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History repeats itself: NYC horses may be replaced by electric carriages



By [Mark Sumner](#) 

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In the right weather and with the right person, riding in a horse-drawn carriage around Central Park can be romantic... if a little corny. Of course, it can also be a bit odorous and, for those on foot who have to deal with the horse by-product, messy. It's not just joggers and bikers who object to the city horses; animal welfare groups have long worried about the poor working conditions. Not only do the animals spend their days shuffling along on hard pavement through slow-moving traffic while inhaling exhaust fumes, most of the horses return at night to narrow stalls beneath tenement buildings with never a chance to step into a pasture and graze. A recent petition drive gathered nearly 45,000 signatures in favor of retiring the carriage horses.

Well, welcome to the 20th century. Central Park may be about to re-enact the transition from horse-drawn to horseless carriage as the four-footed form of horsepower is replaced by eclectic motors. The organization NY CLASS (New Yorkers for Clean, Livable, and Safe Streets) has commissioned designs for electric carriages, modeled after some early cars, as horse replacements. The plan is to make the cars available to the same people who currently own and drive the horse-drawn carriages so no one will lose a job. Except possibly the horses, who may finally get a chance to step onto some of that grass they've been circling for years while never getting a hoof off the blacktop.

Right now, the horse-replacements exist only as foot-long models (a bit small for a romantic evening), but if the New York City Council moves forward on legislation to phase out the carriage horses, the electric cars could be replaced with full-sized versions in the next few years.

News Source: [NY CLASS](#), [New York Times](#)