

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

VISION ZERO - QUEENS TOWN HALL MEETING

----- X

April 23, 2014

Start: 6:15 p.m.

Recess: 8:30 p.m.

HELD AT:

LaGuardia Community College

31-10 Thomas Avenue

Long Island City, NY 1101

B E F O R E:

Chairperson

Ydanis Rodriguez

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Costa G. Constantinides

Daniel Dromm

Vanessa Gibson

Corey Johnson

Peter A. Koo

Donovan J. Richards

James Van Bramer

Mark Weprin

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

Thomas Chan
Chief of Transportation, NYPD

Dr. Gale O. Mellow. President
La Guardia Community College

Dalila Hall
Queens Borough Commissioner

Helen Ho
Mayor's Office
Community Affairs Unit Representative

Meera Joshi
Commissioner
Taxi and Limousine Commission

Polly Trottenberg
Commissioner
Department of Transportation

Captain Hennessey
NYPD - 108th Precinct

Al Volpe
Community Board 2

Sheila Lewandowski
Community Board 2

Amy Howell
Community Board 1

Nancy Sherman
Community Board 1

Juan Martinez
Transportation Alternatives

DR. GAIL MELLOW: We never have to do that when this is filled with college students. So I guess you're just a rowdy bunch of people. It's just wonderful to have you here, to have you here at La Guardia Community College. And I want to thank the speaker, who we hope will be able to join us later, Melissa Mark-Viverito, and the City Council for holding this very important Town Hall Meeting at LaGuardia. You put a college president up I've got to say one thing about the college.

I'd say at LaGuardia we have over 60,000 students that we connect with every year. We have students for more than 160 different countries. They speak 120 different languages, and we have faculty and staff of over 2,500. And we're surrounded by more than five high schools with 2,000 students. You can imagine, those of you who live in this community, that we are high traffic area. And the pedestrian corridor that is -- that La Guardia is part of is very, very challenging. So we take very, very seriously the work of this committee, and really have worked very hard with the City Council.

Our local City Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer when we had a very tragic fatality right in

front of the college, it was a high school student. He was doing everything right. He was on the sidewalk. He was waiting for the light to change, and because the traffic is so out of control here, he was struck by a vehicle and died in the street. And with Council Member Van Bramer's assistance, we were able to get some calming methods down, but certainly not enough to calm the traffic that is around here.

And so, at the college we really believe in civic engagement and public advocacy. We have engaged our faculty and staff and students to really work with the City Council, and to really make a difference. But to have a great energy, what you need is a great leader. And so, I am very, very excited tonight to be able to introduce really a friend to this community, and I guess I'm a little biased. A friend to higher education, and Chair Rodriguez has a history of fighting and winning for the community that he represents.

He's really focused for many years on higher education for all children on affordable housing, on healthcare, and really working as we all work, I think in this room, for more transparent and effective government. Most importantly -- and this

really where I'm biased -- he's part of the City University of New York family. After arriving in New York City from the Dominican Republic at the age of 18, he got his Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from CUNY. And he paid his way, as many of our students do, driving a cab.

So he knows the traffic issues inside and out. He then obtained a Masters Degree in Bilingual Education at City College, and he's former Chair of the Higher Education Committee. So I feel in particular he understands what our students need. But also most importantly, as Chair of this Committee, I think he understands what we need to do to create safe passageway for all the people who walk and live in the City of New York. It is my pleasure to introduce to you Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez. [applause]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Thank you. Well, let's give another big round of applause to the President right here, Mellow, for her leadership. [applause]. We can announce today that on the -- next week on the 30th, we will have a hearing on a list of legislation introduced by the Council, and many of those who supported the

1 Administration. In the years that I've been with the
2 Council, I've only been here for four years. So I
3 know the staff that they've been here for longer than
4 my colleagues that they've been here for longest.
5 They can make the comparison, but I can say that in
6 the four years that I've been with the Council it's
7 one of the hearings that I -- that we will get to
8 introduce the largest numbers. Twenty-two
9 legislation resolutions related to Vision Zero will
10 have a hearing next week on April 30 looking to
11 making the city safer for everyone, for our children,
12 for our family, and all New Yorkers.

14 I think that there's no doubt that Vision
15 Zero is not only the right thing to do. But it's
16 something that all New Yorkers with their support of
17 the great leader Mayor Bill de Blasio and our Speaker
18 Melissa Mark-Viverito is looking to turn New York
19 City into a place where we would like to reduce to
20 zero the number of fatalities, especially children
21 that are being killed by car crash accidents. As you
22 know, this is a crisis when we live in a city where
23 the first cause of death for children under 14 is car
24 crash accidents.

It means a lot for all the boroughs. I know that some of you here you are a grandfather, you have grand kids. Those of us that are single, you have brothers and sisters. Those of us that have daughters and sons, as myself, I have two daughters. I know how dangerous it is when I walk in the street. It doesn't matter if you walk through the sidewalk or any particular street in New York City. So I'm personally committed and moved by having this experience of talking to many families that they have lost their loved one.

As you know, no one can understand how someone that lost especially their children. And other parents who lost their daughter that she was ready to get in Columbia, you know in her 20, just crossing the street being killed by a car crash accident. It's a crisis. So we are committed to work with the Mayor and the Speaker to make Vision Zero a reality. And I know you will hear from the NYPD, TLC, the Mayor's Office, and we are now waiting to put all the pieces of Vision Zero in place. There's many pieces of Vision Zero that have already been introduced. And we've been working for the last I would say two months in New York City.

But as we are getting closer to finalize our budget we will have on June 30. You will hear from other agencies how millions of dollars will be introduced in this coming Fiscal 2015 Budget. Spent, money that will be spent by TLC, DOE, depending on NYPD to be sure that we make New York City a safe place for everyone. But tonight is a night that we would like to provide the opportunity to hear from you any other ideas that you have in necessary legislation related to Vision Zero.

And that's why the way we have been organizing this Town Hall Meeting, this is the third one. We have two more to go, the one in Staten Island in the Bronx, and when we do those two ones we will be holding a Town Hall Meeting in every town, in every borough where we've been listening to you concern. And at the end, we will be adding. We will be adding all of the legislation initiatives related to Vision Zero. Again, the format for tonight's panel is that you will -- all of us here and my colleagues, commissioners, especially the Commissioner of DOT she will have three minutes.

And TLC they also will have three minutes, and the NYPD they will have three minutes.

1 And the rest of my colleagues they will have two
2 minutes to say anything related to Vision Zero. And
3 then the public will have one minute. It's been
4 working great. We did it in Brooklyn. We did it in
5 Manhattan, and without format everyone has the
6 opportunity. And we were able to end the Town Hall
7 Meeting with everyone being present. So with that, I
8 would like to call the person who represents this
9 part of the borough, the Queens, a person who is the
10 Majority Leader, Jimmy Van Bramer. [applause]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you
13 very much, and I want to salute our great
14 Transportation Chair Ydanis Rodriguez for the amazing
15 work that he's doing. And I know he'll introduce all
16 of our colleagues from Queens so I won't do that.
17 But welcome to Commissioner Trottenberg of the
18 Department of Transportation. She has hit the ground
19 running, and I think she's going to be a great
20 partner. So let's give her a big round of applause.
21 [applause]

22 Because this is my district, I do want to
23 recognize some very important people who are here. I
24 want to thank La Guardia Community College, the
25 Harvard University of community colleges in New York.

