

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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January 29, 2014
Start: 1:32 p.m.
Recess: 1:50 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room
City Hall

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Deborah Rose
Mark Weprin
Costa Constantinides
Carlos Menchaca
I. Daneek Miller
Antonio Reynoso
Rosie Mendez
Jimmy Van Bramer
James Vacca
Margaret Chin
Stephen Levin
David G. Greenfield
Daniel R. Garodnick

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

2

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon
3 and welcome to the first hearing on the
4 Transportation Committee of the New York City
5 Council. See, you got to learn. My name's Ydanis
6 Rodriguez. That's what my father called me. He
7 got the same name and I'm the chair of this
8 committee. It is a privilege to have the
9 opportunity to lead this committee and I thank our
10 Speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito, for placing her
11 confidence in me for this coming term. I would
12 also specifically acknowledge the former, who is
13 not here right now, but he will come join us later
14 on, Jimmy Vacca. In these past four years as a
15 member of this committee, I have learned a great
16 deal from Jimmy and I am happy to have him also
17 serving us in this Transportation Committee. So I
18 would definitely like to say thank you, Jimmy and I
19 know that he will join us later on. It is very
20 exciting to be joined on this committee by such a
21 distinguished group of council members. I very
22 much look forward to working with all of them and
23 would like to take a moment to introduce those
24 members who are here with us right now. Down the
25 line, Debbie Rose; Mark Weprin; Costa

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

3

2 Constantinides; Carlos Menchaca; Daneek Miller and
3 also we've been joined by Antonio Reynoso and also
4 we've been joined by Rosie Mendez.

5 Transportation is something that
6 affects the life of every New Yorker, no matter
7 age, income level, race, political belief or any
8 other designation and it is the responsibility of
9 this committee to ensure New Yorkers have safe,
10 affordable, efficient and ethically sound options
11 as they go about their day. I look forward to the
12 great work we will be doing together to improve the
13 way all New Yorkers get around our great city, but
14 I say today that this committee will place a strong
15 focus on safety and accountability in our mass
16 transit landscape. Just a month into this new
17 year, we have already seen 18 tragic deaths due to
18 traffic accidents, including several children under
19 the age of 14. Two weeks ago, I stood at a vigil
20 with friends and family of nine-year old Cooper
21 Stock, killed while crossing the street with his
22 father at 97th Street and West End, and as a father
23 of two daughters, I cannot imagine the pain that
24 this that has been going through... that this
25 family is going through and other families around

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

4

2 the city right now. While today, we move to
3 bolster the effort for accountability in these
4 deaths, in the near future we will hear about what
5 steps our new administration is taking to withstand
6 this type of traffic violation and to bring an end
7 to the terrible deaths and injuries resulting from
8 reckless driving. With my colleagues on this
9 committee, who I believe share these thoughts on
10 these issues, I will seek to make a concerted
11 effort to continue changing the landscape of urban
12 transportation, taking what works and improving
13 what does not. We will look to our other cities
14 and our countries and around the world and work to
15 incorporate new ideas and methods similar to the
16 Vision Zero Plan initiated in Sweden. We will look
17 to increase the scope of existing options in the
18 state and the locales for innovative ideas to
19 improve one of the largest urban transportation
20 systems in the world. I'm excited to get started
21 on this path and together we hope to accomplish
22 great things.

23 On today's agenda we will vote on
24 whether to override the veto of Introduction 1055-A
25 from the last council sessions, a law that would

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

5

2 require the NYPD to report more information
3 regarding hit and run bill collisions. Intro 1055-
4 a originally sponsored by formal Council Member
5 Leroy Comrie, now Queens Deputy Borough President,
6 was passed by the City Council on December 19th,
7 2013 and vetoed by then-Mayor Bloomberg December
8 27th, 2013. The bill has been reintroduced by
9 Council Member Peter Koo. Over the past few years,
10 the council has engaged in repeated oversight of
11 the NYPD collision investigation protocols. Hit
12 and run crashes, particularly those that result in
13 serious injuries and death, are especially
14 revolting criminal act that we must be sure are
15 receiving extensive investigations by the police.
16 It is in the interest of the public safety for the
17 NYPD to report the statistics relating to such
18 incidents. Into 1055-A will require the NYPD to
19 report the numbers of hit and run collisions broken
20 down by precinct every quarter. In addition, the
21 bill requires the police department to report to
22 the council and to the public the number of cases
23 closed with or without an arrest. This way, we
24 will be able to see what percentage of cases are
25 successfully closed and it will give the council in

