Program Technical Guidelines, any applicable laws, rules, and regulations, or if the Department determines that participation of the sponsor or adopter is not in the public interest.

§5. Subparagraph (i) of paragraph 1 of subdivision (g) of section 2-21 of chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York is amended to read as follows:

- (i) The sponsor agreement is exclusively between the maintenance provider and the sponsor. The Department is not a party to any agreement between the maintenance provider and the sponsor. Neither the maintenance provider nor the sponsor will be considered an agent of the Department. The cost of services for sponsors participating in the program is to be negotiated solely between the sponsor and the maintenance provider. All billing and collection occur[s] between those two parties. The parties must use a Department-approved sponsor agreement available on the Department's website. The Department has the right to review the sponsor agreement.

§6. Paragraphs 3 and 4 of subdivision (g) of section 2-21 of chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York are amended to read as follows:

- (3) Term of Adoption. [(i)]Sponsors wishing to adopt a segment must commit to a minimum of a [one] two-year agreement with a Department-approved maintenance provider.

[(ii) Adopted areas that need landscaping require sponsor commitment for a minimum of two years.]

- (4) *Maintenance provider qualifications.* Maintenance providers must be approved by the Department to participate in the Adopt-a-Highway Program. Maintenance providers must have a minimum of five years of maintenance experience similar to that as defined as maintenance services in these rules, administrative experience, and experience with roadway closures. Maintenance Providers must register with PASSport, New York City's end-to-end digital procurement platform, and conform with [the] its requirements [of VENDEX, New York City's automated system check on background, performance, tax, and contact information for businesses that contract with the City].

§7. Subparagraphs (ii), (iv), (v), and (vii) of paragraph 5 of subdivision (g) of

section 2-21 of chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York are amended, and a new subparagraph (xvii) is added, to read as follows:

- (i) [Reaching] Entering into a sponsor agreement with a sponsor and informing sponsors of maintenance services completed.

- (iv) [Submitting] Obtaining a maintenance provider work permit [application and performing all administrative work associated with the program including billing and related services with the sponsor].

- (v) Performing all maintenance services in accordance with the maintenance provider agreement, [and] maintenance provider permit, and sponsor agreement.

- (vii) Supplying all labor, equipment and capital resources necessary to perform the maintenance services in accordance with the maintenance provider agreement, [and] maintenance provider permit, and sponsor agreement.

- (xvii) Performing all administrative work associated with the program including billing and related services with the sponsor.

§8. Subdivision (g) of section 2-21 of chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York is amended by adding a new paragraph (17), to read as follows:

(17) Termination. The Department may terminate, revoke, or deny renewal to a sponsor or adopter of the Adopt-A-Highway program for any reason, including, but not limited to, safety concerns, failure to comply with this section, the Adopt-a-Highway technical guidelines, any applicable laws, rules, and regulations, or if the Department determines that participation of the sponsor or adopter is not in the public interest.

§9. Paragraph 1 of subdivision (h) of section 2-21 of chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York is amended to read as follows:

- (1) *Term of adoption.* Volunteers wishing to adopt a segment must commit to a minimum of a [one] two-year agreement with the Department to perform maintenance services at the adopted segment.

§10. Subparagraph (iii) of paragraph 2 of subdivision (h) of section 2-21 of chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York is amended to read as follows:

(iii) [Submitting] Obtaining a volunteer permit [application to] from the Department.

§11. Subdivision (h) of section 2-21 of chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York is amended by adding new paragraphs (12) and (13), to read as follows:

- (12) No political affiliation. A government official, candidate for elected office, or any group affiliated with a political party or campaign may not be volunteers.
- (13) Termination. The Department may terminate, revoke, or deny renewal to a volunteer from the Adopt-A-Highway program for any reason, including, but not limited to, safety concerns, failure to comply with this section, the Adopt-a-Highway technical guidelines, any applicable laws, rules, and regulations, or if participation of the volunteer is not in the public interest.

§12. Subdivision (k) of section 2-21 of chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York is amended to read as follows:

- (k) Adopt-a-Highway Signs.
- (1) Sponsor signs. [Signs are] The portion of a sign naming the sponsor (“sponsor panel”) is produced and maintained by the maintenance provider [or volunteer] and must be delivered to the Department for installation no later than one month after the permit for an adopted segment is approved. All other portions of the sign (“background panel”) are produced by the Department.



White area is sponsor panel.

Other portion of the sign is background panel.

- (2) Volunteer signs. Signs naming the volunteer are produced and maintained by the Department.
- (3) Sign installation.
- (i) Ground mounted signs will be installed by the Department as close to the beginning of the adopted segment feasible, taking into consideration safety and other informational signage.

- (ii) Signs requiring bridge, gantry wall, or parapet mounting will be installed by the Department or a contractor approved by the Department, and paid for by the maintenance provider or volunteer.

[(3)] (4) All signs posted at the adopted segment must:

- (i) consist of a standard base sign design with removable recognition panel identifying the sponsor's or volunteer's name and/or logo;
- (ii) conform to the Department's specifications for size, shape, materials, and placement;
- (iii) not be used for advertising purposes; and
- (iv) comply with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

[(4)] (5) Where litter pick-up, trimming and/or mechanical sweeping are the services provided, the sign will read "[LITTER REMOVAL] For a Cleaner, Greener NYC."

[(5)] (6) Where other services are provided, the [signs] sign will read "BEAUTIFICATION."

[(6)] (7) Signs on elevated highway segments must be 4' x 4.5' and hung on lampposts.

[(7)] (8) Signs on the Henry Hudson Parkway must be larger than 4' x 4.5' to accommodate two recognition panels.

[(8)] (9) Maintenance providers and volunteers must replace damaged or stolen signs.

[(9)] (10) When an adopter terminates its agreement with the Adopt-a-Highway program, the adopter must not remove the sign. The Department will remove the recognition panel portion of the sign.