1 It is a great, great institution. [applause] And
2 Gail Mellow is its amazing President and leader. I
3 do want to say we're joined today by the Captain of
4 the 108th Precinct, Captain Hennessy. I want to
5 thank him and all of us officers who are here.
6 [applause] Today folks here from the borough, and we
7 have a number of community board member, Al Volpe and
8 Sheila Lewandowski from Community Board 2; Amy Howell
9 and Nancy Silverman from Community Board 1.

11 I want to thank them for being here, and
12 for their support. I know Transportation
13 Alternatives, both Juan Martinez and Steve Schofield
14 representing the Queens folks are here. And a lot of
15 folks from my district who care very much about this
16 issue. Very briefly, I just want to say we have been
17 working on this issue since day one. When I took
18 office in the City Council, we realized very quickly
19 that safety on our streets, on our sidewalks, on our
20 roads was incredibly important.

21 And we were getting case after case, and
22 unfortunately, tragedy after tragedy whether it's in
23 Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, or Astoria.
24 And we have been committed to Vision Zero long before
25 it became something as popular as it is today. It is

1 absolutely essential that every single street in
2 every single neighborhood be safe. And that every
3 single person be able to go to school, go to work, go
4 home without fearing for their lives just to cross
5 the street. That is a real issue that's faced by
6 thousands of students here at La Guardia Community
7 College trying to cross Thomson or Van Dam.

9 It's an issue for little children going
10 to PS-152 in Woodside on Northern Boulevard. It is
11 an issue on Queens Boulevard, Vern Boulevard,
12 everywhere. This is an issue that affects everybody.
13 We're all committed to it. I am a big, big supporter
14 of Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero plan, and I look
15 forward to hearing from folks. And my staff, I want
16 to recognize Nick Galotta [sp?], Jason Van Ray [sp?],
17 and Cody Ryder [sp?]. We are as a team all committed
18 bicyclists. I want to say we all cycle, and
19 [applause] all of us committed to zero, zero
20 fatalities in this city. Thank you very much.
21 [applause]

22 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Now, let's hear
23 from another leader in the Council. So one that he's
24 been working very hard especially connecting Vision
25 Zero in our education. When we have our Vision Zero

1 we know that a lot of the work had to be done also
2 educating our parents and the student by also
3 improving safety in the surrounding area from our
4 school. So now, let's hear from my good friend Danny
5 Dromm.
6

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Okay, great.

8 Thank you Ydanis. Thank you for that nice
9 introduction. Of course, President Mellow, it's
10 great to be here. A great institution, and I
11 appreciate your offering us this hall. I just want
12 to also recognize that we've been joined by Queens
13 Borough Commissioner Dalila Hall who's here, who we
14 work very, very closely with and who I'm proud to
15 have a good relationship with. [applause]

16 And I want to say also we implemented a
17 Transportation Study in Jackson Heights when I first
18 got elected into office, which there have been many
19 transportation studies done in the neighborhood, but
20 none of them were ever implemented. And I
21 implemented it to less than great fanfare, and to the
22 surprise of many actually. And part of that was
23 implementing two plazas. And part of it was also
24 changing people's mentality from having a priority,
25

to having cars on the street to protecting pedestrians.

And that has happened I think in a large way in my district, particularly over the issue of these pedestrian plazas. So we were fortunate, though, to have a supportive Community Board, I see Community Board 3 is here as well, and Giovana Reed [sp?] who is District Manager and Vivian Duff [sp?] are here. Remember the struggle that we had getting those in, and taking cars off of those streets. I'm fortunate to have two of them. I have the 78th Street Plaza, and I have Diversity Plaza.

They were implemented in different ways. One was implemented with Community Partners. The other was implemented as part of that transportation study. I see Laura Hanson is here from the Horticultural Society as well. And we're working with them on maintaining those plazas, which has been an issue. But that Diversity Plaza was placed on the corner of the most dangerous intersection in Jackson Heights. And that was really the major reason for putting that plaza in. It was implemented in a different way than other plazas were implemented.

I'm also proud that in my district, we are getting [bell] two slow zones.

And I want to mention -- I hear the bell because I guess that's my two minutes, but we in my district had three terrible tragedies. We had two children who were killed, and we had a woman who was killed under a bus when she was crossing the street. It is my continued goal to prevent these types of tragedies from ever having -- from ever occurring again. So I, too, am committed to Vision Zero. It's a top priority for me. And finally, let me just last say I do have to go to an educational conference tonight. It is my new role as Education Chair, and it conflicts with this. So I will have to leave a little bit earlier. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause] All right. So remind everyone that we have translation in Spanish and monitoring. [SPEAKS SPANISH] Now, let's hear from Council Member Richards.

COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Good evening.

[applause] That's okay, you can clap. Okay, good. Well, it is an honor to be here. First, I want to thank Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez for his

1 leadership, and the new DOT Commissioner and, of
2 course, the Queens Commissioner Dalila Hall, who we
3 work very closely with. And obviously the Mayor for
4 his vision on Vision Zero. This is critical, and I'm
5 just happy that we have a Mayor who obviously
6 realizes that traffic safety needs to be a priority
7 for the city.

9 I think this is a good move for this
10 administration, and that we obviously have a lot to
11 do in our communities. With that being said, I
12 represent Laurelton, Rosedale, Springfield Gardens
13 and the Rockaways, half of the Rockaways, but we've
14 always struggled with pedestrian safety. Maybe a few
15 weeks after I was elected last year, a young man was
16 hit by a car at one of our busy intersections. And,
17 you know, it was like what do you say to the mother
18 when she sees blood on her child's face?

19 There's nothing you can particularly say.
20 But one of the things we can do is make sure that
21 these particular incidents never happen again. And
22 this is why it's critical that we have initiatives
23 like Vision Zero. I just want to throw out a few
24 things. Southeast Queens is a very busy place in the
25 Rockaways, and we have not yet seen slow zones in our

particular communities. And I'm hoping that the Department of Transportation is really going to re-evaluate this.

And I know that this is a new administration, but in the past my particular community has put in for a lot of slow zones, and has received none. So I'm hoping this administration is certainly going to look into these things. I think the primary focus of this is obviously we need to make sure that we are preventing fatalities and accidents before they happen. And I think that's the main thing all of us are here for. There is no reason that we should wait for an incident to happen before we start to address [bell] what needs to happen.

As I wrap up, I do want to thank DOT. Just last week we were able to break ground on a new four-way stop sign in my community, and a speed hump is coming very shortly to Springfield Gardens. So there are movements among these things. What I'm is that as we focus on Vision Zero we really do is figure out how do we speed the process up to make sure that traffic devices are getting to communities when they need them. Lastly, also how do we address

these commuter vans, who in particular in our community speed through every block?

