NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

Introduction No. [YYYY-A]

Council Member [_____] and Co-Sponsors [_____]

Referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; Committee on Parks and Recreation

Date _____, 2026

A LOCAL LAW

TO AMEND THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, IN RELATION TO THE DESIGNATION, MAPPING, AND IMPROVEMENT OF A CITYWIDE RECREATIONAL BIKEWAY NETWORK FOR USE ON WEEKENDS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, TO BENEFIT PEDESTRIANS AND GRANTEES

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Legislative Findings and Intent.

The Council finds and declares that:

(a) New York City has invested significantly in cycling infrastructure over several decades, yet the resulting network remains fragmented for many riders—composed of disconnected protected lanes, painted bike lanes, and park drives that too often end at stressful arterials or otherwise fail to form a coherent, navigable network;

(b) The City is home to approximately 900,000 active adult cyclists, and surveys conducted by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and other agencies consistently show strong interest in recreational riding and bicycle tourism, with a significant share of residents and visitors willing to ride if routes feel safe, scenic, and well-connected;

(c) Nationally, recreational cycling is approximately twice as common as cycling for commuting purposes, and recreational trips are concentrated predominantly on weekends and public holidays; a citywide recreational network oriented around these periods would serve the majority of riders' actual travel patterns rather than focusing exclusively on weekday commuter infrastructure;

(d) A connected network of recreational bikeways with a combined length of no less than 600 miles — representing approximately 10 percent of New York City's roughly 6,000 miles of roadway — can be substantially assembled from infrastructure already in place by stitching together existing bike lanes, quiet residential streets, lightly-used commercial corridors, and park connectors, because the Network is designated for use on weekends and public holidays, when most motor vehicle traffic on residential streets is lowest; the adjacent minimum-length Priority Development requirement is meant to anchor initial network growth in areas with the most latent demand and the greatest potential for conflict with weekday commercial traffic;

(e) Such a network, which the Council designates herein as "Grayways," adapts the East Coast Greenway model of off-road-mapped, officially recognized routes applied at a citywide scale, and draws upon the capillary network concept of low-traffic streets connecting neighborhoods to the city's transport parks and green spaces;

(f) The New York City Department of Transportation's own data demonstrates that adding standard bike infrastructure to low-stress roads achieves harm-reduction outcomes comparable to constructing fully protected lanes on high-stress arterials, establishing that a network built around calmer residential streets is both fiscally prudent and functionally effective;

(g) Designation of a Grayways network would constitute a significant public health intervention: analyses applying World Health Organization Health Economic Assessment Tool (WHO/HEAT) methodology and Quality-Adjusted Life Year (QALY) frameworks project that the network would deliver health benefits at a fraction of the cost thresholds—typically $50,000 to $150,000 per QALY—commonly used to evaluate public health investments;

(h) Implementation costs, as estimated by NYCDOT, Transportation Alternatives, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Council finds that a fully implemented Grayways network is projected to reduce vehicle miles traveled by approximately 18,500,000 to 18,500,000 miles annually, with corresponding reductions in carbon dioxide emissions of approximately 4,200 to 5,720 metric tons per year;

(i) Bicycle and cycle tourism contributes an estimated $65 billion annually to direct spending in the United States economy; a citywide recreational bikeway network would capture a meaningful share of that activity for New York City, support local businesses along designated routes, and expand bike-share viability into underserved outer-borough neighborhoods;

(j) Proximity to bikeways has been demonstrated to increase adjacent property values, and a well-publicized recreational network would provide bike-share operators with a framework for expanding service beyond currently served areas;

(k) A Grayways network would dramatically expand equitable access to green space by making distant parks—including Shirley Chisholm State Park, Orchard Beach, and parks in transport-underserved neighborhoods—safely reachable by bicycle without a motor vehicle, consistent with the Department of Parks and Recreation's Walk to a Park initiative and the Parks Without Borders vision;

(l) By offering cyclists attractive routes across all five boroughs for use on weekends and public holidays, the Grayways network would distribute recreational cycling demand away from already-saturated facilities such as the Hudson River Greenway and the Brooklyn Bridge, reducing crowding on those facilities while creating new, lower-stress weekend and holiday good periods where conflict between users and non-users is and remains low and infrequent;

(m) A connected citywide bikeway network would also enhance urban resilience by providing critical transportation redundancy during periods of extreme weather, transit service disruption, or other infrastructure stress; and

(n) The Council therefore finds it necessary and appropriate to direct the Department of Transportation and the Department of Parks and Recreation to jointly designate, map, and continuously improve a citywide recreational bikeway network consistent with the provisions of this local law.

