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Councilman Gentile Introduces Two Bills To Give Communities a Voice in Parking Regulations

CITY HALL—Councilman Vincent Gentile (D-Brooklyn) introduced two bills today to force the New York City Department of Transportation to “keep local communities in the loop” when it comes to changes in parking meter regulations and the implementation of pilot programs.

“More often than not, drivers are caught off guard by rule changes the Department introduces,” Councilman Gentile said. “Last year, the Department decided that a quarter would get you just 20 minutes at a parking meter instead of 30. When did drivers find out? After they fed 50 cents into a meter and came back an hour later to a ticket.

“These bills will force the Department to treat local residents like partners instead of having them be an afterthought,” Councilman Gentile continued. “It forces the Department to communicate with residents before making any changes to parking meter regulations or using their neighborhoods as testing grounds for pilot programs, and it gives those communities a voice in the process.”

Intro 1076 would require the Department to give local community boards and council members 60 days notice prior to any changes in parking meter regulations going into effect. The notice must, at a minimum, state the proposed regulation change and the date it is planned to take effect.

Intro 1077 would require the Department to present plans for any pilot program to the affected community board at its monthly meeting at least 60 days prior to the program’s implementation. The presentation must include, at minimum, the cost of the project, a map showing the streets that would be affected, all traffic studies related to the project and the project’s start and end dates.

The community board could make recommendations on any presented pilot programs or projects; the Department must update the board with its intention of implementing the original

program or amending it as a result of the board's recommendations at least 30 days prior to the program's implementation.

Councilman James Vacca (D-Bronx), a longtime opponent of unfair and aggressive ticketing practices in New York City, is a prime co-sponsor of each bill.

"There's no reason people should have to wake up one morning and find out there's a new traffic pattern or bus-only lane or that a quarter only gets you 20 minutes at the meter," Councilman Vacca said. "These bills are about giving New Yorkers a simple heads-up so they're not blindsided when the rules change. I think it's the absolute least we can ask of our city agencies."

Councilman Peter F. Vallone Jr. (D-Queens) is a prime co-sponsor of Intro 1076.

"One would have hoped that this sort of common sense legislation was unnecessary. Unfortunately, in the past, DOT has changed signs with no notice, and have given out tickets," Councilman Vallone said.