And I'm hoping to hear from the TLC on that particular issue. And the obviously, the best way to ensure that there are less cars on the road is to make sure that transportation is running smoothly and effectively. So things like bus lanes, which may not be properly enforced in my district, but certainly the bus, Rapid Transit plan is wrapped up and select bus service. These are things that Queens needs, and I'm hoping to hear that we're going to roll out of these things. Thank you, Ydanis. That's it for three minutes. Thank you. [applause]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council Member Constantinides.

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Good evening. [applause] First, I want to say what a great pleasure it is to be back here at La Guardia Community College. This really is an amazing institution. You guys do great work. Thank you. And, of course, to our leaders, Council Member Rodriguez, Council Member Dromm, Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer, who's district we sit today. To Polly Trottenberg and Dalila Hall from DOT. This is

1 all a team. This is really everyone coming together
2 to find a common solution for a problem that we know
3 needs to be dealt with in our city. And our Mayor
4 has taken this on, and has really made it his own,
5 and we're very grateful for that because I remember
6 times before that where it wasn't as much of a
7 priority.

8
9 Going back to 21st for me it was being an
10 activist. Had a man going across the street to get a
11 pack of cigarettes and dying. Hit by a car and his
12 body landed right in front of one of our local
13 daycare centers right when the kids were being let
14 out. And I remember knocking on doors following that
15 tragic accident, and people telling me, Costa, I
16 don't feel safe crossing the avenue going to get a
17 carton of milk. So getting milk should not be a
18 dangerous endeavor, and I think this administration
19 with the DOT with Dalila Hall, our Queens
20 Commissioner; with Polly Trottenberg, our citywide
21 DOT Commissioner get that.

22 We have to find ways as our city grows if
23 we implement. As we see the growth of our city, our
24 traffic infrastructure grows with it. And we have to
25 be cognizant of that, and make sure that things go

1 well. I know for me in Astoria, I represent Astoria
2 at least East Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, a little bit
3 of Woodside, a little bit of LOC. And I see my
4 activists here from 21st Street, and there have been
5 seven deaths and 102 accidents in the last ten years
6 there. And they've been great advocates to make sure
7 we never forget that. And those numbers are sobering
8 as an elected official. That was one of the first --
9 that was the first press conference, the first thing
10 that we took on in our office was to address a 21st
11 Street that really functions more like a highway than
12 a street. [bell] So we're going to continue to work
13 with colleagues to get 21st Street done with the DOT,
14 with -- on some of these bigger thoroughfares in
15 Astoria. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

18 [applause] Council Member Koo.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Good evening
20 everyone. Of course, I want to thank the La Guardia
21 Community College and DOT, the police, Community
22 Boards, and City Council for doing this together.
23 Tonight, we are doing a collective thing tonight I
24 think government to the people, and collectively we
25 will plan, and we will listen to you for your

suggestions and ideas on how to implement the Mayor's initiative on Zero Vision. I represent Flushing, which is one of the most busy places in New York City, but people don't realize it.

We are the third business place in the whole of New York City, after Queens Angel and Times Square. Flushing Main Street is the busiest street - is one of the busiest streets in the. Of course, we share our buildings, our fatalities in our area. We had a young girl -- who was a young killed last year, and we have a high school student that was killed. It was on Northern Boulevard. So tonight we are meeting together to listen to ideas so that we can cut down on these traffic fatalities, and be sure pedestrians are safe to cross the street when they go out, or when they go to school or when they go and do whatever they want to do.

We want to make sure the drivers pay attention to the pedestrians. There are a lot of drivers are driving too fast, or they are driving while they're talking on the phone, or they're reading something. So together with education, and enforcement hopefully we can implement the Mayor's initiative and make zero fatalities so that we have

100% success. And so I want to thank each one of you coming to this committee, this Town Hall Meeting. Thank you. [bell]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. [applause] And now we will hear from the DOT Commissioner. From day one she has shown how important is the work implicit, Commissioner Polly Trottenberg.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is wonderful to be here, and I'm pleased not only with a terrific partnership under Mayor de Blasio's leadership but we've had with DOT, NYPD, TLC, but also with the City Council, and with the Chair of the Transportation Committee. We really have a citywide partnership on Vision Zero, and it's great to see so many people in the audience including so many La Guardia students. I'm glad you're here and I think we're really looking forward to hearing your comments and thoughts.

At DOT as I've gone around the city, I've talked a lot about some of the work we've already heard, and we've heard talking to our borough Commissioner Dalila Hall. And we have done a lot of pedestrian-oriented projects and street designs all

1 over the city that have already been helping to save
2 lives. And a lot of them we've actually done some
3 right here no Thomson and different parts of this
4 neighborhood. We've made changes to intersections,
5 shortened crossing distances, improved visibility,
6 and predictability to make the streets safer for
7 pedestrians, for cyclists and for motorists.

8
9 We've been doing a bunch of work in
10 Queens, including some improvements on Northern
11 Boulevard, Astoria Boulevard, Woodhaven Boulevard,
12 and now through Vision Zero we're pledging to do a
13 lot more. And we've started some of -- rolling out
14 some things in Vision Zero. Some of you may have
15 heard with the Chairman and others, we've been
16 rolling out some arterial slow zones where we're
17 slowing traffic down on some of the busiest, and
18 unfortunately most dangerous streets throughout the
19 city. We've been to Atlantic Avenue and McGuinness
20 Boulevard in Brooklyn, the Grand Concourse up in the
21 Bronx, and we will be coming to Queens soon with an
22 announcement. And I just want to say again thank you
23 for this terrific partnership. I think working
24 together we're going to try and make New York City
25 the safest big city in the world. [applause]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Now, let's hear from TLC Limousine Commissioner, Meera Joshi.

COMMISSIONER JOSHI: Good evening and thank you everybody for joining us. Thank you Chair Rodriguez for this opportunity. And also thank you, La Guardia, for hosting and being our partner in our future education process where we're going to expand education for all for-hire transportation providers. Also, I'd like to thank all the other Council Members that are here, and our partners within the City, DOT, and NYPD. Under Mayor de Blasio's leadership, TLC is excited to be part of Vision Zero. We're a small agency, but we're one of the three lead agencies, and we have a critical role.

The TLC licenses over 100,000 drivers, and we generally set the pace for how the rest of the city drives. In Queens alone we license over 20,000 livery drivers, and one of the Council Members mentioned commuter vans. We license over 300 commuter vans in Queens alone, which represents the largest concentration of commuter vans in the city. They're probably outnumbered by illegal commuter vans within in your borough. And that is something that

we've worked tirelessly on and need to do more on in enforcing against.

Year to date, we've seized hundreds of illegal commuter vans, and we look forward to working collaboratively with PD as well as the community on stepping up those efforts. And year to date, there's been over a million street livery pickups in Queens alone. So there is lots and lots for-hire transportation activity within Queens, and it's that activity that we need to monitor as part of our Vision Zero goals. And that really comes down to four things. That's educating our drivers on what it means to be a safe driver; exploring new technologies that break unsafe driving habits; enforcing against drivers who break speed limits and traffic rules; [bell] and incentivizing drivers.