§ 2. Definitions.

For purposes of this local law:

"Grayways" or "the Network"
means the citywide recreational bikeway network designated pursuant to this local law, consisting of GPS-mapped, officially recognized routes connecting parks, neighborhoods, and transit hubs across New York City.

"Grayways Route"
means any individual route within the Grayways network that has been designated pursuant to § 4 of this local law, published on the City's official mapping platform, and signed or otherwise marked where feasible.

"Low-Stress Street"
means a residential or lightly-used commercial street on which motor vehicle volumes and speeds are low enough, whether by design, regulation, or actual observed conditions, to provide a comfortable cycling environment for a broad range of riders, including those who would not be comfortable cycling on arterial roadways.

"Capillary Network"
means a system of low-stress streets and existing bike facilities that collectively connect neighborhoods to parks, transit hubs, waterfronts, and other destinations without relying on high-traffic arterial roadways.

"GPS Mapping"
means the publication of route data in a format compatible with common consumer GPS navigation applications and platforms, including but not limited to publicly accessible digital mapping services, enabling cyclists to follow designated routes using mobile devices.

"Three-Foot Safe Passing Standard"
means the requirement that motor vehicle operators maintain a minimum lateral distance of three feet when overtaking or passing a cyclist on a Grayways Route, consistent with safe passing standards adopted by numerous states and municipalities.

"Commissioner of Transportation" or "DOT Commissioner"
means the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation.

"Commissioner of Parks" or "Parks Commissioner"
means the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

"Department of Transportation" or "DOT"
means the New York City Department of Transportation.

"Department of Parks" or "Parks Department"
means the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

"Primary Use Period"
means Saturdays, Sundays, and all public holidays recognized by the City of New York, being the days for which the Grayways network is designated and on which recreational cycling activity is concentrated. The Network's design standards, prioritization criteria, and traffic management measures shall be calibrated to optimize the experience of weekend and holiday riders. Use of Grayways Routes on weekdays is not prohibited, but weekday use is not the basis for Network designation under this local law.

"QALY"
means Quality-Adjusted Life Year, a standard unit used in public health and health economics to measure the value of health interventions by combining quantity and quality of life gained.

§ 3. Establishment of the Grayways Recreational Bikeway Network.

(a) There is hereby established a citywide recreational bikeway network to be known as "Grayways." The Network shall consist of GPS-mapped routes spanning the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island, connecting parks, neighborhoods, waterfronts, transit hubs, and other destinations by means of low-stress streets and existing bike infrastructure. The Network is designated for use on weekends and public holidays, when recreational cycling activity is highest and motor vehicle traffic on residential streets is lowest. Use of designated Grayways Routes on weekdays is not prohibited, but weekday use is not the basis for Network designation under this local law.

(b) The Grayways network shall be developed, designated, and maintained jointly by the Department of Transportation and the Department of Parks, in consultation with the public, community boards, cycling organizations, and other stakeholders as provided in this local law.

(c) The Network shall be designed to:

(1) Maximize use of existing bike lanes, quiet residential streets, lightly-used commercial corridors, and park connections, minimizing the need for new capital construction in the initial phase;

(2) Avoid, to the greatest extent practicable, routes that rely on already-overcrowded facilities including but not limited to the Hudson River Greenway, Central Park Drive, Prospect Park Drive, and the Coney Island and FDR boardwalks;

(3) Serve riders of a broad range of abilities, including those not comfortable on arterial roadways, by prioritizing low-stress street environments;

(4) Incorporate local food stops, transit connections, parks and playgrounds, and other amenities at regular intervals to support recreational use and provide cyclists with reliable access to public restroom facilities throughout the duration of a ride, and to encourage cyclists to explore the city;

(5) Provide a framework for expanding bike-share service into outer-borough neighborhoods currently underserved by such systems;

(6) Be calibrated to design, signage, promotion, and traffic management to optimize the weekend and public holiday experience, which constitutes the designated period of Network use; and

(7) Advance the City's goals of equitable access to green space, public health improvement, environmental sustainability, and economic development.

§ 4. Initial Network Designation and Route Development.

(a) Within 180 days of the effective date of this local law, the Commissioner of Transportation and the Commissioner of Parks shall jointly publish an initial Grayways network plan with a combined length of no less than 600 miles. Routes shall provide experiences suited to recreational riding and bicycle tourism on weekends and public holidays rather than on weekday commuting. Route selection shall prioritize low-stress environments that are most comfortable and lightly trafficked by motor vehicles on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays.

