

**NYC Department of Transportation Testimony Before the  
City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
January 21, 2025**

Good morning, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am Margaret Forgione, First Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation. With me today are Paul Ochoa, Executive Deputy Commissioner, Eric Beaton, Deputy Commissioner of Transportation Planning and Management, and Rick Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Adams and Commissioner Rodriguez on capital planning and the future of street repairs.

DOT is responsible for operating and maintaining 6,300 miles of streets and highways. This includes maintaining roadways, curbs, and pedestrian ramps, over 800 bridges and five tunnels, nearly 400,000 streetlights, and jurisdiction over 12,000 miles of sidewalk.

DOT's \$33.5 billion capital plan makes this work possible, with \$5.7 billion dedicated to DOT's capital street reconstruction program. This program advances a broad range of agency priorities, among them enhancing safety conditions for all street users, increasing accessibility, improving pedestrian and cyclist connectivity and bus operations, keeping the road network in a state of good repair, and addressing flooding and ponding. DOT identifies street reconstruction needs regularly and through a variety of stakeholders, including community members, elected officials, other agencies, as well as proactively through our internal operational and planning teams.

As a part of the capital planning process, DOT evaluates prospective street projects using statistical prioritization frameworks that include metrics to quantify safety needs, roadway conditions, mobility improvements, climate considerations, and community demographics. Equity is one of the largest considerations in determining how projects rank. Our most recent ten-year capital plan for street reconstructions invests the most amount of money ever in communities of color throughout the five boroughs, including cycling and safety improvements in Northern Manhattan, Mott Haven, and Hunts Point; drainage improvements in Southeast Queens, the Rockaways, and South Brooklyn; and pedestrian and transit safety projects on the North Shore of Staten Island and along Southern Boulevard in the Bronx.

DOT's capital street reconstruction projects undergo a rigorous scoping process that includes various multi-departmental reviews, both from within DOT and across the wider City administration. DOT coordinates closely with other agencies and entities working within the City's right-of-way, including the Department of Environmental Protection, NYC Parks, utilities, and the MTA, to ensure that the resulting reconstruction project is thoroughly scoped, meets a range of stakeholder needs, and has been sufficiently coordinated to prevent follow-up work and repeated community disruption. This approach ensures that the roadway is not disturbed twice unnecessarily. The capital scoping process includes collaborative dialogue between DOT and the Department of Design and Construction (DDC), who are generally ultimately responsible for managing the project's implementation during its design and construction phases.

Once a project scope consensus has been reached, DOT transfers the project and its funding to DDC for implementation. After assuming management of the project, DDC brings on a design consultant, directly oversees design activities and facilitates design review, and leads the community engagement process. When design is complete, DDC then procures a construction contractor for the project buildout, while maintaining contact with the community throughout the project's construction phase.

Beyond capital street reconstruction projects, DOT also implements a wide array of Street Improvement Projects to enhance safety, connectivity, and accessibility for New York City's streets. Last week, we released an *Equity and Street Safety* report to analyze how we are prioritizing these projects and to ensure they are benefiting the neighborhoods with the greatest needs. I'm happy to say that the report found that since the start of Vision Zero, neighborhoods with high shares of non-white residents or high poverty rates have received more Street Improvement Project installations per mile.

### Legislation

Now turning to the legislation before us today.

#### Introduction 145

First, Intro. 145 sponsored by Chair Brooks-Powers. This bill would limit the correlated color temperature of new and replacement lamps installed to illuminate streets, highways, parks, or any other public place to 3,000 kelvin.

3,000 kelvin is already DOT's lighting standard based on engineering guidance. And so we all understand what this means, kelvin refers to how warm or cool a light is, ranging from orange to white to blue. This is different from wattage, as wattage refers to how bright a light is. All new or replacement lamps that the agency installs are 3,000 kelvin, and thus the agency is complying with the intent of the bill. However, it is critical that we are able to adjust our practices in the future if engineering standards change. For this reason, we do not support legislating an engineering standard, but we would be happy to have further discussions with the Council about this standard and our operations.

#### Introduction 552

Next, Intro. 552 sponsored by Council Member Brannan. This bill would require DOT to finish resurfacing within two weeks from the start of the work. If the work is not finished within two weeks, DOT would be required to notify the surrounding community of reasons for delay and provide a new timeline.

DOT resurfaces roadways to address problems on the surface, including cracking, patching, and peeling, by replacing the top layer of asphalt pavement. This extends the roadway's lifespan and helps prevent potholes—the more we pave, the fewer potholes we need to fill. DOT's budget has baseline funding for resurfacing 1,100 lane miles and up to 50 miles of protected bike lanes each year.

We do not support this bill as written. While DOT works hard to mill and pave as quickly as

possible, our process must give sufficient time for utility companies, plumbers, and our sister agencies to make repairs under the asphalt. We conduct extensive coordination efforts with sister agencies and utility partners throughout the city to ensure the time when a street is milled is well used. Without this necessary time for repairs, more cuts would need to be made to roadways in the future, which would make the whole process less efficient. We all want to avoid the situation where a newly resurfaced street needs to be cut into for a repair right after the work finished. To have smooth streets for years to come, we need to give sufficient time for these repairs.