And I just want to close with the fact that Queens is actually the nerve center of the agency. Only a few blocks away is our Licensing Division. Over 160,000 licensees travel through those offices for one reason or another. In Woodside, we have our inspection facility. There's over 90,000 inspections a year, and Long Island City is really the heart of the -- many of the businesses

that form the industry. That's meter shops, that's garages, and mechanics. So we really are at home here tonight, and I'm looking forward to your input and continued partnership.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.
[applause] And this year for the person in charge of Transportation of the NPYD, the Chief of Transportation, Thomas Chan. [applause]

CHIEF THOMAS CHAN: Thank you Chairman Rodriguez. I'd like to thank all the elected officials here tonight. Tonight also with us, joining us here is the Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Silks from Patrol Borough Queens North. [applause] Deputy Inspector Tomolar [sp?] from Queens North also. [applause] We have the Commanding Officer of the 108 Precinct, Captain Hennessy. [applause] And also from Queens we have Captain Hellman[applause] and Sergeant Everosky [sp?] from Community Affairs [applause].

The NYPD is happy to partner up with the Department of Transportation, the TLC and the other city agencies in the Vision Zero effort. The Police Department has been working on traffic issues for a long time. We are concentrating on engineering the

education and the enforcement part of that.

Engineering certainly going to the Department of Transportation, and the officers identify locations that need engineering changes. We do traffic intelligence reports that we forward to the Transportation Department. And they will then take a look at how we can improve that particular location.

Our officers in reference to Vision Zero will be concentrating on specific violations we feel that will impact the collisions and also the injuries, and pedestrian fatalities. Specifically, we are looking speeding summonses, speeding violations, failure to yield to pedestrians, signal light violations, disobeying signs, improper turns, and also cell phone, and also texting while operating motor vehicles. So our officers while we will continue to issue violations for other areas, they will look at specifically those six hazardous violations that I've just mentioned.

One of the things we also are looking at is training, training not only for the new and the old. For the new officers in the Academy how we can better prepare the police accident reports, [bell] but also for training for officers are currently in

1 the precincts. We are updating our equipment in
2 terms of computers, and also the equipment that are
3 available for radar. And also violations in terms of
4 speed. There is a form, which I'm not going to go
5 into full detail, but we call it Traffic Stop.
6 Basically, we have a borough, for example, Queens
7 North.

9 The Executive Officer will attend that
10 along with either the Executive Officer of each and
11 every one of the precincts. So basically we have
12 the Executive Officer, Highway Safety Officers, and
13 they meet at once a week each borough -- I have at
14 least one borough coming in on a Wednesday who come
15 before us. They tell us what their strategy is, tell
16 us what their analysis of the accidents and
17 collisions throughout their particular borough. We
18 take a look at their plans. We analyze it. We
19 discuss it, and we come up with new solutions, and
20 see if we are doing the best thing for the community
21 out there.

22 Ultimately, it's a collective and a
23 cooperative effort between our City agencies, and our
24 communities because we do not come up with all the
25 solutions. So we're proud to work with the

Department of Transportation, the Taxi and Limousine Commission, and all the other city agencies and elected officials in terms of achieving Vision Zero. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause] Now, let's hear from the Community Affairs Unit Representative Helen Ho, the Queens Borough. [applause]

HELEN HO: Hi everyone. [applause] It's nice to see so many familiar faces here. I am Helen Ho. I'm the new Director of Queens Community Affairs for the Mayor's Office. And I just want to say that we're all really grateful that you're here today. And thank you especially to our host this evening. There are so many of you here, and I have a limited amount of time. But I just want you to know that I really appreciate you, and that I know that Councilman Van Bramer and Constantinides have been working on this for a very long time. And so I'm glad that we're here today.

As a representative of the Community Affairs Unit, it's absolutely essential for us to hear from all of you in the audience. Your perspective informs our Vision Zero agenda and fuels

1 our efforts every single step of the way. To us,
2 implementing Vision Zero isn't theoretical. It's
3 practical and it's real. So it's key that we listen
4 to you to understand these issues at the neighborhood
5 level from the ground up. Our administration's
6 priorities with Vision Zero are clear and
7 unequivocal.

8
9 We want to end the epidemic of traffic
10 fatalities in New York City. We don't believe in
11 losing our neighborhoods or family members on city
12 streets is inevitable. We know that we can prevent
13 these tragedies. That's our mindset and the premise
14 that we have to start with if we're really going to
15 achieve our goal. This is a commitment that our
16 Mayor made before he came into office, and he renewed
17 it within days of stepping through the doors of City
18 Hall on January 15th. We're not going to let red
19 tape, and miscommunication among city agencies or a
20 sense of business as usual obstruct our path towards
21 progress. [applause]

22 I think that deserves applause, right?
23 So Commissioners from the NYPD, the Health
24 Department, the DOT and the TLC have been meeting
25 constantly since we took office. And we edge one

1
2 step closer towards our goal every single time. We'd
3 like to take this moment to emphasize how much we
4 appreciate their hard work and collaboration as we
5 move forward with this. Already we're gaining ground
6 [bell] on a slate of reform bills that will make a
7 real difference when it comes to street and
8 pedestrian safety.

9 We're working on reforms like laws that
10 will help us set our own speed limit and install
11 traffic cameras where they will save lives. And with
12 the warmer weather that's finally here, we've
13 officially kicked off our street project
14 implementation season. Already we've announced as
15 the Commissioner -- the DOT Commissioner said before
16 the first few arterial slow zone projects that will
17 lower speeds on bigger streets. We've broken ground
18 on the first set of the 50 2014 Street Redesign
19 Projects including traffic calming, pedestrian
20 friendly changes throughout New York City.

21 We're also changing our approach to
22 enforcement to target the most dangerous driver
23 behavior as Officer Chan said before. We can't make
24 this happen without you. These reforms are going to
25 have to come from the ground up. So we just -- we

1 don't just appreciate your input. We need to make
2 Vision Zero work. So please always feel free to
3 reach out to us, and proactively pitch your ideas.
4 That's why we're all here today. Help us identify
5 the most dangerous roads. Come to our workshops that
6 are happening later this month and next month to make
7 the Borough Safety Action Plan. Together, we can
8 turn this vision into a reality, and make our streets
9 safer for pedestrians and motorists alike. So thank
10 you very much.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

13 [applause] Let's hear now from Juan Martinez,
14 Transportation Alternative.

15 JUAN MARTINEZ: Good evening everybody.

16 Thank you so much, everybody, for putting this
17 together, the Council, the Commissioners, thank you
18 so much for attending. I'm going to disagree with
19 Helen slightly. I have been to a number of these
20 event, and I don't recognize very many of you, and I
21 think that's tremendous. It tells me that we're on
22 the brink of something very, very big. And when it
23 comes down to it, eliminating deaths in ten years, is
24 a huge undertaking, and we're all going to accomplish
25

1 it. And it's, I think, in large part because of the
2 newer faces in the room.

