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CITY OF CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL



CITY HALL
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Chair, Committee on Pedestrian and
Traffic Safety

Vice Chair, Committee on Contracting
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MONTHLY REPORT – MAY 2025 **COMMITTEE ON PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY**

Pursuant to the Rule 45 of City of Chicago Rules and Order, the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety submits the following monthly report for May 2025.

Date, Time, & Location of Meeting:

On Tuesday, May 13th, 2025, at 12:30 p.m. the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety held a meeting at City Hall, Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 12:39 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

Chairman La Spata (1st Ward)
Alderman Robinson (4th Ward)
Alderman Yancy (5th Ward)
Alderman Chico (10th Ward)
Alderman Quinn (13th Ward)
Alderman Moore (17th Ward) – virtual
Alderman Curtis (18th Ward)
Alderman Burnett (27th Ward)
Alderman Ervin (28th Ward)
Vice Chairman Cruz (30th Ward) – virtual
Alderman Knudsen (43rd Ward)
Alderman Lawson (44th Ward)
Alderman Martin (47th Ward)
Alderman Manaa-Hoppenworth (48th Ward)

Absent Members: Alderman Hopkins (2nd Ward)

Non-Members in Attendance: Alderman Villegas (36th Ward)

The Chair accepted a motion from Ald. Ervin to allow for remote participation by Ald. Moore and Ald. Cruz, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

Public Comment:

There were five spoken and one written (see page 5) public comments for this meeting.

- **Mr. Blakemore:** Shared his disappointment with the lack of public turnout and participation to meetings; shared opposition to the practice of residential permit parking, stating that the streets are for everyone
- **Mark W.:** representing Citizens to Abolish Red Light Cameras; shared opposition to the expansion of speed cameras based on his group's analysis of the city's crash data, stating that there is not a significant reduction in crashes or long-term benefit to camera use
- **Joseph N.:** with Chicago Gig Alliance, Chicago resident who is also an uber/lyft driver of 10 years; shared and urged support for the Fair Share Ordinance; suggested that the City should have designated zones for pick-up/drop-off or use the side streets instead, wants Committee to get involved with the safety issues of rideshares
- **Patricia P.:** concerned about cars driving unsafely and red lights being run; hopes that ticket enforcement will change behavior and follow rules of the road; shared frustration with blocking of bus lanes, which happens even just outside City Hall on LaSalle by city vehicles
- **Cyrus D.:** Shared support for the use of speed cameras; shared that drivers do slow down at them and the issue is more that the fines are too high for low-income people; suggested that maybe all people do not need to be fined and that ticketing data be used to target repeat or high-speed violators instead

Approval of April 2025 Rule 45 Report:

Ald. Manaa-Hoppenworth moved to approve, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

Agenda of Matters Considered:

The Agenda of Matters Considered consisted of 14 pages and included 246 matters:

- 201 ordinances related to disabled parking permits,
- 20 ordinances related to parking restrictions,
- 15 ordinances related to traffic warning signs and/or signals,
- 6 ordinances related to residential parking permit zones,
- 2 ordinance related to industrial permit parking,
- 1 ordinance related to a municipal code amendment, and
- 1 resolution, for which a subject matter hearing was held [no votes were taken on this matter].

Direct Introductions on pages 2-3 Passed without Department recommendations. Ald. Martin moved to approve all Direct Introduction ordinances, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All matters on pages 4-7 Passed as Recommended by the appropriate Department(s). A Substitute Order [SO2025-0015974] was submitted by the ward office for Item 3 on page 4, and a Substitute Ordinance [SO2025-0016517] was submitted by the ward office for Item 5 on page 4. Ald. Quinn moved to accept these items, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum. Ald. Lawson moved to approve all items on pages 4-7, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All matters on pages 8-14 Passed with No Recommendation. These items were submitted as aldermanic overrides or received no recommendations from City Departments. Substitute Ordinances were submitted by

the respective ward offices for Items 9 [SO2024-0012327] and 11 [SO2025-0015665] on page 13 and Item 5 on page 14 [SO2025-0015682]. Ald. Robinson moved to accept the Substitute Ordinances, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum. Ald. Quinn moved to approve all items on pages 8-14, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

A Substitute Ordinance [SO2025-0016735] was submitted by the sponsoring alder for Item 2 on page 1, which allows the City to vacate final determination of liability on certain parking/standing violations for vehicles reported to enforcement agencies as stolen. Ald. Lawson moved to accept the Substitute Ordinance, which was approved by vica voce vote by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

Ald. Martin shared remarks on SO2025-0016735, explaining that the amendment's purpose is to rectify the existing issue where victims of stolen or hijacked vehicles who might receive tickets for that vehicle when it is no longer in their possession must go through the administrative hearing process to get the ticket(s) waived or dismissed, which is a burdensome process.

