

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
JOINTLY WITH THE  
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

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February 24, 2014

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HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E:  
YDANIS RODRIGUEZ  
VANESSA L. GIBSON  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Stephen Levin

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Stephen Bowman

Bhairavi Desai  
Executive Director  
New York Taxi Workers Alliance

Berisford Simmons  
Cab Driver/Member  
New York Taxi Workers Alliance

Victor Salazar  
Cab Driver/Member  
New York Taxi Workers Alliance

Bill Lindauer  
Campaign Coordinator  
New York Taxi Workers Alliance

Michael Woloz  
Spokesman  
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Christine Berthet  
Co-founder  
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Renee Schoonbeek  
Vice President  
Planning and Capital Projects  
Hudson Square Business  
Improvement District

Adele Bender  
Member  
Gray Panthers, Manhattan, NY

Diana Bernal  
Member  
Make the Road New York

Bob HuDock  
Member  
Bay Ridge Advocates for Keeping  
Everyone Safe, BRAKES

David Powell  
Coordinator  
Southern Bronx River  
Watershed Alliance

Carol Crump  
On behalf of Noel Hidalgo  
BETA-NYC

Emma Rodgers  
Program Coordinator  
Bronx Health REACH Coalition

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Chair, first of  
3 all, I also will apologize because I have to go to  
4 that hearing and then come back. [laughter] As my  
5 colleague here and my co-chair, she excused herself  
6 because there was another hearing at the same time,  
7 so but she's going to be calling the next panel and  
8 I will step out and then come back.

9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, welcome  
10 everyone, to our new location. This is still the  
11 joint hearing on Public Safety and Transportation.  
12 Our next speaker is from Local Transport Workers  
13 Union, Local 100, J.P. Petafio.

14 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: He just stepped out.  
15 I think he had to be somewhere.

16 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Oh, okay so we  
17 will continue. We have Stephen Bowman [phonetic].

18 STEPHEN BOWMAN: Here.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Yes.

20 STEPHEN BOWMAN: How you doing, sir?

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: You can have a  
22 seat right here. [background voices]

23 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, we have two  
24 more, Laura Hanson, Neighborhood Plaza Partnership;  
25 Noel Hidalgo...

2 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: He's in the hearing  
3 upstairs.

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing] Oh,  
5 okay.

6 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: And Laura left as  
7 well, sorry. [background voices]

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Next, Mohan Singh  
9 from New York Taxi Workers Alliance. [background  
10 voices] Okay, Berisford Simmons, Taxi Workers  
11 Alliance, please come forward. [background voices]  
12 Okay, Victor Salazar. Are you here, Victor?

13 VICTOR SALAZAR: Yes, ma'am.

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay and one more  
15 of your colleagues, William Lindauer and Bhairavi  
16 Desai, yes, New York Taxi Workers Alliance. Thank  
17 you.

18 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Make yourself  
19 comfortable, make sure you speak loudly and  
20 introduce yourself into the record before you  
21 begin. Thank you very much.

22 STEPHEN BOWMAN: My name is Stephen  
23 Bowman. I'm a retired techie so my remarks are  
24 going to be more from a technical point of view,  
25 although they are still from the heart, and I'll

2 read from my statement. There are two ways to  
3 reduce pedestrian fatalities and injuries. To  
4 reduce collisions you can also reduce the severity  
5 of the collisions that you get and I'm going to  
6 concentrate on the latter. The most obvious way  
7 to... obvious way to make pedestrian encounters  
8 with vehicles less harmful is to make vehicles  
9 pedestrian tolerant. Car design changes like seat  
10 belts, air bags, crumple zones, et cetera have  
11 reduced the severity of automobile accident crashes  
12 on drivers. Different design changes could make  
13 vehicle pedestrian collisions less lethal. This is  
14 the business for different jurisdiction. There are  
15 other... there are two after market devices that  
16 the city could mandate for vehicles or licenses.  
17 The first, Skirts for Trucks is in the Mayor's  
18 Vision Zero report. There are also wheel guards  
19 for buses that have existed for two decades. They  
20 are used in Los Angeles, Washington, Baltimore and  
21 Sweden, but not by the MTA. They are also a  
22 purchase option by the bus manufacturers used by  
23 the MTA. Three people already died in 2014 after  
24 being run over MTA bus rear wheels. The City  
25 Council cannot mandate the MTA to install rear

wheel guards. The Council can direct NYPD's Collision Investigation Squad to include it in their report whether or not such devices were installed. Chicago CTA retrofitted its 1,900 bus fleet when it decided that \$1,500.00 per bus was cost-effective on the bottom line.

Impact speed remains the most important factor in pedestrian deaths in the absence of vehicle design changes. The gruesome fatality rate statistics are 20 miles an hour five percent; 25 miles an hour 15 percent; 30 miles an hour 20 percent; 35 et cetera going up to 40 miles an hour 40 percent to 50 miles an hour 75 percent. These figures suggest that the significant number of pedestrian fatalities would be reduced if vehicle speeds were lower and that's the data from the Triple A Safety Report. Let's assume every driver obeyed the existing 30 mile an hour speed limit. Existing fatalities would be reduced 25 percent if vehicle speeds were reduced to 25 miles an hour or 75 percent to 20 miles an hour. One objection to lowering vehicle speeds would be increased congestion. Congestion results when garbage in exceeds garbage out; however, there would be no

2 additional congestion if you had reduced  
3 simultaneously garbage in and garbage out i.e. a  
4 universal lower speed [chime] for everything. The  
5 result would be nothing and would not create  
6 gridlock. It simply would result in that vehicles  
7 would move more slowly. The likely time penalty  
8 per vehicle trip can be answered by using data  
9 that's already available publicly and I've listed  
10 it there. The net result is the following for the  
11 weekly daily trips for the tri-state survey of  
12 17,000 trips. The average distances for a vehicle  
13 trip is only 2.8 miles and the duration is 21  
14 minutes at an average speed of 8.2 miles. These  
15 results are fairly consistent by borough, time of  
16 day and vehicle type. You might be interested to  
17 know that cabs, believe it or not, go no faster  
18 than private vehicles. If the maximum vehicle  
19 speed were decreased to 25 miles an hour, the  
20 average trip duration would be increased by 1.6  
21 minutes. Going up to 20 miles an hour it's 3.9  
22 minutes per trip. That represents 10 to 20 percent  
23 of the total vehicle time spent. Most of the time  
24 is spent at traffic lights and looking for parking  
25 and vehicle speed has nothing to do with it. The



2 question is, therefore, you have capping it out it  
3 would be a savings of 40 to 120 pedestrians  
4 depending upon which speed you choose. The obvious  
5 question is how can this be achieved in the absence  
6 of a state law? One rather obvious strategy is to  
7 use existing traffic lights. Traffic lights on one  
8 way arterial streets can be retimed to 25 or 20  
9 miles an hour in the absence of any legal  
10 requirements with regard to speed limit. Nothing  
11 requires you to go at the speed limit on the  
12 streets. [background voice] Right now they're  
13 timed at 30 miles an hour. The difference would be  
14 approximately you know, if you figure it out one  
15 minute per mile or something like that, so what,  
16 three seconds per block difference. A different  
17 strategy can be implemented on two way arterial  
18 streets. There are street sensors currently  
19 available that will turn a red light ahead if the  
20 vehicles attain a certain speed. They're used in  
21 Philadelphia to stop cars from going... from  
22 dangerous curves, so they stop them up ahead.  
23 Other strategies would make use of... again, its  
24 extra legal strategies would make use of the fact  
25 that pedestrian fatalities take place in

2 intersections. Speed bumps are not the only  
3 pavement treatment to slow down cars. Rumble  
4 strips placed before every intersection are less  
5 costly and would focus driver attention at  
6 potential dangers. All intersections could be  
7 paved with cobblestones, that for the future. A  
8 few wheel alignments should make it worthwhile for  
9 drivers to lower their speed. [laughter] If cost  
10 is an option, the low cost option is very simple.  
11 If there is a pothole with an intersection don't  
12 fill it. [laughter]

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you very  
14 much, thank you. Okay, our next speaker. If we  
15 could just ask if you could just try to keep your  
16 remarks to three minutes, so we have time to ask  
17 any questions, okay?

18 STEPHEN BOWMAN: Sure.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Who's next?

20 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Okay, I'll be  
21 beginning.

22 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

23 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Hi, good afternoon.  
24 Thank you for still being here continuing with the  
25 hearing. I am Bhairavi Desai and I'm the Executive

2 Director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance.

3 The Taxi Workers Alliance is an organization of  
4 over 17,000 yellow taxi cab drivers in New York  
5 City. We're proud of the fact that in New York  
6 City we have a workforce of over 100,000 licensed  
7 drivers who operate either a yellow cab or a livery  
8 or a black car for hire. Every day these hard  
9 working men and women are on the streets 12 hours,  
10 sometimes 14 hours a day to earn a living for  
11 themselves and their families. When I was  
12 listening earlier to the family members who had  
13 spoken, we were incredibly touched and moved by  
14 their presence, by their composure, by their  
15 comments and you know, really by their vision. We  
16 know all too well what it means for surviving  
17 family members of victims to become advocates  
18 overnight. Now, as I was listening to the  
19 families, I was reminded of people like Sajjad  
20 Matin, [chime] a member of ours whose left leg was  
21 amputated after he was hit by a speeding SUV as he  
22 was loading the luggage into the back of the taxi.  
23 Mohammed Yusuf, his roommate, less than a year  
24 later was killed by a speeding car as he was  
25 standing outside of his taxi cab. Mohamed Hussain,

he along with a passenger was killed on the highway. Gunthan Paul [phonetic] who was by himself on his way to the taxi lot at Kennedy Airport had lost control of the car on an icy road and Gunthan's family, two children and his wife, are left without their primary bread earner, their father, their husband. Mohammed Elwaleed was a taxi driver. After there was a mild crash he'd gotten out of the taxi to exchange information with the other private vehicle owner. When Mr. Elwaleed bent down to look at the damage, the private vehicle owner ran him over, left the car on top of his body and ran on foot.