3
4 And let's just talk for a quick second
5 about how big the problem is. One in three New
6 Yorkers are either seriously injured in a traffic
7 crash, or know somebody who was seriously injured or
8 killed in a traffic crash. As other folks have said,
9 it's the number one cause of injury-related death for
10 kids, number two for seniors. And the thing about it
11 is that this a problem we can solve if we take a look
12 at what other cities have been doing. If we are able
13 to unleash all of the talent that we have in the
14 city, we can solve these problems. And that's what
15 this is all about, and it's amazing.

16 The best part about it is that we've
17 already seen some of these tactics start to bear
18 fruit. As Commissioner -- I'm sorry, as Chief Chan
19 has mentioned, the NYPD is reoriented it's
20 enforcement priorities. And has been focusing on
21 speeding, and failure to yield, two of the most
22 dangerous offenses. To a degree that it's been
23 incredible. I bet if we took a pole in this room,
24 applaud if you want to see more speeding and failure
25 to yield tickets in your own precincts? [applause]

So not quite unanimous, but very close. So that's the thing.

Speeding is the number one cause of fatal crashes in New York City. It kills more than drivers on cell phones and DUI combined. Failure to yield, 44% of pedestrian who are hit and injured in traffic are hit in the crosswalk with the light. [bell] So if we can figure out a way to get drivers to make better decisions, we're going to save a lot of lives, we're going to prevent a lot of injuries. That's what this is about.

The work that DOT has done on the arterials, huge, huge, and it's only going to get better. I can't wait. I just want to make one last point. This is going to happen because we take this moment that we're in Vision Zero and we stretch it out. We make it permanent, and that's going to happen if we keep on showing up to these things, and the City Council keeps up its accountability on the agencies, and we keep up the accountability on the Council.

One last, last point about this: May 6th my organization Transportation Alternatives -- By the way, if you don't know us, you're here. You will

love us. Please check out our website transalt.org. We are doing a big bus trip to Albany because a lot of what we need has to come from Albany when it comes to the speed cameras, when it comes to the speed limit, we need our state representatives to show up and to do the right thing.

So please come with us May 6th, and we have the bus. We'll provide lunch. I don't know if that's true, but it will be a great time, and transalt.org. As a matter of fact, if you're with the Queens Activist Committee, please raise your hand. These folks are the best. Please reach out to the. Thank you. [applause]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Let's also hear from the Chairman of the Public Safety Committee who is also Co-Chair of the Vision Zero Initiative, Vanessa Gibson.

VANESSA GIBSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and good evening Queens. I'm excited to be here. I'm Council Member Vanessa Gibson. I chair the Committee on Public Safety, and I'm from the Bronx. So I thank all of you. [applause] I thank each and every one of you for being here at La Guardia, and I thank them

1 VISION ZERO - QUEENS TOWN HALL MEETING 36
2 for hosting us and all of our relevant agencies,
3 NYPD, Chief Chan; TLC; the DOT Commissioner
4 Trottenberg; as well as the Mayor's Office;
5 Transportation Alternatives; Streets Pack; Bike in
6 Line; and all the advocacy groups that do so much
7 incredible work. And all of my distinguished
8 colleagues on the City Council.

9 Truly, truly, truly Vision Zero is a
10 great step of progress. This is an effort. And I
11 thank Mayor de Blasio for his vision of Vision Zero
12 in recognizing that we have to do more to create
13 livable and safe streets for everyone; for our
14 cyclists, for our bikers, for our pedestrians,
15 drivers, and everyone. And this comprehensive plan
16 is really an approach that to me strikes a lot of
17 balance.

18 And I know many have already talked about
19 neighborhood slow zones, countdown crosswalks,
20 pedestrian plazas, defined bike lanes and bus lanes,
21 as well as neighborhood slow zones, which are truly
22 important. And I guess I just have two bits to add
23 to the conversation. On public safety and working
24 with NYPD really important that we look at resources
25 for the Police Department to do a lot of enforcement.

1 VISION ZERO - QUEENS TOWN HALL MEETING 37
2 All of the incredible work, all of the great ideas we
3 have means nothing if we don't have the enforcement
4 alongside, and that is very important.

5 Also, the disabled community, those that
6 have visual and hearing impairments, it's really
7 important to keep them at the forefront of
8 conversations because a lot of these initiatives
9 don't really cater to those that have disabilities.
10 Making sure that we provide streetscape and other
11 enhancements are extremely important. And I want to
12 thank [bell] DOT for all their work.

13 I am proud that in the Bronx, we just
14 announced an arterial slow zone on the Grand
15 Concourse, and we have a lot more that are coming.
16 So stayed tune, share your ideas. This is a
17 framework. We look forward to working with all of
18 you so that we can have an absolute Vision Zero when
19 it comes to pedestrian accidents across the City of
20 New York. So thank you Queens. Thank you, and I
21 look forward to working with all of you. God bless.
22 Thank you. [applause]

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Before we open
24 this section to the public, I would like to recognize
25 and thank the staff of the Community Outreach

1 Division from the Speaker's Office. Yvonne, worked
2 with Steve, and Neil, Carlos, Joe, Raphael, and
3 Israel. And so let's give them a big round of
4 applause because they do well, and I'm happy to have
5 them. [sic] [applause]. They help. Also, from my
6 staff Rosa, Carmen, and Joanie they also have been
7 working so hard, my office staff. Another group also
8 group also they are doing a great job. They're the
9 ones that they've been working when it comes to
10 inputting or translating our deal to legislation from
11 the Transportation Staff Committee, Lila, Fran, and
12 Jennifer are here. I want you to give a big round of
13 applause. [applause]

15 When Mayor de Blasio announced Vision
16 Zero, a number of Council Members we had started
17 looking at previous legislation and introducing new
18 legislation. And we had like six to eight
19 legislation at the beginning. After we started doing
20 these Town Hall Meetings starting in Manhattan,
21 Brooklyn, and other necessary boroughs, and also the
22 DOT Commissioner, and everyone at NYPD, TLC, other
23 transportation advocate groups. Today, as I said at
24 the beginning, 22 legislation and resolution will
25 have a hearing on the 30th.

And that's very important because it also shows how the Council Members we've been listening through all this concern and idea. But also it show a different type of literacy by the New York Council. Where the Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito she committed to allow Council Members to see their legislation go into here. So that's why next week we will probably have one of those hearings that we will have the largest numbers of BOD getting an opportunity to go to the floor, and we'll probably have an opportunity to get their feedback.

As we did it like 45 minutes on each side of the table, now we expect that when we call your names, that in one minute you can summarize and go straight to the point. If you have any new ideas about Vision Zero, any new legislation, now we're moving to one minute so that the 40 New Yorkers that say that you'd like to say something about it, will have the opportunity. And we will have opportunity to hear your concern. I want to let everyone know also that we are taking official notes of this hearing. So we definitely are committed to use new idea, and translate it into legislation or a new initiative. The first group to be called are - -

MALE SPEAKER: Slinger [sp?]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Also, they I
assume they will come, and we will let --

MALE SPEAKER: She is represented.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

MALE SPEAKER: Sean McDonough from the
Borough President's office is here representing
Queens Borough President Melinda Katz.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: The first panel
to be called are Sherry Erfren [sp?], Eugene Falick
[sp?], Steven Levine [sp?], and Sheila Lewandowski
[sp?]. One minute, please.

