

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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November 24, 2014
Start: 10:21 a.m.
Recess: 11:15 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E:
YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
ANTONIO REYNOSO
CARLOS MENCHACA
COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES
DANIEL R. GARODNICK
DAVID G. GREENFIELD
DEBORAH L. ROSE
I. DANEEK MILLER
JAMES G. VAN BRAMER
JAMES VACCA
MARGARET S. CHIN
MARK S. WEPRIN
STEPHEN T. LEVIN

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Good morning

everyone and welcome to today's hearing of the City

Council Transportation Committee. I'm Ydanis

Rodriguez the chair of the committee. First let me

recognize my colleagues who are here with us today;

Council Member Vacca, Chin, Levin, Levine, Van

Bramer, Reynoso, Rose, and Menchaca. Today we will

vote on a bill that will make transportation in our

city safer for most vulnerable New Yorkers, people

with disabilities. Proposed Intro 218 that's being

introduced by my colleague Council Member Mark

Levine at the request of the Manhattan Borough

President Gale Brewer. Will require the new, the

New York City Department of Transportation increase

the number of accessible pedestrian signals they

install each year. APS as they are known are vital

tools which use sounds to allow people with visual

impairments to accomplish a task that most of us

take for granted, the simple act of safely crossing

the street. Councilman Levine and I learned

firsthand just how danger and disorienting it can

be by navigating our roadways without the benefit

of, of the site. Our residents shouldn't have to

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2 rely on listening to parallel traffic in order to
3 cross a street. Councilman Levine's bill will help
4 make sure that everyone in our city has the ability
5 to safely cross, cross our streets, an ability New
6 Yorkers often take for granted. I want to thank all
7 the advocate, especially Pedestrian for Accessible
8 and Safe Streets for organizing that impactful
9 demonstration and for working with us for many year
10 on this legislation that will expand these vital
11 program. With all the work we have done this year
12 toward achieving vision zero and making our street
13 safer it is very important that we make sure that
14 the street become safer for all New Yorkers. I also
15 want to thank Council Member Levine, Borough
16 President Brewer, DOT, and of course Speaker Mark-
17 Viverito and Mayor Bill de Blasio for working
18 together with us in making it possible. To take,
19 making it possible to take this important step
20 today in making sure the blind and low vision
21 individuals can more safely navigate our streets,
22 our city streets. I now like to invite a sponsor
23 for the bill Council Member Levine to deliver his
24 opening statements.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you
3 Chairman Rodriguez and thank you for helping us to
4 build the case for this policy and for shepherding
5 it through the legislative process. Of course I
6 also want to thank Borough President Brewer who as
7 a council member had been championing this
8 legislation and similar efforts in previous
9 sessions. Under your leadership Mr. Chairman and of
10 course that of Mayor de Blasio our city has made
11 extraordinary strides towards making our streets
12 safer for all New Yorkers through the set of
13 policies initiatives known as Vision Zero. However
14 we have yet to take significant steps to address
15 the special needs of pedestrians with disabilities,
16 in particular those with vision disabilities, a
17 group which numbers approximately 200 thousand in
18 the five boroughs. In 2002 the Council took the
19 first step to address this by passing local law 21
20 which requires DOT to install 25 automated
21 pedestrian signal devices per year in the areas
22 deemed to be of the highest risk and with the
23 greatest crossing difficulties. But as of today, of
24 the 12,460 intersections in New York City only 96,
25 just 96 currently have an APS installed leaving

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2 visually impaired New Yorkers to fend for
3 themselves when crossing 99 percent of our city's
4 intersections. Our bill will change that.
5 Specifically it would require installation of APS
6 devices at a minimum, minimum of 50 additional
7 intersections per year where DOT is doing
8 installation work that would otherwise hinder
9 crossing by the visually impaired. The bill allows
10 DOT to continue instillation of APS signals on
11 their list of the most critical intersections in
12 need and will triple the number of APS
13 installations per year to at least 75. Since the
14 initial hearing of the bill where we heard
15 testimony from DOT and in turn advocates gave their
16 important feedback to the council and DOT we worked
17 closely with the administration to develop a piece
18 of legislation that all parties were comfortable
19 with. In passing this bill the administration is
20 committing an additional 1.75 million dollars per
21 year for these instillations. This is a major step
22 forward for accessibility. And I remain committed
23 to fighting for either more funding for this in
24 future budgets. Finally I want to acknowledge that
25 we wouldn't be here today if it weren't for the

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2 years put in by the past coalition of advocates for
3 the visually impaired. And I want to thank again
4 the chairman and all my colleagues for supporting
5 this important bill. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Does any other
7 of my colleague would like to say something on
8 this? It's none and we're going to be asking the
9 clerk to take a vote.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: William Martin
11 Committee Clerk. Roll call vote Committee on
12 Transportation, Introduction 216-B. Chair
13 Rodriguez.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Vacca.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: [off mic] Aye.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Chin.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [off mic] Aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Rose.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Aye and thank you
21 so much for this wonderful legislation. And I would
22 like to have my name on this bill, added to the
23 bill. Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Van Bramer.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: [off mic]

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Aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Menchaca.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [off mic] Aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Reynoso.

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COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I'd like to say

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congratulations to Mark. I, I absolutely I'm going

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to vote aye and this one, this piece of legislation

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arises up to the level of controversy as Jimmy Van

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Bramer's library card legislation that we had a

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couple of years ago. But this is great work, no

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brainer. Thank you so much for taking a lead on

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this. Congratulations. I vote aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: By a vote of

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seven in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and

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no abstentions item has been adopted.

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CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I'd like to

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leave the vote open up to 11:00 a.m. and at the

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same time I'd also like to congratulate my

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colleague who I've been working together for many

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year in northern Manhattan... the, the first bill

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that he passed. So congratulation and even though I

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was not able to pass one bill in my first four

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year...

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[laughter]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And the previous speaker...

[laughter]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: ...be able to do it. Congratulation.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Council Member Weprin.

COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Vote is now eight in the affirmative. Constantinides.

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Vote now stands at nine. Council Member Greenfield.

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Vote now stands at 10 in the affirmative. Final vote Committee on Transportation is 10 in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and no abstentions.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And with that this hearing is adjourned.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date November 26, 2014