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COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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March 25, 2021

Start: 9:43 a.m.

Recess: 9:57 a.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 1)

B E F O R E: Ydanis A. Rodriguez,
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Fernando Cabrera
Chaim M. Deutsch
Ruben Diaz, Sr.
Robert F. Holden
Peter A. Koo
Stephen T. Levin
Mark Levine
Carlos Menchaca
I. Daneek Miller
Antonio Reynoso
Deborah L. Rose
Kevin C. Riley
Kalman Yeger, Powers
Bill Perkins

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: PC started.

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SERGEANT PEREZ: Back up is rolling.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you, Sergeant, begin
your opening.

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Good morning and
welcome to the Remote Hearing on Transportation.

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Will Council Members and staff please turn on your

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video at this time. Thank you. To minimize

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disruptions, please place all cellphones and

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electronics to vibrate.

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Chair, we are ready to begin.

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CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you Sergeants and

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the whole team again, doing a great job to be sure

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that all New Yorkers are connected to these remote

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hearings.

17

Good morning and welcome to today's Council

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Transportation Committee vote. I am Ydanis

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Rodriguez, the Chair of the Committee on

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Transportation. Today, the Committee conveying

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remote to vote on proposed Intro. 2224-A sponsored by

22

myself, Council Member Lander, the Speaker and

23

Council Member Levin.

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Proposed Intro. 2224-A is a Local Law to amend

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the Administrative Code of the City of New York in

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2 relation to the establishments of a crash
3 investigation and analyst unit within the Department
4 of Transportation. The Committee heard a previous
5 version of this bill October 24, 2021.

6 Every year there are thousands of crashes that
7 goes fatalities or serious injuries. According to
8 DOT and statistics, there were 244 traffic fatalities
9 and 43,866 traffic injuries in 2020. Currently, the
10 NYPD's collision investigations squad and a group of
11 four DOT employees respond to around 300 crashes per
12 year in which a person has been killed or is likely
13 to die.

14 Over the last several years, serious questions
15 have been raised about the units effectiveness. Many
16 advocate for safer streets have come out in support
17 or rethinking the way we respond to serious crashes
18 and the bill we are voting on today does just that.

19 Proposed Intro. 2224-A would establish a crash
20 investigation and analyst unit within the DOT. In
21 coordination with the NYPD, this new unit would be
22 tasked with analyzing a much wider range of crashes.
23 All vehicle crashes involving significant injury.
24 Most crucially, this new unit will take what is
25 learned from serious crashes and turn that knowledge

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2 into action. The new DOT unit will be required to
3 make recommendations for safety improving changes to
4 a street sign and infrastructure, with the goal of
5 preventing future crashes.

6 It is important to understand that this bill does
7 not inhibit the ability of the police department to
8 pursue criminal investigations regarding traffic
9 violence or interfere with the state law mandate that
10 the police investigate certain crashes.

11 Since our last hearing of the bill, I have been
12 having to make that even more clear, especially after
13 we heard from all the DA's in New York City. This
14 bill is an important step in making significant
15 changes to the way in which we respond to crashes.

16 In addition, this bill will allow for victims and
17 families or victim to receive better information on
18 why and how a crash occurred as well as what is being
19 done to remedy the situation. [SPEAKING IN OTHER
20 LANGUAGE 4:07-5:05].

21 I want to thank Transportation Family for Save
22 the Street and all the advocates and all the staff at
23 Central Counsel and the staff in my office and my
24 Chief of Staff Elizabeth [INAUDIBLE 5:18], my
25 Legislative Director Evelyn Collado and my

1
2 Communications person [INAUDIBLE 5:24] for working so
3 close with the Central staff of the Council who did a
4 great job to make this bill a reality.

5 I want to thank Mayor de Blasio and his team for
6 one more time showing his leadership when it comes to
7 sitting with us, compromising, listening to what is
8 best for the city and at the end, coming with a plan
9 where we can pass a bill that is a good one for all
10 New Yorkers.

11 I will now ask the Committee Clerk to conduct a
12 roll call vote on the Proposed bill and recommend my
13 colleagues to vote yes on this important piece of
14 legislation.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good morning, William Martin
16 Committee Clerk roll call vote Committee on
17 Transportation Proposed Introduction 224-A. Chair
18 Rodriguez?