For taxi drivers, traffic safety is workplace safety issue and for far too long it has been presented in the public light that somehow we either don't care about this issue or we are the primary cause of this issue, and I can tell you council members and members of the public, that neither statement is true. In fact, you could not be further from the truth. We're proud of the fact that taxis and liveries, as hard as drivers work, as long as they're out on the street with the deplorable economic conditions that they must bear

on their back, but they are still among the safest drivers out on the streets in New York City. That by [chime] no means takes away from the fact that we are as equally committed to everybody else from the Mayor to the families to the advocates to your average New Yorkers, our friends and our neighbors and our passengers to seeing that the only statistic that matters in time will be that number zero. All that we have to say to you, however, is do not take the truth for granted and allow us to be scapegoated or singled out. Already taxi drivers are held to standards higher than any other motorists. Not only is there a suspension triggered at six points, a revocation triggered at 10 points on your license, but at 10 points it is not only a loss of livelihood for one year, it is a loss of livelihood for three consecutive years. For a workforce that's 94 percent immigrant, many who do not have other economic options within our economy, and what we see when a family... when the primary breadwinner loses that livelihood and entire families dig deeper into poverty, especially for a workforce that is already living on the edge of our economy. What we ask; when we say not to be

2 scapegoated is not only for the earnest desire to  
3 be protected, but also because we genuinely believe  
4 in this issue and when you scapegoat, meaning when  
5 you pin the issue on the backs of a vulnerable  
6 population, then in fact, you disservice the issue  
7 that you are trying to address in the first place.

8 While we are held to higher licensing standards  
9 with drug tests, with existing point rules, you  
10 know with the requirement of a defensive driving  
11 course, at the same time unlike other motorists, we  
12 do not have the benefit of point reduction rules.

13 While DMV gives a four point reduction, TLC only  
14 honors a two point reduction. Taxi drivers are  
15 held to the highest standards out there and that's  
16 why when we saw in this proposal that the bulk, the  
17 overwhelming majority of enforcement is again

18 pinned on our backs, [chime] it just... that simply  
19 does not make sense to us. It will not go and  
20 create real solutions. The things that we want to  
21 see more, and my colleagues will really get to more  
22 of the heart of the solution, are changes in

23 infrastructure and our changes in real design more  
24 or less terms. I mean drivers not only have a  
25 stake in this, they're on the road 60 to 70 hours a

2 week and they're not just sitting in that vehicle.  
3 You have to get out to open that trunk you know, to  
4 load it or to unload it; to open the vehicle; the  
5 doors to help somebody get into the vehicle. Right  
6 now in the Taxi Limousine Commission there has been  
7 talk about requiring more wheelchair accessible  
8 vehicles, a proposal that the Taxi Workers Alliance  
9 has continued to support and as one of the previous  
10 speakers said earlier, absolutely, when we see  
11 social you know economic policies that are to the  
12 benefit for our disabled neighbors, it is to the  
13 larger benefit of society as a whole, but it bears  
14 a question for us as drivers that how will you  
15 safely help people get in and out of your vehicle  
16 when you don't even have enough space simply to  
17 maneuver your vehicle? These are serious concerns  
18 and serious issues and you know, we want to be at  
19 the table in a way that respects our contribution;  
20 that does not criminalize us. We do not want to be  
21 singled out. If you take away the civil rights of  
22 one workforce where does it end? It may begin with  
23 us, but where will it end? And does it begin with  
24 us because we represent a workforce that is  
25 vulnerable in terms of race and class and

2 immigration status? And particularly in a city  
3 that is no longer trying to operate as a... you  
4 know, it's two cities. We don't want to be singled  
5 out you know, for things that we know have made us  
6 vulnerable throughout these years.

7           So in closing, I would just like to say  
8 that we believe overall in this initiative. We  
9 ourselves have not only seen too many of our  
10 members be severely injured or killed on this job  
11 as a result of traffic safety, which becomes for us  
12 a workplace safety issue, but we also don't want to  
13 be at the other end of that accident. The  
14 drivers... you know I have seen drivers who have  
15 been attacked with you know their ears... their...  
16 we had a member whose ear was bitten in the middle  
17 of an incident. We had a member who was stabbed  
18 with a knife in the back of his neck, another  
19 member who was you know, in a choke hold while Nuda  
20 [phonetic] was trying to operate her vehicle. I  
21 mean we have also seen when drivers have been  
22 attacked on the job and it's remarkable in those  
23 incidents that it did not lead to greater injuries  
24 for people on the street while the drivers  
25 themselves were being assaulted and choked and



2 knifed while in the front seat operating that  
3 vehicle. We want to see you know, driver safety  
4 also be part of this debate because it very much  
5 affects the safety of people in the back seat as  
6 well as the people out on the streets as well as  
7 other motorists. So all we ask of you, in closing,  
8 is not to scapegoat us; not to single us out; not  
9 to criminalize us; not to hold us up as examples of  
10 what can happen you know, when the city takes on an  
11 aggressive enforcement campaign because nobody  
12 driving an SUV or Mercedes-Benz is going to look at  
13 a taxi driver having their license suspended and  
14 think and learn a lesson from that thinking that  
15 they somehow resemble that taxi driver. So we've  
16 been part of the solution and we want to continue  
17 to be part of that solution and that means that we  
18 must be taken seriously and not just politically  
19 handcuffed.

20 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Sorry, I got to  
21 go to the other hearing, but I have a question.

22 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Mm-hm.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: What percentage  
24 of the car... first of all, I agree and as I said  
25 before, as I have two daughters and I care for the

2 safety of my children. I use to be a livery taxi  
3 driver and I also care for all of us as drivers be  
4 held accountable.

5 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Mm-hm.

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yellow, livery  
7 you know, average drivers, all of us should be  
8 accountable to be sure that we keep our city safe,  
9 so this is all about bringing all of us together.

10 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Mm-hm.

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And see how can  
12 we improve the safety of our city. What percentage  
13 is involved yellow or livery taxi driver? What  
14 percentage from the data that we have of...

15 [crosstalk]

16 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Mm-hm.

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Of cases where  
18 a crashing accident that people have died or been  
19 injured? What percentage involved yellow taxi;  
20 yellow drivers? [background voice] Or livery.

21 BHAIRAVI DESAI: I don't... we have not  
22 heard that specific statistic...

23 [crosstalk]

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: We don't know.

25 [crosstalk]

2 BHAIRAVI DESAI: From TLC. No, I mean  
3 the statistics that I think are out there and we  
4 know that 80 percent of the crashes involved  
5 private vehicles, right, or trucks.

6 [crosstalk]

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So we're saying  
8 that right now as far as that...

9 [crosstalk]

10 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Out of the 20...

11 [crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Around 20  
13 percent of bus...

14 [crosstalk]

15 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Well, out of the 20  
16 percent because that would also include buses and  
17 trucks and other commercial vehicles we don't...

18 [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: But we don't...  
20 we don't know...

21 [crosstalk]

22 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Know what...

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]  
24 There's no like... the database right now is not  
25 segregated in a way that we can say there's 10

2 percent involved yellow and livery drivers; five  
3 percent involved bus drivers. We don't have the  
4 data. That's what you're saying.

5 BHAIRAVI DESAI: We don't have that  
6 data.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

8 BHAIRAVI DESAI: And in fact, we think  
9 that the TL... one of the things we'd like to see  
10 is the TLC keep an aggressive database that also  
11 documents when there are crashes 'cause we're  
12 reported... we're required by the TLC to report a  
13 crash within 24 hours and so we'd like to see data  
14 that also looks at you know why that crash occurred  
15 you know and you know, we think there's a number of  
16 ways to capture that information.

17 [crosstalk]

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: But I think the  
19 most important thing is that you know and then I  
20 will leave it to co-chair, is that we need to as  
21 part of the plan of Vision Zero we need to have a  
22 comprehensive database.

23 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Mm-hm.

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So that we can  
25 tackle this problem also; have into consideration

2 who are the most involved in this crisis epidemic  
3 that is affecting our city. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, thank you.  
5 Next, please?

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: The next one?

7 BERISFORD SIMMONS: My name is  
8 Berisford Simmons. I'm a cab driver. I've been  
9 driving for over 40 years in this city. I've been  
10 in accidents myself and we... I sympathize hearing  
11 all of the testifying this morning from the  
12 fathers, the mothers, the brothers, the sisters,  
13 the husbands, the wives as a driver, and like Miss  
14 Desai said, we are willing to work with the city of  
15 New York and with the Taxi and Limousine Commission  
16 and to giving them information and what can be done  
17 to avoid these critical accidents in the street,  
18 especially with cab drivers. In my opinion, most  
19 of the accidents in the city and in the streets  
20 from a cab driver is basically I would say a new  
21 driver because of lack of information, getting them  
22 responsible for these vehicle and to make money for  
23 the brokers and for themselves. It's a lot of  
24 stress to the drivers and before issuing a license  
25 or giving a driver a car to drive in this city,

2 there should be professional drivers sitting  
3 beside... and I've said this before to the Human  
4 Resources and to major brokers, who some of them  
5 may be here, still here today. Before you give a  
6 guy a car to drive in this city make sure that for  
7 at least a week or two you have a responsible and a  
8 professional driver sitting beside him coaching him  
9 on what to do because drivers who are new they  
10 might see a passenger on the far right hand side  
11 and he's three lanes over and he wants that money  
12 and he'll swing one, two, three not considering  
13 that there is somebody coming up inside of him.  
14 Let him know that there is always another passenger  
15 ahead of that passenger, so instead of coming from  
16 one lane to another, stay in one lane close to that  
17 wherever that passenger is so you can make the  
18 swing and again, some of the proposals from... and  
19 I absolutely agree with the new Mayor and some of  
20 the things that he is doing, but like she said  
21 again, they are targeting the cab drivers of this  
22 city for some of the most outrageous things that  
23 happen you know, for instance, taking away our  
24 economic structure. For instance, if you drive  
25 over the speed limit your meter will cut off. I

2 think that's absolutely ridiculous. You know,  
3 that's taking money out of the cab driver's pocket  
4 and it's going to destroy the industry. I can tell  
5 you that because for one, when they put their black  
6 boxes and their meter contraptions in there I'm  
7 going to leave the business and even though I'm  
8 semi-retired right now, I still have to work  
9 because my Social Security... I'm 66 years young  
10 and my Social Security cannot cover [chime] my  
11 family's survival here in this city and I'm cut  
12 quite drastically. My wife, who is 65, has to work  
13 and she works for the Taxi Alliance part-time and  
14 that's because we need the money. We have  
15 grandchildren who we are supporting, okay, so this  
16 economic attack upon the cab drivers I would  
17 totally disagree with, but we are willing to work  
18 along with the city and give them information on  
19 what we think would make a better deal for  
20 everybody. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

22 BERISFORD SIMMONS: Very much.

23 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: I appreciate your  
24 remarks and I do agree that education obviously has  
25 to be a huge component.