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

6

2 its oversight and budgetary role, a better idea of
3 whether more resources are needed to catch the
4 offenders who commit these terrible crimes and to
5 prevent similar incidents in the future.
6 Furthermore, the bill will require the NYPD to give
7 to the council brief descriptions of the
8 investigation of each case again, helping the
9 council in its oversight and budgetary role by
10 allowing greater insight into whether investigation
11 resources are sufficient. The council has heard
12 testimony from several families of individuals
13 involved in fatal crashes who feel they were not
14 informed on what if any investigation took place.
15 This is unacceptable. Intro 1055-A is designed to
16 bring more information about these investigations
17 to light. Our role in the council is to preside
18 over city agencies and Intro 1055-A will help us do
19 so more effectively on an issue that is literally a
20 matter of life or death.

21 I would like to thank my committee
22 staff counsel, Lyle Frank and policy analysts Gafir
23 Solove [phonetic] and Jonathan Masserano, as well
24 as my staff, legislative director Carmen de la Rosa
25 and communication director Rosa Murphy, and now I

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

7

2 would like to turn to some of my colleagues, who
3 would like to say a few words, starting with Rosie
4 Mendez. And before, I would also like to recognize
5 Jimmy Van Bramer, who is here with us today.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you,
Chair Rodriguez. I wanted to come before the
committee to give a little background on this
legislation. Former Council Member Leroy Comrie,
Council Member Koo and I introduced this
legislation last year and it was passed in
December, as the chair said, and Mayor Bloomberg
overrode the veto, but I wanted to give an
explanation. We introduced several pieces of
legislation. For those of you who are in 250 a lot
late working, you may know the cleaning lady, Sarah
Dominguez and so Sarah's son Dante, who was 45, was
killed right after Sandy in Queens by a hit and run
driver, who was speeding. There was camera
footage, but because of the Sandy crisis, the
police did not get and the video was too late and
we only got a partial license plate number. It has
been 14 months. They have no leads on who killed
her son. He left three children behind and a widow
and Sarah, who I've known for more than 10 years,

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

8

2 was crying one day and I asked her what happened
3 and she explained this. So I went to Leroy Comrie,
4 who was the chair of the Queen's delegation and
5 then we found out this was in Koo's district and we
6 all came together and proposed a series of
7 legislation. This legislation would just give us
8 data and that I think goes a long way for us
9 determining how we make our streets safer. We can
10 talk about slow zones, which I just created one in
11 my district with the community board, Board 3, and
12 I'm really excited and we can talk about zero
13 tolerance, but when these things happen late at
14 night when someone's going to the store to get some
15 milk, we need real investigation and we need any
16 camera footage anywhere in this city to be turned
17 over immediately and we need the police to go get
18 it immediately. So I hope that provides a backdrop
19 and I'm here on behalf of my good friend, Leroy
20 Comrie and Council Member Koo and I hope that
21 everyone votes to override this veto. Thank you,
22 Mr. Chair.

23 [Pause]

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I would like to
25 recognize your contribution; the legacy that you

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

9

2 provided to the former chairman and now that we
3 also have you as a member, I'm looking for your
4 advice and experience. I know how committed you
5 are, as all of us here, to be sure that we improve
6 transportation and we take this city to the
7 challenge that we have where in 2030 we will be
8 gaining an additional 550,000 new New Yorkers, who
9 will need transportation to go to work. Thank you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Hi, thank you,
11 Mr. Chair, and I welcome you... as the old chair, I
12 welcome the new chair, but I'm sure we will get a
13 lot done because so much needs to be done and I
14 wanted to speak on Council Member Comrie's bill.
15 While I was chair of the committee, we had many
16 hearings about collisions and the fact that
17 collision investigations had to be strengthened;
18 that we had to see action where people who are
19 involved in collisions who were going so quickly in
20 their cars that they often ended up hurting,
21 maiming and killing people; that these collisions
22 were not being properly investigated, totally
23 investigated and there was not an appropriate
24 conclusion or closure and we had families coming
25 forth that were beyond emotionally distraught.