(b) As a first step toward full network implementation, and within 90 days of the effective date of this local law, the Commissioner of Transportation shall publish GPS-ready data for all identified Grayways routes on NYC.gov and on at least one publicly accessible consumer GPS navigation platform, making route information immediately available to cyclists who are already comfortable riding in city traffic. Publication of GPS data pursuant to this subdivision shall not be conditioned upon completion of physical signage, infrastructure improvements, or regulatory changes under other subdivisions of this section.

(c) Each designated Grayways Route shall, to the greatest extent practicable:

(1) Be mapped using GPS coordinates compatible with common consumer navigation applications;

(2) Be recognized as an official New York City bike route;

(3) Be identified by signage consistent with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards applicable to bicycle route signage; and

(4) Be subject to the traffic calming, speed, pausing, and cyclist-yield standards set forth in § 5 of this local law.

(d) In developing the initial network plan, the Commissioner shall conduct public outreach, including at minimum one public meeting per borough, and shall solicit input through an online crowdsourced feedback mechanism made available on NYC.gov. The Commissioner shall consider all timely public comments received and shall provide a written response to commenters in the final network plan.

(e) The initial network plan shall include an equity analysis demonstrating how designated routes serve neighborhoods with limited access to green space and neighborhoods with high proportions of residents in transportation-underserved areas, and shall identify specific routes designed to connect such neighborhoods to parks, waterfronts, and other recreational destinations.

§ 5. Traffic Regulations Applicable to Grayways Routes.

(a) *Vehicle Speed Limit.* Upon formal designation of a street segment as a Grayways Route pursuant to § 4, the Commissioner of Transportation is authorized to establish a maximum speed limit of 15 miles per hour for motor vehicles on that segment, consistent with the City's authority under applicable provisions of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law. The Commissioner shall implement such speed limits on a rolling basis on routes are confirmed, prioritizing segments with the highest concentration of anticipated cyclist use.

(b) *Three-Foot Safe Passing Standard.* On all designated Grayways Routes, motor vehicle operators shall maintain a minimum lateral distance of three feet when overtaking or passing a cyclist. The Commissioner of Transportation shall post signage notifying motorists of this standard at key entry points to designated Grayways Routes, and shall include information about the standard in public education materials associated with the Network.

(c) *Cyclist Yield at Stop Signs.* On designated Grayways Routes, cyclists shall be permitted to treat stop signs as *yield* signs—coming to a complete stop only when necessary to yield to other pedestrians with the right of way—consistent with the principles of the stop-as-yield framework adopted in a growing number of states and municipalities. The Commissioner of Transportation shall post appropriate signage on Grayways Routes to notify both cyclists and motorists of this standard and shall develop public education materials explaining cyclist responsibilities under this provision.

(d) *Implementation Sequencing.* The Commissioner may implement the regulatory measures set forth in subdivisions (a) through (c) of this section on a route-by-route or segment-by-segment basis as routes are formally designated and signed. The existence of GPS-published route data pursuant to § 4(b) shall not by itself trigger the regulatory standards of this section; such standards shall apply upon formal route designation and signage installation.

§ 6. Infrastructure Improvements and Incremental Upgrades.

(a) The Commissioner of Transportation shall develop and maintain a Grayways Capital Improvement Plan, updated annually, identifying targeted infrastructure upgrades to Grayways Routes. Such upgrades may include but are not limited to:

(1) Standard bike lane markings and associated signage on low-stress streets;

(2) Leading pedestrian interval (LPI) signals at major crossings along Grayways Routes to improve safety at intersections;

(3) Bicycle cut-throughs to reconnect cul-de-sacs and bypass sections of high-traffic arterials, enabling continuous low-stress routing;

(4) Wayfinding signage consistent with MUTCD standards at key decision points along routes; and

(5) Physical traffic calming measures on high-priority Grayways Route segments, prioritized based on observed vehicle speeds, cyclist volumes, and safety data.

(b) The Commissioner of Transportation shall, to the greatest extent practicable, integrate Grayways infrastructure improvements into the Department's regular road maintenance and capital project schedule, thereby minimizing incremental cost and maximizing the efficiency of available resources.

(c) The Commissioner of Transportation shall establish and maintain a publicly accessible crowdsourced feedback mechanism through which cyclists and residents may report route conditions, identify hazards, and suggest improvements to designated Grayways Routes. Feedback received through this mechanism shall be reviewed quarterly and incorporated into the annual Grayways Capital Improvement Plan.