MALE SPEAKER: Thank you for conducting
this Town Hall Meeting. On behalf of the Board of
Community College, we are very thankful for your
efforts. We're experiencing high pedestrian traffic
volume on sidewalks along Thomson Avenue between Van
Dam Street and Skillman Avenue. At peak times
pedestrians waiting for crossing the street often
flow into the traffic lanes because of the volume.
Pedestrian safety is a major concern for the Board of
Community College. In the recent past, we had one
fatality, as our President mentioned. Also, we know
from our faculty staff and students that there are

1 far too many near misses on a daily basis. Because
2 of these concerns, La Guardia had Philip Habib
3 Traffic Engineering Firm to do an analysis of the
4 traffic safety, traffic in front of the campus on
5 Thomson Avenue. And the study took six months, and
6 they made two recommendations. One was to widen the
7 Thomson Avenue along La Guardia campus [bell] from
8 Van Dam. Another one was to create build-outs, and
9 the other one was to change at selected intersections
10 timing of the signals. We do appreciate the help of
11 DOT, and also our Council Van Bramer.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

14 Thanks a lot. [applause]

15 EUGENE FALICK: Eugene Falick.

16 Commissioner Trottenberg, I'm sorry to say I believe
17 the biggest problem with pedestrian safety is the
18 City's Department of Transportation. Over and over
19 again the Department has ignored or worse refused to
20 comply with the law, or when pushed, sought
21 exemptions from it. The first question that must be
22 answered is this: Do we want to prevent all traffic
23 movement, which will certainly prevent injuries or
24 deaths, or do we want to provide the maximum safe use
25 of our streets? We know what the previous two mayors

1 did. The speed limit in New York City 55 miles an
2 hour because your department has neglected to post
3 signs at the entrances to the city. Pavement in many
4 places it's dangerous to walk across a street because
5 of ruts due to incompetent paving. Traffic signals
6 are not visible to motorists in many places, and
7 they're not timed legally. You know the MUTCD.
8 [bell] Bicycle lanes are placed in Rockaway where now
9 they've become pedestrian walkways. I've got a list
10 here.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]

13 Thank you.

14 EUGENE FALICK: I communicated with
15 Dalila Hall's office for a year and a half. Couldn't
16 get her to place street lights on a dangerous snake
17 road through a swamp. I can go on and on, and if
18 you'd like, we can talk about this further.

19 COMMISSIONER HALL: Well, Mr. Chairman, I
20 will jump in for a sec on that. I mean we'd
21 obviously be happy to take a look at your list. We
22 would take that from anyone, and obviously I think
23 our borough --
24
25

EUGENE FALICK: You haven't.
[interposing] I wrote to your predecessor. She
ignored it.

COMMISSIONER HALL: I'm brand new so hand
it back over again--

EUGENE FALICK: I ask them to.

COMMISSIONER HALL: --and I'll be happy to
take a look.

EUGENE FALICK: Thank you. [applause]

STEVEN LEVINE: My name is Steven Levine.
I work here at La Guardia Community College for the
last ten years. I wanted to add to the -- I want to
speak specifically about Long Island City and La
Guardia Community College Corridor, and add some
suggestions to what I think the Habib report had.
One is speed cameras around Thomson Avenue and Van
Dam Street. We have many, many high schools here.
We could justify very easily. Two, reduce speed
limits and post speed limits in this area so people
don't treat it like a super highway as they come off
the Queens Borough Bridge. And three, put a large
sign coming off of the top of the Thomson Avenue
Bridge showing the speed that people are coming off
that bridge, which is very high and much higher than

1 the speed limit. Most importantly, though, I want to
2 see us look very closely at gridlock, Sam Schwartz's
3 plan of bare pricing of tolls. Which I think would
4 do immense wonders for this neighborhood because it
5 would end [bell] the traffic that people are doing
6 right now to avoid going through the Midtown Tunnel
7 and paying the toll. And take the free Queens
8 Borough Bridge [applause] which turns us into their
9 super highway so that they can avoid paying \$7.50 at
10 the Midtown Tunnel.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]

13 Thank you.

14 STEVEN LEVINE: Thank you. [applause]

15 SHEILA LEWANDOWSKI: Good evening. Thank
16 you Chairman, my Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer,
17 Commissioner and everyone else. First of all, I'd
18 like to say I support the slow zones that I worked
19 for many years with the Councilman's Office and the
20 Community Board, which I'm on the Transportation
21 Committee of. There are many specific things that
22 one, policy change I think would be good. Because
23 right now what we're doing is reacting, and we have
24 three new schools that went into our community. We
25 have tens of thousands of new people, and yet we're

1 waiting for the numbers of people to come in to
2 measure them to see if we need stop signs. I think
3 in areas around schools where they're built and
4 parks, we should be putting in calming in advance of
5 the people like stops signs, and yield signs, and
6 then measuring to see if they're warranted to stay
7 there as opposed to waiting for accidents to happen.
8 Specific areas in the neighborhood, Central Boulevard
9 really needs traffic calming. [applause] Eight
10 seconds and there's one other thing I -- We need to
11 right here on Skillman Avenue there are 12-hour
12 meters which encourage commuters [bell]. They should
13 go away and protected by Kling [sp?] should be there.

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

16 SHEILA LEWANDOWSKI: Thank you.

17 [applause]

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: As your name is
19 called, please come and stand at the podium because
20 we would like to use the time to the best. So Laura
21 Hanson, Al Wolper. **Did you come to[00:52:10]**

22 MALE SPEAKER: [off mic]

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I'm sorry. Al
24 Wolper [sp?], Wilson Sanchez, and Martin Brown.

AL WOLPER: I want to say, Save Broadway. Not the theater district, but Broadway in Woodside between 54th Street and 69th Street. They're about half -- it's two lanes wide in each direction. There's about half a million cars go over that street per year. Recently, one car, one pedestrian was killed at 3 o'clock in the morning. So what we're going to do we will get rid of one lane in each direction they put in all these turns, and so forth. And after they do all of that, will that save that one person from being hit at 3 o'clock in the morning? No, it won't. It's a big boondoggle, and the main thing is the pedestrians. Captain Hennessy at the last meeting I said, We gave 18 tickets to bikers, but no tickets to pedestrians for jaywalking. [applause] [bell] The survey that the Police Department did in accidents with cars and pedestrians, 73% were the fault of the pedestrians. So don't blame the cars, right? [applause] I guess that's all. All right, that's it.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Yes, miss.

LAURA HANSON: Hi, I'm Laura Hanson of Neighborhood Plaza Partnership. We're part of the

Horticulture Society, and I'm here to pledge our support for Vision Zero, and ask you to support Neighborhood Plazas as part of the solution. Thank you, Chair Rodriguez, and Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer for hosting us. There are 66 Plazas across the City. Ten of them are in Queens, and each one is helping to calm traffic like safety islands and additional crosswalks, plazas reduce conflicts between driver cycles and pedestrians.