2 BERISFORD SIMMONS: [interposing]  
3 Definitely so.

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: The idea you  
5 mentioned is almost like when we have many of our  
6 new teachers in our schools we have a lead teacher.

7 BERISFORD SIMMONS: [interposing] Mm-  
8 hm.

9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: That works in the  
10 classroom with the new teacher. I mean I like that  
11 idea. I mean I think this is a framework, right?  
12 Vision Zero is a framework and it's to get us to  
13 have the conversation and to have a dialogue and I,  
14 as chair of Public Safety, certainly representing  
15 thousands of drivers in the Bronx, a lot of my  
16 livery bases, I know the value and the  
17 contributions that they make to my district each  
18 and every day, so I don't want this council to be  
19 seen as scapegoating on any population because as I  
20 said earlier, I have problems with truck traffic.  
21 I have problems with our buses that are also... so  
22 I think you know, we all have to take some  
23 responsibility and understand that these types of  
24 proposals are certainly in the event to try to  
25 reduce some behavior, but it doesn't have to be



2 just one industry. I agree with you. I don't want  
3 to be seen as you know, taking you know, money from  
4 any of our pockets because I know that for many of  
5 our families like this is the only source of  
6 income, but I do think that it's good to have a  
7 database to understand where these accidents are  
8 coming from and what is happening because if you  
9 look you know, all the media reports and you know,  
10 I don't know if that's what stimulated the actual  
11 plan of Vision Zero as it relates to taxis and  
12 liveries, but we have to admit what is going on in  
13 this city and we have to admit that there have been  
14 a number of accidents involving taxi and livery  
15 drivers and that is a growing concern you know, to  
16 all of us, but at the same time you know, if we can  
17 try to have the conversations and make some changes  
18 I mean I'm willing to listen because again, you are  
19 a huge part of our city and we all need to shoulder  
20 the burden of this problem. To the extent that the  
21 City Council in its own regulations can impose  
22 fines, fees and other components I mean I think we  
23 should do that. My concern, and I said it to the  
24 CEO of TLC, is with repeat offenders, the same  
25 livery drivers that are still on the road that are

2 getting in multiple accidents. What I don't know  
3 is what type of investigation has been you know,  
4 underway to determine what happened and if it's  
5 safe for that driver to return to the road and you  
6 know, that should be without saying that that has  
7 to happen. Our new drivers obviously are a growing  
8 concern because we have a lot of new drivers that  
9 are coming on the road.

10 BERISFORD SIMMONS: [interposing] Big  
11 turnover rate.

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: So I do think that  
13 you know, as we have the attrition we have new  
14 drivers coming into the industry and I think it's  
15 also really important to make sure that our drivers  
16 are aware of rules and regulations because a lot of  
17 times we just don't know. Now again, I mean this  
18 goes... same argument with pedestrians. We do have  
19 to embark on a major education component, so I do  
20 agree with your assumption.

21 BERISFORD SIMMONS: And we would like  
22 to see the people who are doing this, the city  
23 agencies who are educating the drivers should be  
24 drivers themselves.

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Agreed,  
3 absolutely.

4 BERISFORD SIMMONS: Who are... have  
5 been in the industry. I'm not putting myself up  
6 front you know, but [laughter] people who are in  
7 the industry...

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing]  
9 Right.

10 BERISFORD SIMMONS: As long as I have  
11 been to be and educated force to educate the new  
12 upcoming drivers in the industry.

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Mm-hm. Thank you.

14 BERISFORD SIMMONS: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

16 VICTOR SALAZAR: Okay, hi. My name is  
17 Victor Salazar and I'm also a member of the New  
18 York Taxi Workers Alliance. I've been driving in  
19 New York City about half of your time, Berisford,  
20 about 20 years or a little more.

21 BERISFORD SIMMONS: Alright.

22 VICTOR SALAZAR: Around that and you  
23 know, as a taxi driver, preventing traffic  
24 fatalities is a good thing. It is a great thing  
25 and Vision Zero encourages our New Yorkers to

2 participate in order to achieve good results in the  
3 normal pursuit to prevent traffic fatalities. This  
4 initiative will make our residents of New York to  
5 participate together as a big family. We, the taxi  
6 drivers of New York City consider ourselves very  
7 much part of this brotherhood of New York City and  
8 as a taxi driver, I would like none... none of us  
9 would like to be look at us as the ugly duck of  
10 this family, you know? And so we don't want to be  
11 singled out and also it is... for us you know, it  
12 is necessary to make our streets a better one, so  
13 that on behalf of taxi drivers, I tell you we ready  
14 to comply with the laws and regulations that the  
15 city impose on us. Since 1979, when the Taxi  
16 Limousine Commission was formed, taxi drivers in  
17 New York City complied with every single rule that  
18 the Taxi Limousine Commission makes it or changes  
19 and modifies continually through the years and I  
20 tell you these rules are practically pretty much  
21 the size of a bible. There's a lot of rules and  
22 regulations that we have to comply. You know, the  
23 TLC had spoken today earlier in the other chamber  
24 and said clearly that... and stated, the  
25 Commissioner that we, the taxi drivers of New York

City you know, we're better drivers versus other drivers. The statistics shows clearly that the New York City cab driver is practically a maestro in the road and if you talk to other taxi drivers across any other city in the world and if you say to them, "What do you think about a taxi driver in New York City?" The taxi driver of Paris, London, Milan, Rome will tell you, "They are maestros," and I myself consider myself a maestro in the road. I have 22 years of experience driving in New York City and I tell you, you know, it takes a great deal of courage, concentration, stamina and discipline to drive a cab in New York city and to put it simply it's like making aerobics to drive a car in New York City considering all the things that we have to work through it. You know, the black box; about the black box that they was... it was mentioned, I think it's good; however, a black box will show details and data how an accident has happened, but if all taxi cabs are equipped with a black box [chime] and after an accident it seems like we would be at a disadvantage 'cause the other cars, the other vehicles would not have the black box. So that... I'm not clear on that and the most

2 important thing for us is the fact that the TLC  
3 today simply concealed a particular fact that is  
4 stated in one of the proposals; that they will use  
5 technology to knock down the meter or lower the  
6 fare of the cab if the taxi cab is exceeding 25  
7 miles an hour. That is the only thing that we taxi  
8 drivers... or one of the things that we taxi  
9 drivers see that that will be an invasive kind of  
10 approach and going directly to you know, to affect  
11 us economically speaking. The TLC is about to make  
12 and did already a few auctions on medallions. Each  
13 medallion, as you already well know, exceeds \$1  
14 million, so for TLC to auction a medallion and then  
15 later to cut the... you know, then to knock down  
16 the meters, that will make it more difficult for  
17 that individual who invested in a medallion to you  
18 know, make the actual payments of that vehicle.  
19 And one thing I want to mention is that it was also  
20 mentioned the modifying behavior of driving here in  
21 New York City and I tell you that taxi drivers in  
22 New York their behavior is very well modified since  
23 1979 until now. We have tons of regulations to  
24 comply. We have garages that have enormous fees in  
25 terms of leases. We also have rules that drivers

2 have to be responsible for repairs of their  
3 vehicles in the event of an accident, so the  
4 insurance no longer protects that driver. So we do  
5 not want to make accidents and through the years as  
6 experienced drivers we have built this  
7 professionalism you know, on how to behave on the  
8 road; how to deal with the needs of New York City;  
9 to comply with the city and to make the best  
10 service that we can in New York City, so I urge the  
11 council not to pass these particular sections of  
12 the Vision Zero, which is exclusively aimed to the  
13 meter of the yellow taxi. We taxi drivers will  
14 continue to obey the city rules and the Taxi  
15 Limousine Commission rules and you know, we will  
16 comply with this great, magnificent Vision Zero  
17 Plan, but at the same time, we will not be at the  
18 end singled out and be, like I said before, the  
19 ugly duckling in the family.

20 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I have just one  
22 question on that.

23 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Yes, Council  
24 Member Levin.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
3 much, Madam Chair. I just... and I wanted to thank  
4 you all for coming to the table and I know how hard  
5 working your members are and that it's not an easy  
6 or safe... it's a dangerous job. It's... and every  
7 taxi driver and livery driver in New York City puts  
8 themselves out there in a way that not all of us do  
9 in order to make a living for themselves and their  
10 families, so I want to acknowledge that. I wanted  
11 to ask if there was... are there any proposals as  
12 part of Vision Zero that you are supportive of and  
13 that maybe you could be a little bit more explicit  
14 about which proposals you're supportive of, which  
15 ones you're on the fence about and which ones...

16 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing] You  
17 outright don't support.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yeah, right now.

19 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Sure, I mean we are  
20 concentrating on the parts that really...

21 [crosstalk]

22 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Yeah, I  
23 understand.

24 [cross-talk]  
25



2 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Focus on us, but I  
3 mean certainly I think the discussions around  
4 infrastructure development...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]  
6 Sorry, just take one step back. So there's a dozen  
7 or so proposals that deal specifically with the  
8 taxi industry, so of those ones in particular just  
9 in terms of not so much the broader points...

10 BHAIRAVI DESAI: [interposing] Oh,  
11 okay, okay, okay.

12 [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But the ones  
14 that are specifically...

15 BHAIRAVI DESAI: {interposing} Mm-hm.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Addressing at  
17 TLC issues.

18 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Oh, okay. Yeah, I  
19 mean I think the proposals that are around you  
20 know, training and monitoring we would be  
21 supportive of that. Really the main ones that  
22 we're against would be the combining of the  
23 Critical Driver Program and the Persistent Violator  
24 Program essentially, which I mean it's little  
25 inside baseball, but you know, as discussed earlier

2 in the morning where so the Critical Driver Program  
3 looks at the points on your DMV license and so the  
4 TLC assesses points on your DMV license. Well, the  
5 DMV might not take action because DMV it's like if  
6 you have 11 points it'll trigger action.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Mm-hm.

