



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0079-2024, **Version:** B

Res. No. 79-B

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the New York State Governor to sign, S.315/A.1416, which would authorize New York City to set a five mile per hour speed limit on streets participating in the Open Streets program

By Council Members Fariás, Hanif, Won, Hudson and Rivera

Whereas, New York City's (NYC) Open Streets program began during the Spring of 2020 in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, and is an effort to transform streets into public space open to all; and

Whereas, NYC's Open Streets program allows for a range of activities that promote economic development, support schools, and encourage cultural programming and community-building; and

Whereas, The Open Streets program is overseen by the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), and works with community-based organizations, public, private and charter schools, and groups of businesses citywide; and

Whereas, In 2021, the NYC Council voted to make the Open Streets program permanent; and

Whereas, In 2023, according to the DOT's Open Streets 2023 Recap Report, there were more than 200 Open Street sites which spanned over 25 miles and 400 city blocks, representing a more than 40% increase in the number of Open Street sites when compared to 2022; and

Whereas, The Open Streets program has provided noticeable positive economic, social and cultural benefits to the City; and

Whereas, For example, according to a recently-released report by DOT entitled: "Streets for Recovery: The Economic Benefits of the NYC Open Streets Program," when comparing restaurants and bars in Open

Streets corridors and those in the same borough but not in an Open Street corridor, restaurants and bars in an Open Street corridor saw: an increase in sales growth; a higher percentage of staying in business during the pandemic; and faster growth in the number of new restaurants and bars that opened during the pandemic; and

Whereas, As the popularity in the use of Open Streets has increased, it is important to ensure that these streets are safe for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers and businesses; and

Whereas, In recent years, NYC has experienced higher traffic fatalities, with data from NYC's Vision Zero View Dashboard showing that 265 people died due to traffic violence in 2023, 263 people died in 2022, and 275 people died in 2021, as compared to 2020's 242 traffic fatalities, 2019's 220 traffic fatalities and 2018's 206 traffic fatalities; and

Whereas, In an effort to ensure Open Streets are safe for New Yorkers and to reduce speed limits in these areas, S.315 and A.1416 were introduced in the New York State (NYS) Legislature; and

Whereas, S.315, introduced by NYS Senator Julia Salazar, and A.1416, introduced by NYS Assemblymember Harvey Epstein, relate to authorizing a five mile per hour speed limit for Open Streets in NYC, and would work towards ensuring that Open Streets are safer, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the New York State Governor to sign, S.315/A.1416, which would authorize New York City to set a five mile per hour speed limit on streets participating in the Open Streets program.

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