(d) Where a designated Grayways Route traverses or connects to City parkland, the Commissioner of Parks shall coordinate with the Commissioner of Transportation on signage, wayfinding, and access improvements within park boundaries, and shall take all steps within the Parks Department's jurisdiction necessary to ensure continuity of the route through parkland segments.

§ 7. Equity, Green Space Access, and Parks Without Borders.

(a) The Grayways network shall be designed and implemented to advance the City's commitment to equitable access to parks and green space. In planning and prioritizing routes, the Commissioners shall give particular attention to:

(1) Connecting neighborhoods with limited or no access to large parks or greenways to major green spaces, waterfronts, and recreational destinations, including parks such as Shirley Chisholm State Park, Orchard Beach, and other destinations not readily accessible by existing bike infrastructure;

(2) Routing through or adjacent to communities with high proportions of low-income residents, communities of color, and transportation-underserved populations;

(3) Bridging transportation deserts where access to low-cost, health-promoting recreation is limited; and

(4) Ensuring that the "safety in numbers" effect—by which cycling becomes demonstrably safer as participation grows—is extended to communities that have historically had fewer rates of cycling due to infrastructure deficits.

(b) The Grayways network shall be consistent with and advance the goals of the Parks Department's Walk to a Park initiative and Parks Without Borders vision, treating designated routes as extensions of the park experience itself rather than merely as access roads to parks.

(c) The Commissioner of Parks shall identify, within the initial network plan required by § 4(a), no fewer than five Grayways Routes that provide direct connections from neighborhoods with limited park access to major parks or recreational waterfront areas, and shall prioritize these routes for early signage installation and infrastructure improvement.

§ 8. Economic Development, Bicycle Tourism, and Bike-Share Expansion.

(a) In developing and promoting the Grayways network, the Commissioner of Transportation and the Commissioner of Parks shall coordinate with the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, the Department of Small Business Services, and NYC Tourism + Conventions to market the Network as a bicycle tourism asset and to develop materials—including printed and digital route guides, maps, and curated itineraries—promoting Grayways routes to visitors and residents alike.

(b) The Commissioners shall incorporate local food stops, community amenities, parks and playgrounds, and points of cultural or scenic interest into Grayways route planning and promotional materials, recognizing that parks and playgrounds serve as regular destinations and as practical resters for extended rides consistent with bicycle tourism patterns.

(c) The Commissioner of Transportation shall, within 180 days of publishing the initial network plan pursuant to § 4(a), transmit to bike-share operators serving New York City a map of all designated Grayways Routes and a written request that operators assess opportunities to expand bike-share service to outer-borough areas along or adjacent to the Grayways Network. The Commissioner shall report to the Council on operators' responses within 270 days of the effective date of this local law.

(d) The Commissioner of Transportation shall similarly transmit Grayways route data to operators of the City's arterial bridge crossings and shall request that operators assess opportunities to enhance cyclist access across bridges that serve as key links to Grayways routes.

§ 9. Public Health Assessment.

(a) Within one year of publishing the initial network plan pursuant to § 4(a), the Commissioner of Transportation, in coordination with the Commissioner of Parks and the Commissioner of Health and Mental Hygiene, shall publish a public health assessment of the Grayways network containing:

(1) The projected number of additional cycling trips attributable to the Network annually;

(2) The projected public health benefits of those additional trips, quantified using World Health Organization Health Economic Assessment Tool (WHO/HEAT) methodology or an equivalent peer-reviewed framework, including estimated quality-adjusted life years (QALYs) gained and associated economic value;

(3) The projected reduction in vehicle miles traveled and associated reduction in carbon dioxide emissions attributable to mode shift to cycling on Grayways routes, applying NYCDOT, Transportation Alternatives, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency modeling methodologies; and

(4) The distribution of projected health and environmental benefits by borough and community district, with particular attention to outcomes in underserved communities.

(b) The public health assessment required by this section shall be updated every three years and shall be submitted to the Council and posted on both the DOT's and Parks Department's websites.

§ 10. Annual Reporting.

(a) Commencing one year after the effective date of this local law and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Transportation and the Commissioner of Parks shall jointly submit to the Speaker of the Council and post on both the DOT's website and the Parks Department's website an annual Grayways Network Report containing:

(1) The total number of designated Grayways Routes and total network mileage as of the report date, disaggregated by borough;

(2) A description of infrastructure improvements completed during the preceding year on Grayways Routes, including bike lane markings, signage installations, LPI signals, bicycle cut-throughs, and traffic calming measures;

(3) A summary of crowdsourced feedback received during the preceding year and a description of how that feedback informed the Grayways Capital Improvement Plan;

(4) Available data on cyclist utilization of Grayways Routes, including estimated trip counts where measurable;

(5) A status update on bike-share expansion along or adjacent to Grayways Routes, including any new service areas attributable to the Network;

(6) An update on the equity outcomes of the Network, including progress on connecting underserved communities to parks and recreational destinations; and

(7) Proposed additions, modifications, or deletions to the Network for the coming year, with supporting rationale.