8 BHAIRAVI DESAI: But when the TLC  
9 evaluates your DMV license, if you have six points  
10 it will trigger a suspension of your hack license.  
11 If you have 10 points it will trigger a revocation  
12 of your hack license and again, whereas the DMV  
13 would allow you to take a point reduction class  
14 every three years it could be you know, to four  
15 points, even if you're eligible for that by DMV,  
16 the TLC will only honor a two point reduction, so  
17 it's actually the... and this is within a 15-month  
18 period, whereas the DMV evaluates a longer time, so  
19 an 18-month period. So it's... you know they're...  
20 it's already the strictest kind of you know point  
21 rule that exists. Now, the Persistent Violator  
22 Program, which is the other TLC point rule, looks  
23 at points you accumulate from TLC violations or TLC  
24 issued violations and again, six point suspension,  
25 10 points revocation and again, revocation is up to

2 three years you cannot reapply even if you're able  
3 to show you know rehabilitation and whatever had  
4 led to the revocation. So in the proposal what  
5 it's seeking to do is essentially combine points  
6 between the PVP and the CDP, so if a TLC inspector  
7 gives you a moving violation, for example, it would  
8 be counted towards your Critical Driver Program  
9 points as well and so we just think that that is  
10 really harsh, especially in light of the fact that  
11 like we don't get point reduction classes. You  
12 know, you can't really reduce points once you have  
13 them on your license...

14 [crosstalk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: You mean the TLC  
16 license.

17 [crosstalk]

18 BHAIRAVI DESAI: From TLC, right.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And the TLC...  
20 the things that would... the types of violations  
21 that would get you points on your TLC license are  
22 not necessarily safety issues. They could be any  
23 type of...

24 [crosstalk]

2 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Oh, yeah, it could  
3 be... I mean it's shift change; your partner just  
4 exited; you just got in; inspector pulls you over;  
5 you haven't put your hack license in the back frame  
6 yet. That's two points. You know again, you get  
7 three of those summonses in 15 months, you're out  
8 of work for 30 days and in our industry it's a  
9 leasing- based industry been the same since 1979,  
10 which vast majority of drivers they have... they're  
11 contractually bound to make their payments and you  
12 know, so you know and if you're going be out you  
13 can't... it's up to the company to allow you a  
14 replacement driver.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Mm-hm.

16 BHAIRAVI DESAI: If you can't get a  
17 replacement driver, then your second shift partner  
18 ends up working longer hours or you now have no  
19 income coming in and in addition to that you have  
20 you know, sometimes up to \$1,000.000 in payments  
21 that you have to make.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, but  
23 you... you wouldn't...

24 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Legally.  
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But you wouldn't  
3 be if there... for the things that are safety  
4 related and in terms of having like so that  
5 reckless driving or repeated reckless driving.

6 BHAIRAVI DESAI: [interposing] Mm-hm.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Those things  
8 can... that there's some additional enforcement I  
9 think. Is that something that the industry is  
10 supportive of?

11 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Yes and I mean to us  
12 in theory, that's what like... the idea of a  
13 persistent violator, being able to monitor a  
14 persistent violator I mean that's reasonable,  
15 right, and you know, it's part of good you know,  
16 policy making.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Mm-hm.

18 BHAIRAVI DESAI: That's not something  
19 that we would be against.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Mm-hm.

21 BHAIRAVI DESAI: You know, but our  
22 concern is whenever the fishnet is cast really  
23 widely, and in our industry when it comes to us  
24 it's always really wide you know, then you get  
25 folks like who have good records you know I mean

2 and who've done exemplary things in the course of  
3 their work.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Mm-hm.

5 BHAIRAVI DESAI: You know but because  
6 you're combining the non... right?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yeah.

8 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Moving violations...

9 [crosstalk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yeah.

11 [crosstalk]

12 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Related all of that  
13 gets you know, into one category and you have  
14 people that are otherwise really good drivers that  
15 end up losing their license.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, but then  
17 and other issues you know.

18 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Well, then the issue  
19 of using technology to well, essentially tamper  
20 with the meter you know, if the car.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, right and  
22 I can...

23 [crosstalk]

24 BHAIRAVI DESAI: And...

25 [crosstalk]

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I've heard that  
3 one.

4 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Those two are our  
5 main... our biggest concerns.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, the black  
7 box issue I think that that's something that I  
8 think is an interesting thought when applied across  
9 the board with buses you know, so that it's not...

10 BHAIRAVI DESAI: [interposing] Mm-hm.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Targeted solely  
12 at the taxi industry, but with city-owned vehicles,  
13 with...

14 BHAIRAVI DESAI: [interposing] Mm-hm.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Sanitation  
16 trucks, with buses, with anything that's a city-  
17 owned, but then I think maybe that's something  
18 that... that...

19 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Mm-hm.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Would be  
21 probably a good idea across the board, but not...

22 BHAIRAVI DESAI: [interposing] Mm-hm.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Necessarily  
24 focusing on taxis.

25 VICTOR SALAZAR: Yeah, then there...

2 [cross-talk]

3 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Just a quick  
4 question.

5 [crosstalk]

6 VICTOR SALAZAR: Then there was...

7 [crosstalk]

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Oh, okay.

9 [crosstalk]

10 VICTOR SALAZAR: One thing that...

11 [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Mm-hm.

13 VICTOR SALAZAR: You know for us taxi  
14 drivers been on the job, the fact that you know,  
15 Big Brother's going to be watching on us you know,  
16 that makes it more distressful and you know I do  
17 love my... the new administration in the fact that  
18 you know, Stop and Frisk was eliminated because  
19 Stop and Frisk was exclusively aiming you know, to  
20 minorities in New York City. I mean in this case  
21 with the tampering of the meter it's exclusively  
22 targeting another section of minorities in New York  
23 City, which I think already taxi drivers in the  
24 field are talking and are already you know entering  
25 in this mode of tension that we have and I hope



2 that you know, this great plan that have great  
3 solutions in mind I think will modify it you know,  
4 to include everyone, not to partially exclude you  
5 know, a great group of New Yorkers, who also  
6 educate the kids here in New York City like you  
7 know, all of us sent kids to school here in New  
8 York. We're part of New York. We live in New  
9 York.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

11 VICTOR SALAZAR: And we're very proud  
12 of it.

13 COUNCL MEMBER LEVIN: Absolutely,  
14 absolutely.

15 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Mm-hm.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
17 much for your time and being here.

18 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

19 BILL LINDAUER: Can I say something?

20 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Sure. Go ahead.

21 BILL LINDAUER: It's well said by my  
22 colleague, but especially by... by the... I'm a  
23 lifetime New Yorker, 70 years old, drove a cab for  
24 30 years. I know we're all to blame whether there  
25 are pedestrians, who act like zombies sometimes,

2 especially nowadays with their cell phones and  
3 iphones; bicyclists, who with impunity violate red  
4 lights, even though bike riding is a good idea in  
5 itself, but in practice it's not... been very  
6 poorly done in many cases, but to single out...  
7 I've never seen a bus driver get a ticket and as  
8 some people related, a couple people were hit and  
9 killed by a bus. What happens to the bus driver?

10 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Excuse, me, sir.

11 [crosstalk]

12 BILL LINDAUER: I...

13 [crosstalk]

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Can you identify  
15 yourself for the record, please?

16 [crosstalk]

17 BILL LINDAUER: Oh, my name is Bill  
18 Lindauer of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

20 BILL LINDAUER: Troubleshooter and  
21 troublemaker. Okay. [laughter]

22 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: You sure you want  
23 the microphone?

24 BILL LINDAUER: So these bus drivers,  
25 I've never seen a bus driver get a ticket. What

happens to their license if they maim or kill somebody, right? We shouldn't be treated any differently. In fact, we should... the city should show some appreciation for us instead of stigmatizing us; being vengeful for us. It's like a vengeance there you know, especially Council Member Rose's little suggestion to you know, "Immediately get rid of 'em." You know, it's not a vengeance. It reminds me of Guilianì, unfortunately. It's so vengeful, it's Guilianiesque, if I may coin a term, and I want to remind people that we are a union and hopefully we'll be even stronger and nationwide by the AFL-CIO and I don't think either the Mayor or the council would want to be seen as anti-union. You know, we don't want to bring dishonor to His Honor or to City Council. We just want to be treated equally with everybody else.

CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you, thank you.

BHAIRAVI DESAI: Thank you very much.

BERISFORD SIMMONS: Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you very much. [background voices] Next up we'll have

2 Erhan Tuncel, the League of Mutual Taxi Owners;  
3 Michael Woloz, Metropolitan Taxis Board of Trade;  
4 Renee Schoonbeek, Hudson Square Business  
5 Improvement District. Christine Berthet.  
6 [background voices] Yes, hope I got it, sorry.  
7 Thank you. Okay, whenever you're ready to start,  
8 three minutes and if you could please identify  
9 yourself for the record. Thank you.

10 MICHAEL WOLOZ: Good morning.

11 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Good afternoon.

12 MICHAEL WOLOZ: Right. It was supposed  
13 to be in the morning, but that was... I am Michael  
14 Woloz and today I'm here representing the  
15 Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade, which  
16 represents the operators of more than 5,250 yellow  
17 medallion taxicabs. As taxi operators, we have a  
18 supreme obligation not only to ensure the safe  
19 transport of our passengers, but to ensure the  
20 safety of our drivers as well as all vehicles,  
21 cyclists and pedestrians with whom our taxis  
22 coexist. While MTBOT has always placed safety as  
23 our single most important goal, and according to  
24 accident data traveling via yellow taxi is safer  
25 than traveling in one's private vehicle, much more

2 must be done. We must innovate with new  
3 technologies. We must do more to encourage safe  
4 driving and discourage dangerous driving and we  
5 must do so keeping in mind the difficulties of  
6 driving a taxicab. MTBOT's been a long-time leader  
7 in the fight for safer taxis and safer streets.  
8 Most recently in 2013, we joined civic groups,  
9 transportation advocates and families of victims in  
10 supporting Intro 535 to lower speed limits on side  
11 streets from 30 miles per hour to 20. Mayor de  
12 Blasio's put forward an even bolder goal to reduce  
13 the citywide speed limit on all streets from a  
14 default of 30 to 25 miles per hour. We applaud  
15 this goal and stand ready to fight alongside the  
16 Mayor, the City Council and others to achieve it.  
17 MTBOT is proud to have worked closely with TLC on  
18 the Mayor's Vision Zero initiative and is pleased  
19 that many of our suggestions were incorporated into  
20 the common sense working plan. Many Vision Zero  
21 ideas can be implemented with relative ease, for  
22 example, utilizing existing technologies in the  
23 taxis to message safety to drivers and passengers.  
24 Other initiatives are not without concerns. We  
25 must be careful to not make the already difficult

