

**NYC Department of Transportation Testimony Before the  
City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
June 25, 2026**

Good morning, Chair Abreu and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am Monty Dean, Deputy Commissioner of Traffic Operations. I am joined by Michelle Craven, Associate Deputy Commissioner of Cityscape and Franchises, Jeff Malamy, Director of Street Improvement Projects, and Rick Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Mamdani and Commissioner Flynn about Intro. 845, Intro. 866, Intro. 894, Intro. 917, and Intro. 918.

Intro. 845

First, Intro. 845, sponsored by Council Member Thomas-Henry. This bill would require DOT to install distinctive lighting under elevated train lines.

With nearly 400,000 streetlights citywide under our responsibility, we recognize the importance of street lighting in enhancing both street safety and quality of life. We are committed to ensuring streets are well lit for vehicle traffic as well as pedestrians in both the roadway and sidewalk. As a national leader in sustainable street lighting, our lighting studies are based on DOT standards. These standards include recommended practices and guidelines published by the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES), the internationally recognized entity that sets recommended practices for lighting levels in various applications, to ensure lighting standards are sufficiently addressed citywide.

We are happy to provide a quick breakdown of how lighting is installed to provide more background. Based on study evaluations, we routinely make upgrades in any street reconstruction project. For installation, there are three ways we can add additional lighting, depending on where the lower lighting levels are located. We can reduce the distance between streetlights, add secondary lighting on the back of existing poles over the sidewalk at a lower height, or install new standalone poles. DOT must consider various factors when installing lighting including extensive coordination with contractors and utilities when working around obstructions caused by trees or hydrants and existing below ground infrastructure like gas mains and electric ducts. These factors require further extensive survey and design work. Installations also often require time-consuming and disruptive street excavations to lay new electrical conduits and cables as well as ConEd construction for new feeds. Our team works every day to make sure our streets and roadways are well lit. In 2025 alone, we enhanced lighting at nearly 2,500 locations across the city. Despite these efforts, around the city we hear from New Yorkers that they feel safer and more secure when streets and sidewalks under elevated train lines are more brightly lit. Lighting under elevated

trains is uniquely challenging because the support columns create shadows and the elevated structures limit the height of the streetlight poles, and the elevated structures are not engineered to support additional lighting loads. Further, high vibration levels can prevent the installation of DOT equipment.

Along with the installation process, DOT has two categories of lighting we typically install: Standard and Distinctive. Any streetlight pole other than the standard steel “Octagonal” and “Davit” designs for city streets is considered Distinctive. There are seven types of distinctive streetlights, which are installed as part of streetscape projects and other elected funded initiatives, requiring Public Design Commission (PDC) approval. Due to the different funding streams and additional approval processes, distinctive lighting is generally more expensive and much slower to implement.

While DOT strives to be responsive in addressing community concerns regarding sufficient lighting, we have concerns with the bill as written. We are worried that this bill would have the unintended consequence of slowing down our ability to address lighting conditions by limiting us to distinctive lighting. We would be happy to discuss with the Council how we can enhance lighting in your districts and welcome feedback if there are particular locations of concern.

#### Intro. 866

Next, Intro. 866, sponsored by Council Member Epstein. This bill would require DOT to post signs in advance within a 500-foot radius of a location of disruptive work. Disruptive work, as defined in the legislation, means work that is performed by DOT or pursuant to a permit issued by DOT that is expected to create street, sidewalk, or parking space closures; rerouting traffic; relocation of bus stops or bike share stations; or work between 8 pm and 8 am that includes noise, vibrations, or bright lighting.

DOT already posts informational signs for long-term construction projects pursuant to existing requirements. We understand the need to communicate effectively to New Yorkers when there will be disruptive construction work. We believe that existing rules and current practices accomplish the goals of this bill, while balancing operational needs.

In addition to the informational construction signs, we have other tools in our toolkit to appropriately notify and involve communities within project areas. For example, our Street Ambassadors meet people where they are by discussing project impacts in impacted communities on the street. We also deploy VMS boards (those large portable signs that feature construction updates) when needed. Of course, we also are proud of the ongoing partnerships we have with the Council and the Community Boards utilize your networks to spread the word with residents

about critical projects in your neighborhoods.

Although we support the goal of the bill, as described with our existing toolkit of communication efforts, we have a number of concerns with the current scope of the bill and would prefer to utilize existing requirements on construction signage to meet the intended goals. With affordability and project delivery a top priority in this administration, we would be wary of creating additional requirements which would slow construction and raise costs. We would be happy to continue conversations with the Council to identify the best way to implement notice requirements.

#### Intro. 894

Next, Intro. 894 sponsored by Council Member Brewer. This bill would allow sidewalk cafes to include removable vertical screenings and overhead coverings from October 1 to March 31.

We are thrilled with the significant interest in expanding the Dining Out NYC program and we support the goals of this bill, as sidewalk cafes are already allowed to operate with overhead coverings and awnings pursuant to our rules, along with our sister agencies' requirements in specific instances. We have suggestions for how to include other winterization methods like vertical screenings and may want to modify the timeline, so the requirements are in alignment with existing discussions on winterization for roadway cafes. We are happy to have more conversations with the Council on how best to enhance the sidewalk cafe experience.

#### Intro. 917

Next, Intro. 917 sponsored by Council Member Sanchez. This bill would codify existing DOT rules pertaining to cleanliness standards for businesses operating sidewalk and roadway cafes. The bill would also raise maximum civil penalties to \$300 for the first violation and \$600 for second and subsequent violations at the same place of business.

Prioritizing quality of life concerns is critical to the success of our Dining Out NYC program. We have been working to be incredibly responsive to complaints and carry out enforcement when necessary. The Dining Out NYC program requires durable, modular, and easy-to-clean materials for outdoor dining setups, establishes weekly cleaning requirements, and prohibits messy sand-filled barriers, which result in a dramatic improvement to the outdoor dining experience.

Regarding the fine structure, we understand the desire to raise the fees, but believe it is important that all program violations related to non-compliance be treated uniformly. We look forward to working with the Council to determine appropriate violation amounts.

We are always striving to make the Dining Out NYC program the best it can be for New Yorkers and visitors, and we are happy to work with Council on this bill to strengthen cleanliness and sanitation standards.

#### Intro. 918

Finally, Intro. 918 sponsored by Council Member Thomas-Henry. This bill would give businesses the option to pay revocable consent fees in quarterly installments.

Along with addressing quality of life concerns, we are also working every day to help small businesses thrive through outdoor dining – a program that New Yorkers love and that restaurants depend on. We strive to make participation as accessible and streamlined as possible. Currently, restaurants must pay an initial revocable consent fee once their application is approved. Across the board for DOT programs, we require a one-time, upfront payment for all revocable consents.

Additionally, it has been DOTs experience that restaurants have a harder time meeting program requirements once they have been authorized to commence operations. We worry that if this new payment method was authorized, DOT would struggle to collect after the initial payment. This would not only leave DOT with a program deficit, but would result in new costs for the department and delays in application approval for the restaurants, due to already limited staff capacity being shifted to chase down payments four times a year.

While quarterly payments perhaps were necessary in the DCWP program when fees were notably higher, DOT charges far less for the revocable consent, making a quarterly payment less relevant.

We share Council's goal to improve the application process and are happy to have more discussions with Council and stakeholders about adapting our program processes.

#### 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.