And not only do they play an important role in safety, they literally create a new asset, a mini-park vibrant town square. And they are typically built at the request of neighborhood organizations, which see them as a way to calm traffic, and activate community life. So even struggling organizations are willing to invest their time and money to care for these plazas. I'd like to work with you to give all of those organizations the support that they need, and we'll be a lot closer to Vision Zero. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause]

MARTIN BROWN: Martin Brown. I live in Jackson Heights. I support all of these measures for

1 traffic calming and reduction. I'd just like to
2 emphasize two aspects that I hope we'll be focused on
3 in all the measures. Traffic reduction that in all
4 the measures taken that be borne in mind whether it's
5 changes in toll fares, the tolls for bridges and
6 tunnels or taking away lanes in the busiest
7 boulevards so that people are discouraged from
8 driving, and enforcements.

10 I was encouraged by Officer Chan's
11 remarks about that. But as we all know, enforcement
12 is being extremely lax. And whatever the new laws
13 are it's very important that they be enforced, speed
14 limits, failure to yield, failure to stop at signs.
15 And finally, I'd like to mention in my own
16 neighborhood, Jackson Heights at 34th Avenue that is
17 a residential street with a number of schools
18 including a new one under construction, and it's a
19 speedway and needs addressing. [bell] Thank you
20 very much. [applause]

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: The next group
22 are Ibrahim Bomens [sp?], Peter Lever [sp?], Don
23 O'Reilly, and Nancy Silverman.

24 IBRAHIM: Hello, everyone. My name is
25 Ibrahim. I'm petty cab driver. I'm here today to

1
2 safer than taxi cabs and horse and carriages? And
3 lastly, and most importantly, I request an electric
4 assist with a speed limit of 10 miles per hour to be
5 legalized for pedicabs. California is a more
6 progressive state, allows pedicabs with electric
7 assist to operate.

8 Federal law allows bicycles to have
9 electric assist up to 20 miles per hour. I'm
10 proposing a speed limit of 10 miles per hour
11 considering the traffic environment of New York City.
12 Nobody can say a speed limit of 10 miles can create a
13 safety concern. What about the disabled people?
14 Should they not be able to drive a pedicab with an
15 electric assist with a speed limit of 10 miles per
16 hour? Thank you. [applause]

17 DON O'REILLY: Hi, I'm Don O'Reilly from
18 Sunnyside. First I want to thank you for being here,
19 and I want to express my appreciation to Council
20 Member Van Bramer for his foresight on this issue.
21 Are you having nights with the Vision Zero Action
22 Plan Website? If anybody here hasn't looked at it,
23 they should. I'm looking forward to seeing it
24 populated with the data that's promised on there. In
25 looking at the plan, I think it's a big oversight in

1 that it does not address motorized or electric
2 bikes that are used primarily by delivery people. In
3 Sunnyside and I know in other parts of the city,
4 these bikes are the terror. They drive the wrong
5 way. I don't even know if they're legal.

6 That seems to be ambiguous. They don't
7 follow any traffic laws. I, myself, was a victim of
8 being hit by one of these people going the wrong way
9 in the street. In Sunnyside there's a shop, a repair
10 shop that operates on the sidewalk that's open to the
11 tourists and a longstanding problem, and nothing gets
12 done about that. I think the Plan needs to deal with
13 that. The existence of these bikes do whatever they
14 want, driving on the sidewalks creates a culture of
15 disregard for the law. And I think zero means zero
16 [bell]. And I think this panel or Council needs to
17 address that, and needs to address enforcement. If
18 the vehicle a vehicle, they should be treated the
19 same, and zero means zero. [applause]

20 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

21 SHEILA LEWANDOWSKI: They are -- so they
22 are actually illegal, and I have actually been
23 hearing complaints about them all over the city. And
24
25

you need to work with NYPD because there needs to be an enforcement done there, and they're not allowed -

DON O'REILLY: [interposing] But it's not said at all. It addressed -- the plan addresses pedal bicycles, but it does not at all address these electric bikes within a tariff.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

PETER BEATLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you to everyone who's here tonight. My name is Peter Beatle [sp?]. I'm from Rego Park, Queens. I'm a member of Community Board 6. More importantly, though, I'm the father of a 12-year-old who's one of thousands of children who have to cross Queens Boulevard everyday twice to get and from school. Over the decades, that street has been designed into a speedway. Of the few cameras that we have checking for speed, and we need home rule, and we need to change that immediately, the highest number one is on Queens Boulevard.

And it -- and there's a huge difference it and all the other speeding cameras that capturing people. Number six is on the other side of that same location. We lost two people. Out of the six, we lost we lost on Queens Boulevard last year, two

1 people on the sidewalk killed as they walked one
2 November morning to a speeding motorist. New York
3 City has written the book on complete streets, on how
4 to redesign and re-engineer these streets. That
5 needs to be done immediately to the entire length
6 [bell] of Queens Boulevard working with volunteers
7 for making a better and safe Queens Boulevard.
8

9 In Transportation Alternatives Queens
10 Activist Committee, we've collected over 3,300
11 petition signatures calling for a re-design of Queens
12 Boulevard. We have over 200 youth, senior centers,
13 business, religious centers, senior centers who have
14 all signed on asking the DOT to study a redesign of
15 the entire boulevard. I want to especially thank
16 Council Member Van Bramer, Council Member Danny
17 Dromm, Council Members Koslowitz, Rory Lancman, and
18 Elizabeth Crowley, all five of whose districts touch
19 Queens Boulevard, all five of whom came together to
20 sign the letter asking the DOT to redesign Queens
21 Boulevard.

22 And I hope that when we hear about the
23 arterial slow zones that will be announced in Queens,
24 that we will hear Queens Boulevard at the top of that
25 list. We are losing way too many people on this

1 street. There needs to be something done
2 immediately. I understand it's a huge project, but
3 as I said when I presented to Community Board 6
4 recently, and I hope those supporters soon, we want
5 to make it safe for DOT to come out and redesign this
6 street. Because we desperately need it.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]

9 Thank you. [applause]

10 NANCY SILVERMAN: Hi, I'm Nancy Silverman
11 a resident of Long Island City, and brand new member
12 of CV1. I'm really excited about all of these
13 measures and the implementation of Vision Zero. I
14 look forward to it. I want to speak to you as a
15 cyclist. I know that the measures that are going to
16 be put into effect for Vision Zero are going to make
17 me safe. Enforcement of speed limits for cars and
18 failure to yield, all of which are affect me as a
19 cyclist. The slow zones; the reducing of speed
20 limits on certain corridors; the expectation of
21 enforcement and education. And I also want to remind
22 you that protected bike lanes make us all safer and
23 help calm the streets. I look forward to protected
24 bike lanes implemented in all of this in Vision Zero.
25 Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause] And after we finish with public comment, then we will have another of one minute from everyone here from elective, and that's going to the DOT, TLC, NYPD beginning to add, and to respond answer any questions. So after the public section is over, then the elective and the commissioners they also will have another minute to clarify or add or respond to any questions.