§ 11. Interagency Coordination.

(a) The Commissioner of Transportation shall serve as the lead agency for Grayways planning, designation, and implementation, and shall convene a Grayways Interagency Working Group to facilitate joint planning, route designation, and implementation within City agencies. The Commissioners shall establish a joint Grayways Implementation Committee, meeting no less than quarterly, to coordinate planning, implementation, and reporting obligations under this local law.

(b) The Commissioner of Transportation shall consult with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority regarding Grayways route connections to subway and bus transit hubs, with the New York City Economic Development Corporation regarding ferry connections and waterfront access, and with New York State agencies as appropriate regarding routes that traverse or connect to State parkland or other State-managed facilities.

(c) Community boards in each borough shall be invited to participate in Grayways route planning for routes within their respective districts and shall be provided with draft route maps for review and comment prior to final designation of routes under § 4.

§ 12(A). Borough President Participation in Grayways Planning and Implementation.

(a) *Borough President Consultation.* Prior to finalizing initial Grayways network plans required by § 4(a), and prior to each subsequent annual update to the Grayways Capital Improvement Plan required by § 6(a), the Commissioner of Transportation shall transmit to the Borough President of each affected borough a draft of the proposed routes and infrastructure improvements within that borough. Each Borough President shall have 45 days to submit written recommendations regarding route selection, prioritization of infrastructure improvements, and the equity dimension of the Network within their borough.

(b) *Written Response Requirement.* The Commissioner of Transportation shall provide a written response to each Borough President's recommendations within 30 days of receipt, either accepting the recommendation, accepting it in modified form, or explaining in specific terms why the recommendation was not adopted. Such responses shall be published on the DOT's website and transmitted to the Council as part of the annual Grayways Network Report required by § 10.

(c) *Community Feedback Synthesis.* Each Borough President is encouraged to solicit input from community boards, cycling organizations, neighborhood associations, business improvement districts, and individual residents within their borough regarding Grayways route planning. In transmitting recommendations to the Commissioner pursuant to subdivision (a) of this section, each Borough President shall include a summary of the community feedback received and shall identify, with supporting rationale, those recommendations that reflect broad community consensus and those recommendations that reflect the Borough President's independent planning judgment. The Commissioner shall give particular weight to recommendations identified as reflecting broad community consensus.

(d) *Equity Accountability.* Each Borough President's recommendations shall specifically address whether the proposed routes and improvements adequately serve neighborhoods within their borough that have been identified as having limited access to parks, green space, or recreational cycling infrastructure. The Commissioner shall respond specifically to any equity concerns raised by a Borough President pursuant to this subdivision.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the Commissioner of Transportation or the Commissioner of Parks to adopt any recommendation of a Borough President, to delay implementation of the Grayways network pending receipt or review of Borough President recommendations, or to grant any Borough President veto authority over any Grayways route or infrastructure improvement. The participation rights established by this section are advisory and consultative in nature.

§ 12. Construction.

(a) Nothing in this local law shall be construed to create a private right of action against the City of New York, the Department of Transportation, or the Department of Parks and Recreation.

(b) Nothing in this local law shall limit the authority of the Commissioner of Transportation or the Commissioner of Parks to temporarily close any Grayways Route or portion thereof for permitted events, maintenance, emergency conditions, or other operational purposes.

(c) This local law shall be construed in a manner consistent with applicable New York State law, including the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law. To the extent that any provision of this local law requires action that is contingent upon State authorization—including but not limited to the cyclist stop-as-yield standard set forth at § 5(c)—the Commissioner of Transportation shall seek such authorization from the appropriate State agency or legislature and shall report to the Council on the status of such request within 180 days of the effective date of this local law.

§ 13. Severability.

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or other portion of this local law is, for any reason, declared unconstitutional or invalid, in whole or in part, by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed severable, and such unconstitutionality or invalidity shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this local law, which remaining portions shall continue in full force and effect.

§ 14. Effective Date.

This local law shall take effect 30 days after its enactment into law.

Introduced by Council Member(s): _____

Co-Sponsors: _____

Committee Referral: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; Committee on Parks and Recreation

Draft version for public comment. Not yet introduced.