



NAIROBI CITY COUNTY ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL REPORT

Second County Assembly – Fifth Session

Tuesday 9th November 2021

The House met at 9.30 a.m.

(Hon. Temporary Deputy Speaker (Ms. Immapet Kemunto) in the Chair)

PRAYER

QUORUM

Hon. Temporary Deputy Speaker: Clerk, confirm whether we have a quorum so that we can start.
(The Clerk-at-the Table confirmed there was quorum)

PAPERS

Hon. Peter Wanyoike: Thank you Madam Speaker. Pursuant to Section 166 of the Public Finance Management Act 2012, I beg to lay the following Paper on the Table of the assembly today Tuesday 9th November 2021: The Nairobi City County Revenue and Expenditure Report, and the Financial Statements for the First Quarter for the Financial Year 2021-2022. I beg to lay.

(The Paper was laid on the Table of the Assembly)

MOTION

COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND NMS TO INCREASE U-TURNS ON COUNTY ROADS

Hon. Mbugua Kabiro: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. Today, being 9th November 2021, I wish to move the following Motion: That aware that under Article 186 (1) of the Constitution of Kenya and the Forth Schedule, the functions and the powers of county government among others cover county transportation, including county roads, street lighting, public roads, transport, traffic and parking; further aware that the city has designated preferential U turns throughout the city county roads; noting that recent years have witnessed a marked increase in the number of vehicles plying various routes in the county; concerned that most county roads have limited marked U turns which has led to the use of pedestrian walkways and unmarked areas along various county roads being illegally turned into U turn points by not only the public services vehicles but also private vehicles, this has led to increased traffic congestion and

accidents including deaths to pedestrians; further noting that the few available legal U-turn points were done years ago with few vehicles available; acknowledging that to access some places within the central business district, motorists have to cover longer distances to get to a U turn which consumes extra fuel despite the increase in prices, this Assembly urges the County Executive in conjunction with the Nairobi Metropolitan Services to undertake the audit of county roads with a view of increasing the U turn points where necessary in the county roads and rehabilitate the existing ones with visible signs to ease traffic flow across all county roads.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to move this Motion today because it is going to solve my problems and of other people who use these roads and have the privilege to own vehicles or like you, Madam Speaker, to be driven around. I would like to ask a question: have you been in a road situation where there are no alternatives whatsoever?

I watched the clip of Buruburu Girls High School where two girls jumped through the window. This made me remember that - there are some parents amongst us - that situation did not have any alternative. Have you ever been in a situation where your destination is so close, like across the road, and yet one hour later you are still at the same spot?

Hon. Mbugua Kabiro: Madam Speaker, you may be privileged to listen to music while in traffic but we do not have the same privilege while boarding local transport. I love living amongst people so that I get to experience life with them and help bring forth legislation that will help ease these challenges and this is one of them.

What is a U-turn? It is a 180-degree rotation towards the direction that you came from, in other words when you are going towards the right, you can take a turn and go towards the left. The reason why it is called so is that it mimics the letter "U" on the road. In some places, it is legal while in others it is considered illegal and this is the process of legalizing it by erecting signs and making sure that they are clearly labelled and marked.

Some of the places that allow for U-turns include states like Indiana where a driver yields and the other one continues driving and Texas, also referred to as Texas turn around.

Madam Speaker, Georgia, Michigan, Dubai, Singapore among many other states have U-turns. In some places traffic lights, on turning green, regulate U-turns. I have looked around the streets of Nairobi for places where this would be ideal including Haile Selassie Avenue to University Way and across from Uhuru Highway to Kirinyaga Road.

Nairobi has about 14 roundabouts and in states like the United States, you find very few roundabouts yet the number of cars in the US are way more than those in Nairobi hence the traffic congestion would be worse there if they were using our roads. We want to create a situation where we allow for U-turn points to avoid motorists from persevering going to the roundabout to change direction. That is a waste of fuel, time and psychological trauma and especially if you are on a taxi service like Uber and Bolt where you are close to your destination but have to use a longer route and cover more time before alighting.