Questions & comments on SO2025-0016735:

- Ald. Lawson asked for clarification around the current process and how this amendment would change that process.

Seeing no further questions or comments, Ald. Lawson moved to approve SO2025-0016735, which was approved by vica voce vote by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All actions taken at the meeting were by viva voce vote.

There was a subject matter hearing on the topic of the installation of speed cameras at various locations in Chicago during 2025 [R2025-0016225]. No votes were taken on the topic. Ald. Villegas, the sponsor of the resolution, opened the discussion by contextualizing the hearing within the concerns around the use of speed cameras for revenue generation and the need to emphasize safety and data-driven installation of cameras.

CDOT Commissioner Tom Carney and Managing Deputy Commissioner Vig Krishnamurthy led a presentation on CDOT's administration of the city's automated speed enforcement program. Key data points shared during the presentation include:

- In 2023, Chicago recorded a 27% reduction in traffic fatalities from the peak in 2021, compared to a 5% decrease nationwide. However, over 100 Chicagoans were still killed in traffic crashes in 2024, which is a significant number that must be reduced.
- In 2023, 66-84% of drivers who were issued a camera ticket did not receive a second ticket during the year, indicating they changed their driving behavior.
- Between March 2021 and March 2025, violations have decreased by 65% and average speeds have decreased by 2mph at speed camera locations.
- CDOT shared how the placement of speed cameras is decided:
 - o State Law allows speed cameras only within "Child Safety Zone", which is considered a 1/8th mile from school or park, and during school/park hours only
 - o State law allows up to 20% of all Safety Zones to be equipped with cameras (~320 zones), and in 2024, 85 Safety Zones were equipped with cameras.

- CDOT takes into account the legal stipulations around placement, quantitative data regarding speed and crashes, and qualitative data regarding the community experience with speeding at that location when deciding where to install a camera.
- Regarding the new cameras that have been / will be added in 2025:
 - 40 of the locations are back-log requests on file from City Council that will be re-verified and re-evaluated
 - 34 locations have been identified to date (05/13/2025) – 23 cameras were installed in April and May and another 11 cameras were in the design and construction phase

Alders Villegas, Lawson, Martin, and Manaa-Hoppenworth shared comments and asked questions following the presentation. Questions fell into the fine amounts and the use of funds generated by these tickets, including suggestions that these funds be used for safer infrastructure instead of going to the corporate fund; how the legal restrictions on placement of cameras were decided upon; and ticketing trends for 2024.

Chair La Spata shared closing remarks centering on the tangible impact of these cameras in creating safer conditions in our city, as demonstrated by the CDOT presentation and data. Having no further business before the committee, Chair La Spata requested a motion to adjourn. Ald. Manaa-Hoppenworth so moved, and hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 1:53 p.m.

Written Public Comment:

Dom A., Sierra Club, submitted May 13, 2025:

The Sierra Club of Illinois - Chicago Chapter supports the further usage of cameras throughout the city to enforce speeding and red light violations. We believe that the cameras are a less biased and safer alternative than police enforcement for these types of infractions. Traffic stops are one of the most dangerous interactions people have with the police which can largely be mitigated through the use of these cameras. Doing so also frees up police to be more present in their communities and solve crimes that are more material to the residents.

These cameras are also proven to work. A common criticism from detractors has been that people just slow down where the cameras are and then speed up once they are past. While this may be true, if the intention is to slow people down in particularly high risk areas, such as schools or parks, then they are doing their job. This was also proven through reductions in fatalities and crashes where they were installed. The data is in, the cameras are effective, just not a panacea for traffic violence.

If there is one major criticism of the cameras it is that they are used as a revenue generation device to which we agree. The city has done a poor job of using the revenue from these cameras to make long term infrastructure improvements that would reduce speeding without the need for enforcement. All fines and fees should not be put into the general fund and instead be earmarked to address the most dangerous streets in our city. The south and west sides where speeding is most often ticketed need to see effort from the city to address these corridors. We know this is possible, these treatments have been proven to work at various locations throughout the city, such as Central Park Avenue in Garfield Park. Safe streets require investment to improve the quality of life of people who live there and cannot solely rely on enforcement.

We believe the city has a long way to go before the streets are equitable but for those who claim that these speeding tickets are an unfair burden for the poor of Chicago is to ignore the reality of the cost of car ownership. The average cost of owning a car is nearly \$1000 a month between loan payments, gas, insurance, city stickers, maintenance and so on. If we want to unburden the poor of Chicago the best thing we can do for them is remove one of the largest costs for them in their life. World class public transit and safe walkable neighborhoods would do more to relieve and lift up the poor than any tweaking of fines could ever hope to achieve.

We challenge the city to rethink how it uses the funds these cameras generate. They are not a bridge to fill budget gaps, they need to be a way to improve the streets and lives of the communities they exist in. Anything else is unacceptable.