

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

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September 10, 2024

Start: 10:36 a.m.

Recess: 10:44 a.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Selvena Brooks-Powers, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joann Ariola

Chris Banks

Carmen N. De La Rosa

Amanda Farías

Farrah N. Louis

Mercedes Narcisse

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Erik D. Bottcher

Alexa Avilés

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 2

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone
3 test for the Transportation and Infrastructure vote.
4 Today's date is September 10, 2024. Located in the
5 City Hall Committee Room. Recording is done by Rocco
6 Mesiti.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and
8 welcome to the New York City Council vote of the
9 Committee on Transportation.

10 At this time, can everybody please
11 silence your cell phones.

12 At this time and going forward, no one is
13 to approach the dais.

14 Chair, we are ready to begin.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [GAVEL] Good
16 morning and welcome to this hearing of the Committee
17 on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am Selvena
18 Brooks-Powers, the Chair of the Committee.

19 Today, we will be voting on proposed
20 Intro. number 346-A, sponsored by Council Member
21 Mercedes Narcisse, a local law in relation to
22 pedestrian crossing guidelines and right of way, and
23 Proposed Intro number 746-A, sponsored by Council
24 Member Oswald Feliz, a local law in relation to the
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2 improvement of paved medians through the planting of
3 vegetation or use in stormwater management.

4 Proposed Intro. number 346-A would permit
5 pedestrians to legally cross a roadway at any point,
6 including outside of a marked or unmarked crosswalk,
7 and allow for crossing against traffic signals. It
8 would legalize the activity commonly referred to as
9 jaywalking and specify that jaywalking does not
10 constitute a violation of the law. This proposed bill
11 also requires that the Department of Transportation
12 conduct education and outreach to inform pedestrians
13 and all people using our roads about their rights and
14 responsibilities regarding street safety. Jaywalking
15 is a rarely enforced violation in our city, yet
16 jaywalking summons disproportionately target Black
17 and Latino persons. There is little evidence to
18 support the claim that criminal or civil offenses for
19 jaywalking change pedestrian behavior or increase
20 pedestrian safety. I am committed to street safety
21 for all New Yorkers, and I'm pleased that this bill
22 includes a public education campaign to ensure
23 everyone on our roads stays safe. Giving less than
24 500 jaywalking summons a year, almost exclusively to
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2 Black and Latino New Yorkers, does not keep us safe.
3 Thus, I support this proposed bill.

4 Proposed Intro. number 746-A would
5 require the Commissioner of Transportation, the
6 Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, and the
7 Commissioner of Environmental Protection to modify at
8 least one mile of vacant paved medians every two
9 years. This bill prioritizes areas that have
10 historically low infrastructure investment or a large
11 population of low-income residents. These median
12 modifications will include planted medians, tree
13 beds, and other forms of stormwater management. These
14 improvements have the potential to improve traffic
15 safety, reduce the negative impacts of climate
16 change, reduce the urban heat island effect, and
17 beautify our neighborhoods. The Department of
18 Transportation will also maintain a website
19 identifying these medians and the agency responsible
20 for cleaning and maintaining them. DOT will be the
21 default agency due to their expertise in this
22 infrastructure, but the Mayor has the power to
23 designate a different agency if appropriate. This is
24 an important transparency measure so the public knows

2 where the buck stops with respect to the cleanliness
3 and integrity of our infrastructure.

4 I will now allow Council Member Narcisse
5 to speak on her Introduction.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Good morning,
7 Chair. Thank you to my Colleagues as well. I want to
8 make it clear as a registered nurse, I spent all my
9 life talking about safety. This bill actually is
10 addressing the issue that we face in the City of New
11 York, and I want to say to my Colleagues, please look
12 into it and support Intro. 346-A. This bill is
13 designed to reform our approach to pedestrian
14 crossing and decriminalize jaywalking in New York
15 City. Our current jaywalking laws disproportionately
16 impact communities of color. In just the first three
17 months of this year, 96.5 percent of jaywalking
18 tickets were issued to Black and Hispanic New
19 Yorkers. This is a very clear indication of systemic
20 bias in how these laws are enforced. Intro. 346-A
21 seeks to correct this imbalance by allowing
22 pedestrians to cross at any point while maintaining
23 their safety. This legislation will remove the
24 penalties associated with crossing outside of
25 designated areas and provide clearer guidelines for

2 pedestrian signals, aligning our laws with the
3 reality of our city's dynamic streets. This bill is
4 about fairness, equity, and public safety. Like I
5 said, it is very, very important for me, and all my
6 time in the career as a nurse is to provide safety
7 everywhere I am. This bill ensures that all New
8 Yorkers can move freely and safely without fear of
9 unjust penalties. I have never heard a New Yorker
10 exclaim I am so glad they caught that jaywalker. By
11 removing the criminal penalties associated with
12 jaywalking, we can redirect resources to more
13 pressing public safety concerns. I urge all my
14 Colleagues, please support Intro. 346-A and join us
15 in making our city a more just and equitable place
16 for everyone. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,
18 Council Member.

19 I will now ask the Committee Clerk to
20 conduct a roll call vote on the legislation.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good
22 morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call
23 vote, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,
24 Proposed Introductions 346-A and 746-A, Items are
25 coupled. Chair Brooks-Powers.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I vote aye and
3 congratulations to the bill sponsors.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Rivera.
5 Louis.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Aye on all.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: De La
8 Rosa.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Aye on all.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
11 you. Farías.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: I vote aye on all.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
14 you. Narcisse.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: I vote aye on
16 all.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
18 you. Won. Banks.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Aye on all and
20 congratulations to the sponsors.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Ariola.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: I'd like to
23 explain my vote. On Intro. 346-A, although I
24 understand the impetus for this bill and I do
25 appreciate the educational portion that was amended

2 and put in. I think that's important. I just think
3 that the City has invested billions of dollars in
4 taxpayer funding to improve pedestrian safety, to put
5 countdown clocks out, to put speed reducing
6 mechanisms in place, and the streets have never been
7 more dangerous with bus lanes, bike lanes, scooters,
8 and vehicles not paying attention to the speed
9 reducers, and I think if we have people crossing not
10 in designated areas where they can remain safe, I
11 think it becomes a public safety issue. Therefore, I
12 am a no on 346-A.

13 On 746, although I think that in theory,
14 really it sounds wonderful, we've all seen that the
15 DOT doesn't have the capability of keeping what they
16 have already clean. Also, with the median income
17 portion of this bill, I think that my District would
18 be exempt from any of these beautifications.

19 Therefore, I am a no.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote
21 of six in the affirmative, one in the negative, no
22 abstentions, both items have been adopted by the
23 Committee.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: With that,
25 this hearing is now adjourned. Thank you. [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 September 13, 2024