

MIDTOWN

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Group Wants Vintage Electric Cars to Replace Horse-Drawn Carriages

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A nonprofit organization unveiled a vintage-replica electric car model inspired from a 1909 style that they hope could replace the horse-drawn carriages in New York City. (DNAinfo/Tuan Nguyen)

MANHATTAN — It's a little jolt of nostalgia.

A nonprofit organization wants to replace the city's **horse-drawn carriages** with a vintage-looking car that runs entirely on electricity — unveiling a model Friday of the antique-style ride in Midtown.

New Yorkers for Clean, Livable and Safe Streets said the 1909-era car would be more eco-friendly and cost-efficient than the current horse-drawn coaches that shuttle tourists and others around Central Park and other areas of the city.

"By incorporating 21st-century technology and 19th-century nostalgia, this eco-friendly car will create vast improvement in the industry," said Steve Nislick, co-founder of NYCLASS, during the event at the Hippodrome on Sixth Avenue and 43rd Street.

The \$170,000 car would top out at about 35 mph, have a removable roof and accommodate seven people plus the driver.

Despite the price tag, Nislick believed maintaining a fleet of 68 of the vehicles would be less expensive than "keeping 200 horses in the city and maintaining all the stables."

Car maker Jason Wenig of the Creative Workshop said he hopes to have a prototype up and running within a year.

"My goal is to inspire both New Yorkers and visitors alike with the elegance and nostalgia of yesterday," he said.

"Anything a person might experience with a horse-drawn carriage, we have it," Wenig said.

The project, which has been in development for almost three years, was done in conjunction with American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Melissa Norden, the ASPCA's chief of staff, said the new car would prevent the physical abuse that horses are subjected to while working on the city streets.

"The current environment in New York City is not conducive to have horses," she said.

The horse carriage industry is adamantly opposed to the plan, and have **clashed with NYCLASS organizers who have been canvassing in Central Park.**

"You're going to replace me with cars?" Frank Rodden, a horse driver for 24 years, said to a NYCLASS organizer in March. "You're not going to replace anyone around here."

He disputed allegations of animal cruelty and offered his shiny-coated horse, Jethro, as an example.