2 job of driving a taxi even more stressful and  
3 burdensome by overticketing or singling drivers  
4 out. There is way to strike a balance, for  
5 example, drivers are all to used to getting issued  
6 quote "six-pack of tickets" when they are stopped  
7 by a TLC, NYPD or Port Authority enforcement agent.  
8 This may include tickets for minor violations of  
9 TLC rules, for example, a passenger left paper on  
10 the floor of the rear compartment and another  
11 ticket because a passenger chose to exit the cab at  
12 an intersection before the driver had a chance to  
13 pull over to the curb. Imagine driving in New York  
14 over the past several weeks of snow, sleet and rain  
15 and constantly worrying about whether you'll be  
16 ticketed for a spotty door or a slushy floor. Part  
17 of Vision Zero should be about prioritizing safe  
18 driving and reevaluating nit-pick violations that  
19 do little else than contribute to the stress of our  
20 drivers, and stressful drivers are less safe  
21 drivers, whether you drive yellow taxis or drive  
22 your kids to school in the morning. Another  
23 concern is fairness. Yellow taxi drivers are  
24 already the most targeted drivers on the road  
25 today. It is important that the NYPD and the TLC

2 treat all regulated industries equally. [chime]  
3 Yellow taxi drivers cannot be subjected to  
4 technology-based enforcement while other drivers  
5 regulated by the TLC are not. We should all be  
6 rewarded for good driving together and penalized  
7 for dangerous driving together. Whether you drive  
8 a yellow, a green, a livery or a black car, no one  
9 should be able to quote "buy their way out of safe  
10 driving" by choosing a less regulated means of  
11 travel. If fairness, boldness and balance is our  
12 guide toward implementing Vision Zero, there is no  
13 reason we cannot achieve a dramatic reduction in  
14 traffic related deaths and preserve a healthy taxi  
15 industry. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you. So  
17 just one quick question. I take it as far as the  
18 Vision Zero Plan you share many of the sentiments  
19 echoed by the Taxi Workers Alliance in terms of  
20 some of the enforcement issues, the technology,  
21 some of the penalties that are imposed in the plan?

22 MICHAEL WOLOZ: We have a lot of the  
23 same issues that were articulated and...

24 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing]  
25 Okay.

2 MICHAEL WOLOZ: I would say though that  
3 I think that the status quo is just not good enough  
4 right now and we're going to need to really all  
5 work together to come up with ways that balance  
6 this. If we have some of these... you know the  
7 combination of all the different point systems I  
8 mean you're just not going to have any drivers  
9 left. Nobody's going to want to you know, take the  
10 risk and drive in this industry you know, if it's  
11 so easy for them to lose their license. That's why  
12 I think we should focus on some of these really you  
13 know, minor nit-picky stuff that we see every day  
14 and we're with our drivers all the time in court  
15 and helping them to retain their licenses for silly  
16 stuff. So if we're going to prioritize safety,  
17 then we should prioritize safety. If we're going  
18 to have new penalties, alright, because we're in a  
19 crisis and we have to address it and we should do  
20 that, but we should also make sure that that we're  
21 not unfairly targeting yellows and that we're not  
22 unfairly targeting drivers with all kinds of you  
23 know, ridiculous nonsensical tickets so that it  
24 just becomes impossible, but by and large we're  
25 very supportive of this goal and we think a lot of



2 things are going to have to change including  
3 passengers' behavior is going to have to change.  
4 You know, you can't have this like step on it, get  
5 me here ASAP, right, and then put that burden on a  
6 driver you know, who you know, is reacting to it.  
7 Everybody has to play their... their role is our  
8 position.

9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay and some of  
10 the minor infractions you talk about are the TLC  
11 issue points. You mentioned a passenger exiting  
12 when the vehicle hasn't even come to a...

13 MICHAEL WOLOZ: [interposing] As one of  
14 the previous...

15 [crosstalk]

16 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: An appropriate  
17 stop.

18 MICHAEL WOLOZ: Yeah, as one of the  
19 previous folks mentioned there is basically a book  
20 this thick about... of all...

21 [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Right, the...

23 [crosstalk]

24 MICHAEL WOLOZ: The different  
25 violations.

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: TLC bible.

3 MICHAEL WOLOZ: For owners; for drivers  
4 and yeah, those are... that's a real thing; a  
5 driver getting stopped for one violation. Let's  
6 say it's that; it's a passenger getting out you  
7 know, just leaving the car. I mean it's not like  
8 you know, so they can do that, but if the driver  
9 didn't pull to the curb, the driver gets the  
10 ticket. But when... often when either... and  
11 there's three different threats on the road.  
12 There's the TLC, there's the NYPD and there's the  
13 Port Authority and when they'll pull you over for  
14 one violation, they'll take a look at the car and  
15 they'll give you another five, you know, which can  
16 wipe out your earnings for you know, one, two,  
17 three days. You know, it's really serious stuff  
18 and it really does contribute to the stress of the  
19 job and if we're going to look at this in a  
20 holistic way and say what really matters here?  
21 Human lives matter; saving human lives matter. You  
22 know is a piece of paper on the floor, is that  
23 really... you know is that really something worth  
24 giving you know a ticket for or a slushy floor in  
25 the middle of the snow? I mean probably not, so I

2 think there's a lot that we can do to prioritize  
3 what really matters.

4 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay, has your  
5 industry been a part of the conversations thus far?

6 MICHAEL WOLOZ: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

8 MICHAEL WOLOZ: We have and we're very  
9 happy that a lot of our suggestions were  
10 incorporated and you know, if this is a working  
11 plan and that's what we've been told and that's...

12 [crosstalk]

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Mm-hm.

14 MICHAEL WOLOZ: What all of the  
15 literature says, that it is...

16 [crosstalk]

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Right.

18 [crosstalk]

19 MICHAEL WOLOZ: A working plan and  
20 you've reiterated that and Chairman Rodriguez has  
21 too. There is a lot of things that are going to  
22 need to be tweaked. There's a lot of things that  
23 need to be changed. There's you know, certain  
24 technology that may or may not exist; may or may  
25 not be ready in time; may or may not be worth

2 pursuing, but it's just time to put everything on  
3 the table and see you know, what works and we have  
4 we have examples of transportation alternatives  
5 mentioned earlier. I mean there are... we know a  
6 lot of what works you know, so...

7 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Mm-hm.

8 MICHAEL WOLOZ: So we can skip some of  
9 those parts, especially with the reduction of the  
10 speed limit.

11 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Right.

12 MICHAEL WOLOZ: I mean that's something  
13 that we supported as soon as it was made... we were  
14 made aware of it to reduce the... you know the  
15 speeding on the side streets, which, you know I  
16 think that's another point where we can probably  
17 refine here. I mean going from 30 to 25 on all  
18 streets is broader and that's great, but they  
19 probably should only go 20 miles per hour on side  
20 streets. Okay, there's... I live on a side street  
21 in New York. It's... some of the cars are going 45  
22 miles per hour down that block, which, you know I  
23 have small kids and you can't... you just can't  
24 live like that.

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Well, I live on a  
3 main street and two buses go through my street;  
4 multiple cars and everyone speeds.

5 MICHAEL WOLOZ: Yeah.

6 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: So again, it's a  
7 problem across the board and I guess you know, I've  
8 just been really concerned about the deadly crashes  
9 that you have heard about and I know we all agree  
10 that we do have to do something. I am delighted  
11 that the industry is at the table because you have  
12 to be an important part of it and the fact that we  
13 are at least coming together to acknowledge that  
14 this is a working plan, which means that you know,  
15 we can entertain changes. We're not about you  
16 know, polarizing an industry because just as much  
17 as we have had incidents with liveries and yellows,  
18 we've had with buses, we've had with private cars.  
19 I mean we've had with everyone I mean so we can  
20 fairly say that each industry has been involved in  
21 some level of an injury [chime] or unfortunately, a  
22 deadly crash, so I do you know, think that this is  
23 an area where we can find some common agreement,  
24 but you know I always feel we do have to be [siren]  
25 realistic. We have to be realistic about the fact

that this is a growing city. We have more people, more cars on the streets every day. You would think we wouldn't but... and our trains are overcrowded, but we still have thousands of cars on our streets. So you know, understanding that and coming to the table with the perspective that understands that you know, we still have to have that education component and I keep saying it because most of my district doesn't even know what it means to jaywalk and so that's a concern for me. I don't want my constituents all being arrested for jaywalking when of them don't understand what it is, so we have to educate people on both ends to make sure that they understand their behavior needs to change and then you know, we have a second conversation.

MICHAEL WOLOZ: And I appreciate that and just one point that I'd like to make picking up on something that was said before in terms of training, most of our garages; we have 38 taxi garages in four of the five boroughs. Most of our garages when you show up with a hack license an experienced dispatcher who was probably a driver with a hack license will take you out for a ride,

2 okay, and make sure that you are able to and  
3 understand how to operate a taxicab and that's  
4 probably some... that's something that's been  
5 standard practice for us for a long time. We lease  
6 our vehicles out. We want to make sure that you  
7 know, the driver comes back in one piece, the car  
8 comes back in one piece and so that's probably  
9 something that could supplement on a citywide level  
10 or an industrywide level and it shouldn't just be  
11 for yellow taxi drivers. It should be for  
12 liveries; it should be for greens; it should be  
13 anyone who drives professionally who...

14 [crosstalk]

15 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Mm-hm.

16 MICHAEL WOLOZ: Professionally drives a  
17 vehicle should have that hands-on training with an  
18 experienced driver. [chime]

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

20 MICHAEL WOLOZ: Thank you.

21 CHRISTINE BERTHT: Hello. My name is  
22 Christine Berthet. Good morning, good afternoon.  
23 Thank you, Chair Rodriguez and Chair Gibson for the  
24 opportunity to testify today. My name is Christine  
25 Berthet. I'm the co-founder of Chekped. We are

an 800 members non-profit founded in 2005 to improve the safety of pedestrians in Chelsea and Hell's Kitchen in Manhattan and that's a district which has the Lincoln Tunnel entrances for cars, which has the bus terminal with 8,000 bus trips a day, and a number of other conflicts on the streets, and first I want to tell you I'm so impressed with the level of attention you are putting into this hearing. I have been listening; come to hearings a lot and this is just amazing, so thank you so much for that.