Haile Selassie Avenue is too congested and so is Harambee Avenue, City Hallway, Kenyatta Avenue. Madam Speaker, Moi Avenue happens to be the longest avenue in Nairobi from University way

down to Haile Selassie Avenue and have only one roundabout. This is something that I pray will be implemented fast. I would also prefer for Tom Mboya and River road to also have roundabouts.

Nairobi would be a better place with U-turns and I urge members to support this Motion. I thank you for this opportunity and at this moment I would like to call upon Hon. Mary Ariviza on Zoom to second. Thank you.

Hon. Temporary Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ariviza, via Zoom!
(Technical hitch)

Hon. Temporary Deputy Speaker: ICT, please connect Hon. Ariviza. Mover, call another seconder.

Hon. Mbugua Kabiro: Thank you Madam Speaker. It seems that we are experiencing some technical issues, I call upon Hon. Peter Wanyoike to second the Motion. Thank you.

Hon. Peter Wanyoike: Thank you Madam Speaker. I rise to support this good Motion. The mover, Hon. Kabiro has explained it very well and given the challenges faced by Nairobians. He has also made proposals to resolve this.

Madam Speaker, I support that the County Executive in conjunction with the Nairobi Metropolitan Services to undertake the audit of county roads with a view of increasing U-turn points where necessary. I second the Motion. Thank you.

(Question proposed)

Hon. Silas Matara: Thank you Hon. Speaker for this opportunity. First, I would like to congratulate my colleague Hon. Kabiro for this well thought out Motion. I rise to support this Motion because we are aware that traffic jam in Nairobi is at a higher level. With the negative costs to Nairobians as a whole because as you know an economy where transport costs are high, losses are incurred which is quite regressive in a growing economy. Any move or thought that is going to ease the traffic congestion in Nairobi is most welcome.

Having said that, Hon. Speaker, I have a few reservations in regards to that. I believe that Members know that when Nairobi was designed way back in the 1950s or 1960s, it was meant to handle 400,000 people. Today, we have a population of 6 million people during the day and 5 million people during the night.

A road is designed depending on the vehicle traffic it is meant to serve. So, the whole design of CBD, in as much as these interventions we try to put them in place, it will take a huge task. For example, the NMS redesigning the roads of the City, which will also include purchasing and demolition of buildings so that we have a wider road network.

Around the world, Hon. Speaker, you realize the concept of U-turns or roundabouts because they have wider roads. But in the CBD, we have narrow roads. In as much as the U-turns are going to ease the movement, there is also another aspect of the discipline of the road users, the matatu drivers, the taxi drivers, etc.

When you are in a traffic jam and one person tries to do an illegal U-turn, many people will start to follow. The number of vehicles in Nairobi is high. We import over 12,000 vehicles in a month in this country.

In line with that, the NMS and the County at large should institute long term measures to have roads widened so that such a program of having U-turns is going to be practical and workable in this City.

Once that is done, then we are going to do a good service to Nairobian especially the business people, and also relocate most of the County Government business to the sub-counties. This will ease the number of people coming to the City to get services from the NMS and the County at large.

With those few remarks, I rise to support. Thank you.

Hon. Temporary Deputy Speaker: Hon. Nancy Muthami. ICT, can you connect Hon. Muthami. Any other Member from Zoom? Back to you, mover.

Hon. Mbugua Kabiro: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I thank the Members who have supported me, physically and in Zoom. While replying, I ask you, Madam Speaker, have you ever made an illegal U-turn? Blink if you have. Yes, I see that. This will help you and many others. This challenge of going back to where you come from when you have forgotten your keys especially for the locker at the County... Thank you, I wish to reply.

(Question put and agreed to)

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Temporary Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, there being no any other business, let us meet again in the afternoon at 2.30 p.m. Thank you.

The House rose at 10.15 a.m.