



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

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City Council Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure April 10, 2023 Oversight Hearing on Truck Routes

Good morning Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee, and thank you for holding this hearing today on this extremely important issue. As you may know, one of the main goals of my career has been to reduce truck traffic in environmental justice communities such as Southside Williamsburg, where I'm from. These neighborhoods have suffered for decades due to the disparate impacts of air pollution and exhaust, including higher rates of asthma and cardiopulmonary disease and more frequent hospital visits, as well as more dangerous streets.

We've had some successes in recent years, for example waste equity legislation has resulted in fewer waste trucks traveling through North Brooklyn, Southeast Queens, and the South Bronx, and implementation of Commercial Waste Zoning will build on this victory. However, the next front in this battle is regulating other types of trucks, especially due to the recent rise of e-commerce platforms. In the last three years, the largest percentage of 311 complaints about engine idling, air quality, and truck activity have come from Brooklyn's waterfront communities that also border the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, with the largest uptick coming from neighborhoods where last-mile facilities have sprung up in industrial zones.

I am actively working alongside Councilmember Cabán and a coalition of stakeholders to finalize legislation that will create a licensing structure for last-mile facilities, which will allow us to address multiple issues at once, including but not limited to clustering, environmental impact, and labor conditions. I look forward to introducing that bill soon.

In the meantime, I want to thank the Department of Transportation for its attention to this issue, particularly the plan announced last week to create neighborhood-based micro-hubs that will utilize non-truck methods such as cargo bikes for last-mile deliveries. This is the kind of creative planning we need, and even the corporations know it. Amazon is even piloting a cargo bike delivery program in Red Hook. We need to encourage more of this, and support State legislation to legalize larger cargo bikes that can travel farther and hold more.

And there is still more we can do. Passing Intros 708 and 924 will support re-envisioning our existing truck routes with new needs in mind, while being creative about design interventions that help keep trucks where they should be. This legislation will ensure that this planning includes diverse stakeholders both from within the industry and those who are impacted by it. I would also like to encourage the Council to hear Intro 721, which would explore how to integrate truck routes with GPS so that drivers can plan their routes more efficiently.

Additionally, implementation and enforcement of existing policies can support a more sustainable truck network. Implementing legislation requiring DOT to install 500 loading zones per year through 2024, coupled with DOT's continued efforts to expand off-hour deliveries, will help alleviate double parking and the congestion it causes, and decrease conflicts between delivery trucks and cyclists. Implementing Commercial Waste Zoning will dramatically reduce the number of waste trucks on our streets. Enforcement of existing policies that disallow oversized trucks, particularly on the triple-cantilever of the BQE, will make our streets safer and protect our infrastructure. And last but of course not least, implementing the Central Business District Tolling Program will be transformative by encouraging use of alternative transportation options and thereby reducing congestion.

Thank you again for holding this hearing today. I look forward to continuing to partner with the City Council to address truck traffic, further environmental justice, and make our streets safer.