The Mayor's Vision Zero is an enormous hope for us and what I'd like to do is give you a few suggestion how to make it happen faster and not having the delays and excuses that we have heard in the past. The first question I have for you is how much study is needed to fix a pothole and how many days does it take to fix it? And the point is that DOT doesn't need to study or deal a simple proven techniques. Like we know split phases, for example, a single change at the intersection, would reduce by 44 percent the number of pedestrians injured at turning lanes and this has proven 100 percent effective. This works, right? And it's



included in the Vision Zero package. So in Hell's Kitchen seven people have been killed and 500 injured in about 500 feet on the Ninth Avenue by turning cars and we still have... even after a study of seven years we still don't have a single split phase there installed. So the message is we should recommend that such features be installed within 30 days from any death or serious injury by turning cars. We know it. The car turns; there's a death; there is an injury. Let's put a split phase, just like we fix a pothole. It's no different. It doesn't require a big study.

We also know that speed kills, so why are speed humps delayed when there is construction on a block? We have requested speed humps on a brand new school we have and we were told yes, that's fine, but there is another construction on the block and so you are not going to get it for another two years. That doesn't make any sense because in our district all our streets and in our city a large majority of the city has been rezoned and all these streets have been in construction, what does that mean? We don't put speed humps anywhere there? That doesn't make any sense, so we

2 have a street. We need the speed hump. Forget  
3 about the construction. The trucks can go over  
4 that.

5               So these are [chime] two very quick  
6 summaries. We are really pleased to see  
7 opportunity to involved the community. For  
8 example, do you know where your traffic complaints  
9 go when you log them? Well, I don't know because  
10 if you call 3-1-1 they tell you, "It's not us.  
11 We'll send you to the precinct," and the precinct  
12 doesn't log them, so none of the traffic complaints  
13 is logged in the city and this is really a major  
14 issue because you all know there is congestion; if  
15 there is gridlock; honking; if you see things  
16 happening you know, unless you know the head of the  
17 precinct and you call you don't get anything and  
18 it's not logged, so there is no sense of where are  
19 the problems happening and we need a better  
20 communication process with the traffic officers.  
21 They don't show up at the Community Council, they  
22 don't show up at the Community Board and we don't  
23 have a flow of information going back and forth on  
24 that. So I would encourage that we create a formal  
25 flow and we also create a... you know, they are

2 supposed to do a pedestrian safety by precinct and  
3 they should be requested for the input of the  
4 community in there, so this is another suggestion.

5           And finally, we are pleased to see that  
6 more NYPD resources would be allocated to traffic  
7 enforcement, but we're very disappointed to hear  
8 this morning that the only increase in traffic  
9 enforcement people is going to be on the Highway  
10 Patrol and the Highway Patrol is not on the  
11 arterials. This is really wasting our money here.  
12 Putting the Highway Patrol... more Highway Patrol  
13 means they're going to regulate more cars and it's  
14 for the safety of drivers and I'm not saying that  
15 the safety of drivers is not important, but their  
16 safety has decreased much... or the safety has  
17 increased much more than the pedestrian. What we  
18 need is to reallocate those 70 people that they are  
19 going to hire or more to arterials and we shouldn't  
20 give them the money if we are not going to do that.  
21 The second thing is the traffic agents. I mean I  
22 don't know about you, but I'm sick of people seeing  
23 traffic agents, two of them, waving cars which have  
24 the green light. I mean don't the drivers know  
25 that they just need to go when there's a green

light? Why do we put people doing that? This drives me nuts. We have people telling move and worse, they move the cars turning into pedestrian platoon you know, but that's an exception, but this is a ridiculous use of an enormous, very qualified team. This whole traffic agent, some of them should become highway officers you know and not highway with arterials officers and the others should be retrained to become school guards and crossing guards because what we want them to do is protect the pedestrian and prevent gridlock, not wave cars when there is a green light with a whistle, which drives everybody nuts, by the way in the neighborhood. So I'm saying we have a lot of resources. We just need to use them smarter, put in place where they're needed and I think it would be... we are very, very happy with Vision Zero. We are thoroughly thankful for you listening to our suggestion. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you, thank you. Just a quick point. So I do agree with your remarks, but I do... those traffic crossing agents, in certain parts of our city they are really important. While I know certain areas they're

2 pushing along traffic, but sometimes because of the  
3 dynamic you need them to keep cars moving, so I'll  
4 give you my example. I'm in the Bronx and I  
5 represent Yankee Stadium, so during the season of  
6 the Yankees I have traffic everywhere because I  
7 have buses, I have black cars and my intersection  
8 on the Grand Concourse on 161st Street is horrific  
9 to get by, so I have agents that are there that  
10 kind of keep the traffic moving. I guess my bigger  
11 concern is that outside of no Yankee game when I  
12 need them they're not there.

13 CHRISTINE BERTHET: Right.

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Because I still  
15 have some of those traffic issues and I do agree.

16 CHRISTINE BERTHET: [interposing]  
17 Right.

18 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: And you know,  
19 focusing on collision and the highways is  
20 important, but it's not at the expense of you know,  
21 preparing them...

22 [crosstalk]

23 CHRISTINE BERTHET: No, but I mean I...

24 [crosstalk]

25 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Arterials.

2 [crosstalk]

3 CHRISTINE BERTHET: I wish... I wish  
4 those people would do enforcement because 90  
5 percent of the time the problem is a gridlock. I  
6 would rather...

7 [crosstalk]

8 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Right.

9 CHRISTINE BERTHET: Them give tickets  
10 for gridlock than waving cars. I think that would  
11 be a better experience; a better learning  
12 experience, you know.

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: I gotcha.

14 CHRISTINE BERTHET: And what you have  
15 on Yankee Stadium on Yankee game, we have that  
16 every day because of the Lincoln Tunnel...

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing]  
18 Because... right, right.

19 [cross-talk]

20 CHRISTINE BERTHET: Every night.

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Right.

22 CHRISTINE BERTHET: And so, believe me,  
23 we know.

24 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: I understand.

25 CHRISTINE BERTHET: But...

2 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you, thank  
3 you.

4 RENEE SCHOONBEEK: Good afternoon.

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Alright.

6 RENEE SCHOONBEEK: Chair Gibson,  
7 Rodriguez and both the committees. My name is  
8 Renee Schoonbeek, Vice President for Planning and  
9 Capital Projects of the Hudson Square Business  
10 Improvement District, roughly bounded by Houston  
11 and Canal Streets, Route 9A and 6th Avenue. It was  
12 once known as the Printing District. Nowadays most  
13 people think of the area as where you get stuck in  
14 traffic trying to get into the Holland Tunnel. The  
15 buildings in Hudson Square were built in the 1930s  
16 for manufacturing. At that time, an estimated  
17 12,000 people worked in the district. Around the  
18 same time, the Holland Tunnel was built to  
19 accommodate 15 million vehicles per year. Today,  
20 Hudson Square is a hub of creative industries with  
21 a daytime population of 60,000 and the tunnel now  
22 moves 30 million to 35 million. In spite of this  
23 more than doubling of cars and more than tripling  
24 of population, our streets continue to be treated  
25 as a staging area for tunnel traffic. The bid for

limited resources and working closely with CB 2 and DOT is creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment. In February 2012, for lack of enforcement, we've started our own pedestrian traffic management program to keep traffic from blocking the crosswalks on Varick Street during rush hour. However, the bid alone cannot address the impacts of a regional transportation facility on a neighborhood that is now alive with people. We are asking for a permanent redesign of the road geometry at five of our intersections and automated enforcement along Varick Street. We would like to participate in the Mayor's Office of Operation's Vision Zero taskforce, both to share our expertise and to serve as a voice for the many communities that are similarly affected by the presence of bridges and tunnels in their neighborhoods. We applaud the administration's commitment to making our streets safer through better street signs, regulations and enforcements and we look forward to working with you to expand these efforts.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

[background voices] Okay, next we have Adele



2 Bender, the Gray Panthers in Manhattan. Okay and  
3 we have Antoinette Myers [phonetic], Gray Panthers.

4 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: She left.

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Elizabeth Caputo.

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: She left.

7 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Bob HuDock, Bay  
8 Ridge Advocates for Keeping Everyone Safe, BRAKES.  
9 [background voices] Oh, okay, from Make the Road  
10 New York, Diana Bernal [phonetic] and Dahlia  
11 Goldenberg. [background voices] Okay, we're ready  
12 to begin and if you could just state your name for  
13 the record.

14 ADELE BENDER: Yes, my name is Adele  
15 Bender and I'm with the Gray Panthers. I'd like to  
16 thank you for listening to those New Yorkers who  
17 most need... who... I'm sorry, who most need  
18 improvements in pedestrian safety. Pedestrian  
19 safety is a health issue. They should've put that  
20 in Obamacare. Anyway, for us this is often an  
21 issue of life and death and survival. I represent  
22 the Gray Panthers and I'm 83 years old. We are  
23 mostly a senior organization, although we are also  
24 intergenerational. Living on Queens Boulevard  
25 corridor, the Boulevard of Death, as it's known, I

and so many others confront dangers daily. I'm sometimes really very hesitant about crossing that boulevard. As Gray Panthers we know that we must pay attention to the health and safety of New Yorkers, particularly those of us with mobility limitations. As we get older, you know, I don't sprint across the boulevard the way I used to and even prior to the Mayor's initiative and horrifying epidemic of pedestrian deaths, Gray Panthers in New York began a pedestrian safety education campaign for seniors. Although we may not be, as I say, as speedy as we used to be, we certainly know that we have to speak out on this issue. We are a growing population. We want a demographic safety and dynamic city for all residents regardless of age or socioeconomic level; streets safe for pedestrians all ages and abilities, just plain fundamentals. For decades along Queens Boulevard senior citizens take the brunt of poorly designed streets. For us it's a dance with death just to cross the street. Personally, I've known many seniors who have suffered falls due to traffic issues 'cause sometimes... you know, I used to run across the boulevard, but lately sometimes I'm afraid of

2 falling. Anyway, I don't want this to continue.  
3 Extending the amount of... this is an important  
4 thing. The timing of the traffic lights is very  
5 important because even when I cross when the light  
6 just changes in my favor, I just about make it  
7 across and my hand is always up even if the traffic  
8 light is with me 'cause you know, sometimes a car  
9 or somebody that's going someplace in their vehicle  
10 are in a hurry and the second that traffic light  
11 changes zoom, they're ready to go and you know, the  
12 boulevard, as you know, is pretty broad so when I  
13 cross the street my hand is up all the time.  
14 Anyway, let's make it simple. Gray Panthers  
15 support Vision Zero. [chime] Finished? Is that  
16 it?

17 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Mm-hm.

18 ADELE BENDER: That's it. Okay, I just  
19 wanted to...

20 [crosstalk]

21 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Sorry about that.