Moreover, it is critical that we maximize our capacity to ensure we can resurface 1,100 lane miles and up to 50 miles of protected bike lanes annually. The pace of resurfacing is faster than that of milling, so we must have enough areas milled to spend our resurfacing dollars well. This helps the department to maximize the number of paved lane miles.

### Introduction 928

Next, Intro. 928 sponsored by Council Member Nurse. This bill would require DOT in partnership with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to conduct a pilot on the use of cool pavement.

This Administration shares the Council's goal of enhancing resiliency and addressing heat vulnerability throughout New York City and we support the bill's intent. DOT is already taking a number of steps to enhance resiliency and to address heat. Since the Unified Stormwater Rule (USWR) came into effect in 2022, DOT has also embraced installing Precast Porous Concrete Panels (PPCP) in Capital projects. Roadway reconstruction projects that disturb over an acre of the subbase of the roadway or any project that adds 5,000 square feet of impervious surface are required to include stormwater management practices to reduce impervious space. DOT and DEP have either completed or plan to complete in the relative near-term approximately 92 linear miles of Porous Pavement that will result in approximately 450 million gallons of stormwater managed per year, the vast majority of which has been installed as part of DEP projects. We would be happy to discuss this work further with the Council.

Other than porous pavement, DOT is looking at other ways to beat the heat. Our Cool Corridors study, completed in 2024, was a first-in-the-nation capability and capacity building grant from FEMA to study the types and efficacy of heat mitigation and heat relief strategies through the lens of a benefit cost analysis. The study identified many types of physical interventions including street trees, drinking water fountains, surface treatments, and seating that can address the growing seasonal issue of extreme heat. Through analysis and discussions with sister agencies and sister cities, we evaluated, on a conceptual level, the feasibility of these interventions in the dense NYC context. DOT is advancing our mission to make streets comfortable and safe, especially in the summer. We are seeking federal funding to advance the cooling interventions identified in the study and working to integrate heat vulnerability assessments and heat resilience into capital planning and prioritization.

Given how multifaceted heat health is, we are grateful for the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ) and NYC Emergency Management who have served as

organizers for many of these efforts and also to DOHMH, who has been an incredible technical partner in understanding heat health.

Regarding the pilot that the bill would require, the Administration supports advancement and additional research into the use of cool pavements. DOT is aware that other municipalities have tested cool pavement and seen some promising results. But New York City is a dense and complicated place and implementing cool pavement here will have its unique challenges and any studies and implementation recommendations must consider the wide array of factors at play on the city's streetscape and adjacent buildings, including in areas outside of DOT's jurisdiction. Such a pilot would also require an understanding of heat impacts that are outside of DOT's expertise. We look forward to future discussions with the Council and other appropriate agencies about how to best achieve the bill's aims as well as the City's broader efforts to reduce heat.

#### Introduction 1105

Next, Intro. 1105 sponsored by Chair Brooks-Powers. This bill would require DOT, upon submission of the annual Streets Plan update, to post on our website a description of all planned projects for the year and describe how each will contribute to the Streets Plan mandates. This bill would also require that DOT give monthly updates on each project's progress.

DOT does not support this bill as written. Community engagement is a vital part of DOT's work. We are concerned that putting out a list of projects in the beginning of the year could hamper community engagement if community members feel that the projects will be moving ahead regardless of their input. Additionally, when the Streets Plan was negotiated into law, the annual February update was intended to serve as the agency's chance to publicly account for the previous year's work, and it continues to serve that purpose. That date was specifically negotiated to require our planners to focus on this accounting in the winter months outside of our construction season. We are concerned that requiring such accounting throughout the year will divert our planners' time away from actual project implementation and engagement to bureaucratic paperwork, slowing down our projects during peak construction season. Monthly updates will also be of limited utility, as many of our projects are completed in the last quarter of the year.

#### Introduction 1114

Next, Intro. 1114 sponsored by Council Member Won. This bill would require DOT to create a capital project tracker and provide quarterly updates on all projects that are not part of the Streets Plan.

I'm happy to say that the Mayor's Office of Operations already maintains a citywide capital projects dashboard that includes all of DOT's capital projects. We would be happy to have further discussions with the Council about this dashboard and how it can be improved.

#### Introduction 1160

Finally, Intro. 1160 sponsored by Council Member Brannan. This bill would require DOT to repaint all pavement markings within one week of repaving or resurfacing a street. If the work is not finished within one week, DOT would be required to notify the surrounding community of reasons for delay and provide a new timeline.

DOT does not support this bill as written, though we agree with the intent. DOT has been working to shorten the time between repaving or resurfacing our streets and repainting markings. Once paving is complete, DOT issues a work order right away. Then, the vast majority of markings—or 86 percent—begin within five days, and nearly all—or 96 percent—begin within 10 days. While much better than past practice, we agree that there is room for improvement, but operational flexibility is important to reflect real world conditions. DOT needs to be able to respond to other urgent priorities and, if necessary, redirect the contractor.

In order to get the painting done within one week, we would need to know the completion date a few weeks before the repaving work is completed in order to update plans and schedule contractors, and that is not always possible, as weather and other unexpected conditions can change resurfacing schedules. Environmental conditions also play a role, as extended periods of wet or cold weather may prevent markings installation within any set time period.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Council for the opportunity to testify before you today. We would now be happy to answer any questions.