2 Losing a young child is unbearable and we had a Mr.
3 and Mrs. Eckstein especially come forth from Brad
4 Landers district, at one of the meetings I attended
5 in eight years in this council that was the most
6 emotional hearing I could ever have attended. So
7 this bill is going to provide another tool in the
8 tool box, so to speak. It's going to provide
9 another opportunity for us to address this. We
10 need the information because we as a council are
11 the body that is here to do oversight over city
12 agencies and without every possible piece of
13 information, then doing effective oversight becomes
14 problematic and we are elected to be accountable to
15 the people to make sure the oversight is done. So
16 based on these hearings we had, and as Rosie
17 indicated, Councilman Koo and herself and Council
18 Member Comrie came forth with this legislation. We
19 must advocate for the speed bumps and advocate for
20 the speed cameras and we must have more slow zones
21 and we must quicken up the pace when slow zones are
22 installed. We're told by the former DOT
23 Commissioner slow zones are approved, but for 2017.
24 Well, then they are too slow to implement slow
25 zones. You can't take four years before

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

11

2 neighborhoods get relief once you identify
3 speeding. So with that all that said, hit and run
4 accidents are especially onerous in the city.
5 These are criminal acts that have to be thoroughly
6 investigated and families have a right to know that
7 we're going to take affirmative action and I
8 support the Vision Zero, as the Mayor indicated. I
9 know you, Mr. Chair, support it. I'm sure all of
10 us want pedestrian casualties reduced and I think
11 this legislation from a transparency perspective
12 goes a long way, so I urge you to override the veto
13 of the Mayor.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And other
15 colleagues I would also like to recognize:
16 Margaret Chin, Steven Levin and David Greenfield,
17 who also are here. Anybody else? No? Okay, so
18 hearing there are no further speakers, the
19 questions on the floor are whether we should
20 unsanctify Mayor Bloomberg's veto message of Intro
21 1055-A, which is M0009-2014, and notwithstanding
22 with this veto message whether we will again
23 approve Intro 1055-A. I urge a yes vote on both
24 questions. I ask the clerk to please call the roll
25 on these questions.

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION 12

2 COMMITTEE CLERK: Kevin Pin [phonetic],
3 committee clerk. Roll call on the Committee on
4 Transportation; Intro 1055-A. Council Member
5 Rodriguez.

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Aye. I would
7 like to be added on this bill.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: Garodnick.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vacca.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I vote aye.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Chin.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Levin.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye and I
16 would like to be added to the bill as well.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Rose.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Van Bramer.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Weprin.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Aye.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Greenfield.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK: Constantinides.

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

13

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Aye.

3 COMMITTEE CLERK: Menchaca.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Aye and

5 please add me to the bill.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: Miller.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Aye. Mr.

8 Chairman, if I may. I'm honored to be a part of
9 this Transportation Committee that will impact so
10 many lives of so many people throughout the city of
11 New York and I'm so looking forward to the positive
12 work that this committee will do, and we could not
13 start in a better way than as in the affirmative to
14 address this important, so I vote aye and would
15 love to be added to the bill as well.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Reynoso.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Aye. I would
18 like to be added to the bill as well. Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 13 in
20 the affirmative, zero in the negative and no
21 abstentions, all items have been adopted.

22 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you and I
23 would like to dedicate our vote to a young person
24 who was killed, a Mr. Rivera, two years ago on
25 Mosholu Parkway, and if you google it and you go to

2 his case on Fox 5, you will see that the driver who
3 committed the hit and run he turned his car on fire
4 in order to get rid of the evidence and still with
5 that act, the family is still... the mother of that
6 young recent college graduate killed at that
7 particular area, is seeking for justice. This
8 hearing is adjourned.

9 [gavel]

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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. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.



Date: 01/31/2014