22 ADELE BENDER: I'll just say one thing.

23 [crosstalk]

24 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Sorry.  
25

2 ADELE BENDER: You know, it can be  
3 preventable. We just have to get I guess Albany  
4 and make sure they fund traffic safety needs that  
5 we have and they do have to reduce the traffic  
6 speed. It's got to be reduced to 20 miles. I mean  
7 you know, 20 miles. I think it's now 25?

8 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: It's now 30.

9 ADELE BENDER: Or 30? You got to  
10 reduce it to 20 because as I say, we're a growing  
11 population and we can't always get across that wide  
12 boulevard back there even when the light is with us  
13 and again, if you're a grandmother or if you have  
14 a... you're a mother; you have a stroller; you have  
15 a child; if you're a grandmother with a child it's  
16 even more important that we really have given the  
17 time and notice and whatever it takes to see that  
18 we can cross that boulevard safely. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you, thank  
20 you. [background voices]

21 TRANSLATOR: I'm here with Diana, who  
22 is with Make the Road, and she's going to read her  
23 statement and then I'll reiterate it.

24 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

25 DIANA BERNAL: [Speaking Spanish]

2 TRANSLATOR: Si, okay. Good afternoon,  
3 my name is Diana Bernal and I represent Make the  
4 Road New York. We are an organization of 14,000  
5 immigrant members.

6 DIANA BERNAL: [Speaking Spanish]

7 TRANSLATOR: Thank you. So Diana lives  
8 in West Side Queens near Queens Boulevard and I  
9 have four young nephews in a New York foster home  
10 and in July of this year they'll be returned to me  
11 in my home after three years of not seeing them and  
12 I'm very concerned about their safety when we would  
13 walk in the streets together. From my experience  
14 and those of my friends, I know how dangerous  
15 Queens Boulevard can be. My friends have been at  
16 risk of death by cars coming toward us at Queens  
17 Boulevard and 69th Street and when I think about  
18 this I am frustrated that a car could hit me and I  
19 would never get to see my nephews again. As an  
20 immigrant community, we would like to urge the City  
21 Council and the Mayor to focus on penalizing  
22 drivers for violating traffic safety laws,  
23 especially for repeat offenders who make the  
24 streets more dangerous. We believe that this is  
25 more important to focus on than penalties for lack

2 of a driver's license. It would be a shame if the  
3 police used Vision Zero laws as an opportunity to  
4 conduct racial profiling against our community. We  
5 would also like there to be more emphasis on  
6 stopping drivers for passing the speed limit and  
7 finally, communities like mine have to deal with  
8 major arterial roads like Queens Boulevard and  
9 Northern Boulevard, which are enormously dangerous.

10 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you,  
11 gracias. Thank you.

12 DIANA BERNAL: Yes, thank you.

13 BOB HUDOCK: Good afternoon. My name  
14 is Bob HuDock. I want to thank you for the  
15 opportunity to testify today. I have a written  
16 statement here. I don't know if it was... but I'm  
17 going to depart from my remarks a little bit in the  
18 interest of brevity. I'm here representing BRAKES,  
19 which is Bay Ridge Advocates for Keeping Everyone  
20 Safe. It's a pedestrian safety advocacy group, but  
21 I'm a community board member, member of  
22 Transportation Committee and a member of the  
23 Brooklyn Borough President's 4th Avenue Taskforce,  
24 which works with local communities to bring  
25 pedestrian safety improvements all along 4th

2 Avenue, which is one of the most dangerous  
3 corridors for pedestrians in Brooklyn. I was also  
4 a PTA president at PS 503, which is located on 4th  
5 Avenue and has two of the most dangerous  
6 intersections on the entire corridor right outside  
7 the school, so I know very well from personal  
8 experience how much it affects the community when a  
9 innocent child is injured or killed in traffic. It  
10 affects the entire school community. I've found  
11 that the parents' testimony that we heard this  
12 morning was very touching and it's testimony to the  
13 fact that victims who are injured or killed in  
14 traffic, it's not just that victim who's affected.  
15 It's the family; it's their loved ones; it's the  
16 people at their job; it's the community all around  
17 them and I think it's sends a very chilling  
18 message, especially to our children. When an  
19 innocent child is killed in traffic or injured in  
20 traffic and nothing is done to punish the driver,  
21 it sends a very clear message to those children in  
22 the entire school and to their parents that this  
23 city government values traffic flow greater than  
24 the lives of the children and I think that's a  
25 terrible message to send to children. So I would

like to ask that the City Council first focus on speeding enforcement and failure to yield enforcement and look at these issues of lowering the traffic maximum speed limit. You know, there was a time in human history when human sacrifice was very common in ancient cultures and we look at those ancient cultures and consider ourselves superior and kind of look down on these cultures as barbaric, primitive cultures in ancient Carthage and ancient Babylon, but really I want to ask has really that much changed? Because in a way, we are such a car obsessed culture that we have this expectation that a certain level of fatalities is acceptable and I see that as just morally unsustainable. I have a second-grade daughter. I walk to school with her every day there and back and I'd like her to be able to walk to school on her own someday and I would not like to see her life sacrificed in the name of traffic flow. So what I'm asking the council [chime] to do... I know there will be a lot of push back to many of the provision of Vision Zero. I support everything in it. I'm not going to get into all the details. I know the cab drivers have some issues and I don't



know much about those issues, but the philosophy of Vision Zero; that we should preserve every single human life on the streets I think is very important to send that message to our children and our elderly who are the most vulnerable, but there will be push back. I've seen many times when pedestrian safety proposals from the DOT come out, especially to the outer boroughs where people are very dependent on cars because there's a lack of mass transit options. There's a lot of push back because a lot of motorists don't understand that you know, pedestrians have the same right to life that motorists have, so there will be push back and I want to ask that you show the moral leadership to stand up to the obstructionists who are definitely going to try to block some of these provisions from happening and spend a little bit of your political capital to make sure that we do the right thing and save the lives of our children on the streets of the city. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you. Well, I've always been of the mindset that you know in order to reduce car traffic we have to provide alternatives that are realistic for people to get

on mass transit. Many of us throughout the city live in the old two-fare zones. I don't live near a train station and I have to take a bus to get to the trains station and then I have to walk up almost 40 steps because we've been trying to get an elevator or an escalator at you know, that particular train station, so I understand you know, the urgent need to find alternatives and encourage more bike riding and other things. I guess you know, the reality that always exists is that until it happens people are comfortable and used to certain options and you know, if that's driving a car or you know, we have an issue with some dollar vans and the other modes of transportation, so I do agree and I see in your testimony you're asking for us to take political coverage and courage to make sure that we can get a lot of this done, so I thank you for your testimony.

BOB HUDOCK: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Mm-hm. [off mic]

Well, I won't say final. Someone else could come. Okay, we have David Powell from the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance; Emma Rodgers, Bronx

2 Health REACH; Carol Crump on behalf of Noel  
3 Hidalgo, BETA New York City. [background voices]

4 DAVID POWELL: So thank you, Council  
5 Member Gibson. We're your neighbors to the east...

6 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: [interposing] Yes.

7 DAVID POWELL: Over at the South Bronx  
8 Watershed... River Watershed Alliance rather and...

9 [crosstalk]

10 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Mm-hm.

11 DAVID POWELL: My name is Dave Powell.  
12 I'm the coordinator of the alliance, but our  
13 membership groups are some groups that I think you  
14 know well; Mothers on the Move, Nos Quedamos, Youth  
15 Ministries for Peace and Justice; Sustainable South  
16 Bronx, the POINT and two citywide organizations,  
17 the Pratt Center and Tri-State Transportation  
18 Campaign, who testified earlier today.

19 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: I know them well.

20 DAVID POWELL: Yeah and as an aside,  
21 I'll just say your former colleague in the assembly  
22 has been very supportive of our efforts as well and  
23 we're looking forward to talking to you about some  
24 of efforts and that's Marcus Crespo and like I  
25 already said...

2 [crosstalk]

3 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

4 DAVID POWELL: We have...

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Yeah, he  
6 represents the Bronx River, so.

7 DAVID POWELL: Yes, that's right,  
8 that's right. For over six decades the  
9 transportation network and highway infrastructure  
10 of the South Bronx has produced...

11 [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Mm-hm.

13 DAVID POWELL: Negative health, safety  
14 and economic outcomes for residents. The current  
15 roadway configuration contributes to some of the  
16 highest asthma rates in the United States and  
17 severely comprises pedestrian safety, particularly  
18 around the Bruckner and Sheridan Expressways, which  
19 is where most of our work is focused on. We were  
20 very encouraged that after 15 years in our campaign  
21 in December of 2013, the New York City Department  
22 of Transportation and the Department of City  
23 Planning completed the Sheridan Expressway, Hunts  
24 Point Land Use and Transportation study finally  
25 after two years and \$1.5 million, a grant that we

2 helped secure from the federal government and the  
3 recommendations from the step study largely mirror  
4 long-standing community priorities for the area.

5 If implemented these recommendations will  
6 dramatically improve health and pedestrian safety  
7 and just briefly, there are some slides; colored  
8 slides included with that testimony. The  
9 recommendations revolve around three large scale  
10 improvements. One is the construction of ramps for  
11 direct vehicular access from the Bruckner into the  
12 Hunts Point peninsula. As you know, we have the  
13 Food Distribution Center there and we have 15,000  
14 diesel truck trips coming and going, which have no  
15 direct highway link. They're hammering right  
16 through our local streets in order to get to the  
17 Food Distribution Center, the largest in the  
18 nation, so a direct highway link is critical and we  
19 were very excited to see the city recommending  
20 that. The city also recommended the closure of two  
21 Sheridan ramps that poured truck traffic onto large  
22 pedestrian intersections, including Hunts Point  
23 Avenue and Westchester Avenue and the conversion of  
24 a portion of the Sheridan Expressway into a  
25 boulevard that would calm traffic and implement

extensive pedestrian safety improvements while providing access to the Bronx River and some of our waterfront parks that alliance members have fought for many years to bring on line, parks like Starlight Park and Concrete Plant Park at the former Brownfield site. These and other changes recommended by the step study team will take thousands of commercial vehicles off of our local streets, increase pedestrian safety, create better access to green spaces and create the potential for affordable housing and economic development, all of which are desperately needed in the South Bronx.

