



December 12, 2025

VETO STATEMENT FROM MAYOR BHALLA ON ORDINANCE B-836

After careful consideration, I am vetoing ordinance B-836, adopted by the City Council on Dec. 3, which sought pause the City's CLEAR pilot program.

The CLEAR program was launched as a limited three-month-long pilot, to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and public impact of technology-assisted parking enforcement to improve access along lower Washington Street. Since its launch, CLEAR has achieved remarkable, measurable results that directly support public safety and mobility and reflect an ongoing desire from the community to improve safety on Washington Street. According to a recent survey, 68% of respondents believed the City should increase enforcement of double-parking violations along Washington Street.

Since October, there has been 48% reduction in bus stop violations, providing safer and more reliable public transit for riders of all ages and abilities, improving the safety of boarding and deboarding.

Bike lane violations have decreased by 51%, ensuring that fewer drivers block bike lanes, making streets safer for cyclists and drivers while reducing dangerous swerving into traffic. Overstays in loading zones have declined by 68%, increasing turnover and ensuring greater access for deliveries, residents, and visitors who use the spaces as short-term parking. During this same period, compared to 2024, paid parking transactions have increased by 4% and average turnover has increased by 7% along Washington Street.

Double parking and blocked travel lanes have also been reduced by 72%, keeping lanes clear for emergency vehicles and improving overall traffic flow. CLEAR is a critical component of Hoboken's Vision Zero initiative, which seeks to eliminate traffic deaths and injuries by 2030. Prematurely ending the program knowing that it had such a beneficial public safety impact on reducing illegal and dangerous behaviors, before the three-month data collection is complete, during one of the busiest times of year, is inconsistent with the City's goals of increasing compliance with current laws and advancing the public safety objectives of the program.

The CLEAR pilot has also received countywide accolades and support from community stakeholders and partners in Hudson County and beyond, including NJ Transit, Hudson County Complete Streets, Bike Hoboken, Bike JC, and numerous residents of all ages and abilities.

Andrew Wilson, Executive Director of Bike Hoboken, said that "for the first time in years, the bicycle lanes on Washington Street are consistently clear and usable, allowing people on bikes to travel safely and predictably through our city's busiest corridor...The 126 bus now moves reliably along its route without delays caused by double-parked vehicles, and riders can board safely without navigating around cars blocking bus stops...Ending the pilot now would undermine the safety gains our community has worked hard to achieve."

Hudson County Complete Streets emphasized that the pilot supports both safety and commercial necessities adding "Ending CLEAR now would set back not only the progress made on Washington Street, but also the momentum it is creating for other Hudson County communities looking to make their own streets safer and more reliable."

Bike JC has also highlighted the safety benefits, stating that "the CLEAR pilot program has been immediately beneficial for active and public transportation in the community. Cyclists are able to ride the length of Washington Street without being forced into the street by double parked cars, causing dangerous conflict. NJ Transit has also seen improvements for the 126 bus, which has experienced fewer delays and is able to get to the curb, improving the experience for drivers and riders alike...Prematurely ending the CLEAR program would be a significant setback for safety and transportation equity, and would be harmful to the significant progress that Hoboken has been making over the past several years."

NJ Transit has recognized the value of the program, reporting that the 126 bus now moves more reliably along its route and that riders can board safely improving service for all residents, including those who rely on mobility aids or face challenges navigating curbs. This support underscores that CLEAR benefits not only cyclists and drivers but also thousands of transit riders who depend on reliable service along Washington Street each day.

Significantly, prior to the Council's vote, Corporation Counsel also advised that this ordinance was not legally sound nor permissible, noting importantly that enforcement falls within the executive functions of municipal government and is an overreach of the legislative branch. Additionally, I must again reiterate that the program is not automated. A parking enforcement officer reviews and issues every citation as has always been the case. The pilot was specifically designed to collect data and stakeholder feedback before making long-term policy decisions. Halting it now would deprive the City of essential information needed to make informed, data-driven decisions.

At the same time, my administration remains committed to supporting Hoboken's business community during the holiday season and throughout the year. We continue working closely with local businesses and the Hoboken Business Alliance to address concerns and strengthen our local economy. In partnership with the City Council, we have already advanced legislative adjustments that directly benefit small businesses, including the extension of loading-zone hours to improve delivery access and short-term parking turnover. Additional ideas have also been proposed, and we welcome continued dialogue. However, the answer is not to end a program that is demonstrably improving safety and mobility. The appropriate path forward is to update and refine our laws in ways that preserve these safety gains while better supporting the business community. Halting the program now would eliminate a proven tool for public safety, disrupt improvements for residents, commuters, and businesses, and slow Hoboken's progress toward making our streets safer for all users.

For these reasons, I am exercising my veto authority and urge the Council to allow the CLEAR pilot to conclude as scheduled on December 31, 2025, after which we will evaluate the data and make any future recommendations.