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Aye and I dedicated my
20 vote to all those families who today, after losing
21 their loved one, they have been fighting to be sure
22 that no other single family goes through those
23 situation of losing their loved one as a result of
24 crashes. With that, I vote aye.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK: Cabrera?

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COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Uh, no.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Koo? Council Member Koo?

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. Levin?

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Rose? Council Member Rose?

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I said aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you, no problem.

Deutsch?

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Levine?

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: I vote aye, thank you.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Menchaca?

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Miller? Council Member Miller,
not receiving any audio from you, sorry. I will come
back Council Member. Reynoso?

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Rubin Diaz?

COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Holden?

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I vote no and I did have
my hand up and I think Council Member Miller also had
his hand up before the vote, so I don't know why we

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2 weren't recognized Counsel. Does anybody out there
3 hear me?

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I do.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay, so we both had our
6 hand up and I just wanted to - I just want to make a
7 statement. Do I have permission to make a statement?

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes Council Member.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I was on a hearing, the
10 original hearing and uhm, also on the conference when
11 this was explained. I still don't know the exact
12 changes that were made. Uhm, never was I at a
13 hearing that all the parties were against it. DOT
14 was against this, NYPD was against this, the DA's are
15 against this.

16 So, yes, there were some negotiations done but
17 again, all in secret, not letting the members know.
18 I tried to get some information as to what was
19 exactly changed. We still don't have the real
20 negotiations. Uhm, and knowing DOT how I know DOT
21 that I can't get speed bumps in three years, to get
22 any improvements even mistakes that they have made on
23 turning lanes and bus lanes that they don't correct
24 for over a year. I don't think - this plan is vague.

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2 It's certainly vague, so for that reason, I am voting
3 no.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member hang on one
5 moment. Council Member Miller. You are still on
6 audio, hang on one moment.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Can you hear me now?

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: Yes sir.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, I am going to close
10 this because I am actually on my phone now. So,
11 permission to explain my vote?

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Permission granted
13 Council Member.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, as Council Member
15 Holden said that you know, we did have our hands up
16 and I tried to write the Chair which failed. Mr.
17 Chair, with respect, I do agree that this a well-
18 intended legislation but ultimately it is flawed. In
19 this bill we are voting to allow New York City DOT to
20 be both judge and jury on our streets. They will
21 design the signs and then when their signs fail to
22 keep New Yorkers safe, they will now be responsible
23 for allocating the blame for who was at fault.

24 This agency that loath to take responsibility for
25 their own shortcomings. New York City Department of

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2 Transportation has run for the past few years, run
3 rock shy over New York City communities, community
4 boards, civic associations and residents and is
5 infamously irresponsible to prioritize enforcement
6 before education and engineering.

7 DOT's job performing in recent years has been
8 woefully inadequate. The agency had failed on most
9 basic levels to replace street signs, fix streets
10 markings and address basic safety concerns. It takes
11 three years on average to get a speed hump elevated
12 to install. This is not an agency prepared to handle
13 more responsibilities.

14 Let me also say that it is particularly alarming
15 that this legislation is moving in the spirit of
16 police reform. The DOT had triggged at communities of
17 color with borderline contempt. While White
18 communities got bike share and fully built out bike
19 lanes, our communities were told to wait and then
20 ultimately we were given punitive cameras instead.

21 I cannot today vote to add another \$3 million to
22 DOT's budget and allow the agency to duplicate fresh
23 new services provided by trained experts and
24 professionals at CIS. We would be better served or
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2 sending these resources to CIS to better support the
3 work, their work.

4 I also note that these are the sentiments shared
5 by all five District Attorney's and the DOT itself.
6 With that, I will be voting no on Intro. 2224. Thank
7 you Mr. Chair.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member.
9 The vote on Proposed Introduction 2224-A is 9 in the
10 affirmative, 3 in the negative and no abstentions.
11 The item has been adopted by the Committee. Thank
12 you.

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you colleague and
14 thank you Speaker Corey Johnson again for all your
15 support. In order for us to move this legislation,
16 one more time you show your leadership when it comes
17 to Transportation and many other issues.

18 With that, this hearing is adjourned.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you Chair.
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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. 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 March 26, 2021