[chime] For Mayor de Blasio... so I heard the bell. For Mayor de Blasio and the council, these recommendations provide a clear blueprint for implementing Vision Zero in the South Bronx. No place is this clearer than at the intersection of Hunts Point Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard, the current site of the Hunts Point Avenue 6 train station and the future site of the Metro-North train station. There have been over 100 pedestrian and bicycle crashes at this intersection since 1995, including several fatalities and I just want to mention that we are excited to be working with

2 Council Members Arroyo and Palma, your colleagues  
3 in the council, who have recently introduced  
4 Resolution 15, which is attached to my testimony,  
5 calling on the state to implement the step study  
6 recommendations. The resolution has been referred  
7 to the Transportation Committee. We had a very  
8 productive meeting with Council Member Rodriguez  
9 last week and we are hopeful that it will be passed  
10 quickly and unanimously to send a message to Albany  
11 from the New York City Council that some of the  
12 most dangerous streets in the Bronx are going to be  
13 given the Vision Zero treatment as it were. We  
14 look forward to working with the Mayor, Speaker  
15 Mark-Viverito and the rest of the council for these  
16 critical improvements which have true symbiosis for  
17 the Vision Zero Plan; Action Plan, but have come  
18 from a grassroots place; you know, literally 15  
19 years of community organizing in the environmental  
20 justice movement in the South Bronx, and we hope  
21 that we'll be able to work together to seize the  
22 current moment, a very rare moment in which the  
23 Hunts Point businesses and community groups are on  
24 the same page and which elected officials such as  
25 Assemblyman Crespo and Council Members Arroyo and

2 Palma are all in consensus that this is what we  
3 need to do to move forward and to bring pedestrian  
4 safety to an area of the Bronx that has long had  
5 that deferred. So we look forward to working with  
6 you and passing that resolution and sending that  
7 message to the state, as well as implementing some  
8 of the critical fixes that DOT itself can take  
9 action on prior to the state permission.

10 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you, thank  
11 you and I appreciate it. I know the work that a  
12 lot of the organizations you referenced have done  
13 to really make Hunts Point more residential so to  
14 speak in the long-term. I applaud the efforts to  
15 bring more mass transit. The Metro-North stop is  
16 going to be a huge economic boost for that  
17 community and also what I would say that would  
18 address our issues on childhood obesity and some of  
19 the other health concerns is to work with the Hunts  
20 Point market to make it beneficial to the Bronx.  
21 Most of the food that goes into Hunts Point goes  
22 right back out.

23 DAVID POWELL: That's right.

24 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: There's nothing  
25 that stays in the Bronx and so I've talked about



2 it. I am been working with the teamsters and many  
3 others and so that also has to be a huge component  
4 because I think it's a part of some of the health  
5 issues that we have been dealing with and it speaks  
6 to the longer goal of improving the quality of  
7 life, so I thank you for your testimony and  
8 appreciate the work you guys are doing.

9 DAVID POWELL: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you. Yes,  
11 welcome.

12 CAROL CRUMP: Good afternoon. My name  
13 is Carol Crump and I do have... there are four of  
14 those there. I didn't pass them out. Anyone else  
15 who would like one I can pass those out. Vision  
16 Zero is such an amazing transformative initiative  
17 and I'm so happy to be a part of it. Thank you for  
18 giving me the opportunity to speak today. Thank  
19 you so and I'm here today. There are many pieces;  
20 many slice... many parts of Vision Zero that I've  
21 been working on for many years. At this time I  
22 represent... change my hat here; BETA-NYC and it's  
23 a very active tech community. This weekend we were  
24 at 30-hour prototypathon. You know we were hacking  
25 away and we're exploring the city's open data and

2 trying... our goal is to make tools that reveal and  
3 make the data useful for members of the community,  
4 council members and community board members, et  
5 cetera. BETA-NYC's mission is to empower the  
6 people for... is to build a city empowered by the  
7 people for the people for the 21st Century and we  
8 wrote the people's digital... People's Roadmap to a  
9 Digital New York City and you can check on... there  
10 are 30 policies in there. We have great ideas. We  
11 have very solid ideas about what can be done in  
12 this area. Let me see. And I'm just going to...  
13 I'm not going to read the whole thing.

14 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Mm-hm.

15 CAROL CRUMP: I'm just going to hit a  
16 couple of highlights here. Since 2009, we have  
17 been very actively asking the NYPD to produce  
18 machine readable crash data, and when we say that  
19 we mean not PDFs, not carbon copies, but anything  
20 like even an Excel spreadsheet or a CSV or a  
21 database. Since 2012, the passage of the city's  
22 Open Data Law, the NYPD has refused to do that and  
23 to truly achieve Vision Zero crash and moving  
24 summons date, those two things, really need to be  
25 released accurately in a timely manner. Just to

2 hit another couple of points here. We testified in  
3 December to the Transportation Committee for the  
4 need for crash data to be not only machine  
5 readable, but disaggregated, which means that it  
6 can't be just a street corner. It needs to have a  
7 more precise geolocation, which means geotagged and  
8 for the cause of the crash to be properly cited so  
9 that we can understand why these things are  
10 happening. Currently, approximately 20 percent of  
11 the crash data cannot be accurately verified, so  
12 that means we have a very large statistically  
13 significant portion of the data that does not work.  
14 Additionally, moving summonses; we are unable to  
15 know where and when exactly summonses were written,  
16 [chime] so that's not useful for us. Our goal is  
17 to empower individuals, parents, community boards,  
18 council members, everybody across the board to use  
19 this data that we now have available to us.  
20 Attached to this are 96 people and my name is on  
21 there.

22 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Okay.

23 CAROL CRUMP: Who support the Open Data  
24 Initiative and thank you so much for your time.

25 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

4 EMMA RODGERS: Last but not least.

5 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Yeah.

6 EMMA RODGERS: Thank you so much for  
7 the opportunity to provide testimony at today's  
8 hearing. My name is Emma Rodgers and I work for  
9 Bronx Health REACH Coalition. I'm also a resident  
10 of NY so I need to be here. The Bronx Health REACH  
11 Coalition is led by the Institute for Family  
12 Health. We were formed in 1999 to eliminate racial  
13 and ethnic health disparities, mostly in the South  
14 Bronx, looking at diabetes and heart disease in  
15 African American and Latino communities.

16 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Mm-hm.

17 EMMA RODGERS: We work with community  
18 organizations, residents, community leaders to  
19 improve access to healthy food, to increase  
20 opportunities for active living, as well as to  
21 reduce underage excessive drinking and exposure to  
22 second-hand smoke in the Bronx specifically. On  
23 behalf of our coalition, I am here today to show my  
24 support to the Vision Zero Plan. Although there  
25 have been significant improvements to our

streetscape in the Bronx, including the traffic calming efforts on East 138th Street, much work is needed to ensure that Bronxites feel safe walking down the street and that bikers can bike to work. Making our streets safer is important not only for reducing pedestrian injuries and fatalities, but also it's truly an investment in our city's health. Despite some small wins, the Bronx continues to have the highest rates of overweight obesity in New York City with over two-thirds of residents overweight or obese. Leading an active lifestyle is crucial to maintaining a healthy weight. In the Bronx, almost one-third of adults reported no physical activity in the past 30 days. Over the last year we've had discussions with community members and community leaders and organizations in neighborhoods throughout the Bronx to identify barriers to active living and strategies to really redesign their communities to promote health and wellness in their neighborhoods. In the Melrose section of the South Bronx, one of the major concerns is the lack of safe, affordable places for youth to go after school or in the summer. Recreation centers have been closed and some parks

are actually locked. Kids have no place to go. This has led to increased rates of violence in Melrose, as well as reduced rates of physical activity. In the Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood in the Northwest Bronx, a very different neighborhood, but not far from Inwood and Washington Heights, community centers are at capacity and teens avoid their local parks because of heavy police presence. And lastly, in terms of Hunts Point, I wanted to add we actually worked with an amazing group of youth at the Point a couple summers ago to look at the issues around physical activity in the neighborhood and it was wonderful as they identified that there was this amazing new park, Barretto Point Park and others in the neighborhood, but it's so hard to get to them because of the traffic and other things, so they're terrified to get to the parks, but even though they have these beautiful resources there, so a lot of work is needed to be done to connect the resources and the great things that are happening with where people are actually living. With few affordable gyms and recreation spaces an increased funding for our local parks is unlikely. We must think of

alternative strategies, such as transforming our city streets to promote active living in poorer communities in New York City. We know that obesity rates are lower in countries where people walk and bicycle for recreation and transportation. Also, bike lanes actually make the roads safer for bicyclists and [chime] pedestrians because cars usually reduce their speed in those areas; however, the Bronx is not like it was in the 1930s.

Children rarely play in the streets and near Yankee Stadium seniors are terrified to cross the Grand Concourse to get to Joyce Kilmer Park or to take a walk. Recently I spoke with seniors who actually suggested building an overhead ramp over the Grand Concourse, which again, in some ways seems awesome, but at the same time we shouldn't need to do those things to make the streets safer, and Grand Concourse apparently there was... is the site of five deaths and 325 injuries in 2013. There are simple ways to make our streets safer, including avenue or street markings, bike lanes, stop signs an public plazas; however, in order for Vision Zero to be achieved it must start with a dialogue of the community and include real leadership from

2 community members. Community members know their  
3 neighborhoods best. They know where the most  
4 dangerous corridors are and they know the best  
5 solutions. We look forward to partnering with the  
6 Mayor's office on the Vision Zero Plan as well as  
7 City Council and these efforts will lead to a safer  
8 and healthier environment for all New Yorkers.

9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Well, it's good  
11 to end it with someone from Inwood and Washington  
12 Heights.

13 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: And the Bronx,  
14 yeah. [laughter]

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And the Bronx.  
16 Well, first of all, as we said from the beginning  
17 this is only the first hearing that we... and the  
18 first conversation. It will take everyone to be  
19 more committed to contribute to increase the safety  
20 in our city and we will be working to hold our  
21 meetings throughout the city, so we also expect  
22 your partnership, your support to mobilize our  
23 community, the religious leaders, the community  
24 board CBOs so that we can engage as many New  
25 Yorkers as possible into this conversation because



2 the more people participate and they are empowered,  
3 the more possibility we have to really eradicate  
4 this problem. So it's a privilege for me to co-  
5 chair this hearing with Vanessa, Council Member  
6 Gibson and again, we will continue... we will move  
7 on holding some more meetings throughout the whole  
8 city on this issue.

9 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Thank you all.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And now this  
11 meeting is adjourned.

12 CHAIRPERSON GIBSON: Yes, the meeting  
13 is adjourned. [applause] [background voices]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.



Date: 02/27/2014