FEMALE SPEAKER: [off mic]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes, you will.

The next panel or the next group are green card [sic], Ripley Torres [sp?], Steve Schofield [sp?], Daniel Lynch, Ashley Chappell [sp?].

RIPLEY TORRES: Hi, I'm Ripley [sp?], and I just would like to say that I'm that I would recommend the college school campus and I'm a library student. So, it's heavily paced, actually, it's a heavily paced exchange. And from the former tragedy I believe that some recognition should be taken. It was on the other side of us along Thomson Avenue. And the cycle is creating inside of the two intersections. And the traffic is making exits to signal timing, and pacing at select intersections.

1 VISION ZERO - QUEENS TOWN HALL MEETING 56
2 Basically, they stop in time for it to change. So,
3 hopefully, these steps will reduce this kind of
4 tragedy. And I lastly want to point that boy when he
5 it was done initial. So I know how does it feel
6 like. Whatever. [sic]

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

8 [applause]

9 STEVE SCHOFIELD: Hi, I'm Steve
10 Schofield, Astoria resident. Also a volunteer of
11 Transportation Alternatives Queens Committee. I
12 attended a Transportation Committee meeting with
13 Queens Community Board 2. And there's zero on the
14 clock. See I get to talk forever now. [laughter]
15 Thank you, okay. And I was struck by the number of
16 initiatives that seem to have been pushing for quite
17 a while including one that our group has been working
18 on for almost two years. And none of them have been
19 acted on by DOT. Now, we're all on the same page
20 here. We all support Vision Zero, but I'm concerned
21 that in pursuing this grand vision, we may be -- some
22 of the smaller stuff, some of the stuff that's been
23 outstanding for a long time is kind of falling
24 through the cracks. I work for a large bureaucracy,
25 a city government agency as well. I know this is

1 tough. I know this stuff doesn't come easy. I know
2 we just had a transition. Nonetheless, this is just
3 a plea to maybe pay a little bit more attention to
4 more of the longstanding issues. Not just CV2, but
5 other boards, and other communities throughout the
6 city that have had quite a while. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

9 [applause]

10 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Could I
11 actually just take this? Sir, just to answer a
12 second there --

13 STEVE SCHOFIELD: [interposing] Sure.

14 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: --because I
15 certainly think we're not trying to lose sight of the
16 smaller things, because a lot of the smaller things
17 are very important, too. And look, I hear some
18 frustration. You know, I think we have a lot of
19 requests coming in, and for a variety of reasons
20 sometimes we don't give people the answers they like.
21 One thing I pledge, someone was saying, You all ought
22 to be more proactive and take a look at how you look
23 into all these requests. We're going to try and to
24 that, and obviously we are kind of still getting our
25 feet on the ground on some of that. But we hear the

frustration, and I know you are a supporter of what we're doing. So we're going to try and see if we can figure out how we can be helpful on some of this.

STEVE SCHOFIELD: I appreciate that.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause]

STEVE SCHOFIELD: And if we could do that, that's a lot. [sic] Thanks.

DANNY LYNCH: Hi. My name is Danny Lynch and I live in the district, 35th Street and Van Dam. I've been a Professor of English here at La Guardia Community College for 40 years. I'm the Chapter Chair of the POC, which represents faculty and staff here. The safety of the La Guardia community is of paramount concern for all of us. In recent winters, snowfall turning to ice has caused treacherous walking conditions on the two bridges across the nearby rail yards on Thomsom Avenue and on Queens Boulevard.

These bridges are used by thousands of students, faculty and staff as well as children being brought to daycare at the college; students at our schools, and their teachers and staff, along with thousands of neighbors going to and from work. The

1 VISION ZERO - QUEENS TOWN HALL MEETING 59
2 New York City Department of Transportation is
3 responsible for these bridges. We call upon DOT to
4 fulfill its responsibility maintaining the sidewalks
5 and these bridges in a safe condition by effectively
6 sanding, salting, [bell] or clearing them of snow as
7 part of their routine care in anticipation of, and
8 response to snowfalls. We further call upon our
9 elected officials to support our request. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

11 [applause]

12 Good day. Thank you very much for having
13 me at this meeting. My name is Steve Stollman. I
14 have a group called Sharing Umbrellas. I'm trying to
15 celebrate the World's Fairs of 1939 and 1964 by
16 introducing creative programs to get human scale
17 vehicles and electric assisted vehicles become the
18 predominant form of transportation in New York City,
19 condense urban spaces. This is what we should be
20 doing, not 4,000 pound automobiles. The real problem
21 with danger in this respect is industrial scale
22 transportation, which is inherently very dangerous
23 and inappropriate for our kinds of cities.

24 I'd also like to say that electric
25 assisted transportation, electric assisted bicycles

are the wave of the future. This is the way we need to go. We need to go to the human scale, human power and human scale. They go together, and that's who we are, we're humans. A lightweight vehicle, ultra lightweight vehicle moving at slow speed is not very dangerous. A very extremely heavy vehicle moving at any speed is extremely dangerous. So we have to convert our [bell] transportation system to one, which is more appropriate to the surroundings that we have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause]

GAMISHI CHILDRETH: Hi, good day. I'm Gamishi Childreth [sp?]. I'm an activist from Woodside, and I'm -- my Council Member is Jim Van Bramer. I want to thank him for the -- for this center the wonderful thing he's hosting today, and he's a champion. I met him first on Christmas Day. The Mishat Nyan [sp?] died. The boy who lost his life with a truck. He was holding the flowers for his teacher, and give for the Christmas holiday. And he was the first one and Jimmy Van Bramer was the first one Council Member to attend that day.

And since then, we've become friends, and he and me work and set up the resolutions or also, a mirror -- There's a budget that PS 152, our Deputy Commissioner Benitran Bachiwat [sp?] there that was alongside the other city officials. I want to thank everybody that this initiative that they've taken, and it's going to work. And basically, it's a common sense. I mean it's not a rocket science, how to make our safe city. [bell] Well, only to work. Thank you so much for having me.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Sure.

GAMISHI CHILDRETH: And one more request I have here. My area is about 4,000 or 5,000 cab drivers lives and Yellow Cab drivers, and they told me that TLC is unfairly targeting because of Vision Zero. And they've been imposing a few laws that, you know, they're not -- it's not fair to them. So please take a look at what the situations are. You know, please take the input before you make any decisions. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause] Hugo Fernandez, Eddie Garr [sp?], Ira Goldstein, Andrew Vollo [sp?].

HUGO FERNANDEZ: Hello, Hugo Fernandez. I'm a faculty member here at La Guardia Community College. I'm also involved with governance here at the college, and I'll you that the fall before the student died out here, kids started a Facebook page. They were concerned about traffic in La Guardia and, of course, then six months later a high school student had to die, before everybody started paying attention. I hope it doesn't happen again.

We did a lot of work in Governance, and working with Operations to try to bring these folks in here to come up with reasonable solutions to the traffic speeding here. I mean, if you ask me I would say, Toll the hell out of the bridge, and turn the whole university around so we wouldn't have to turn Thomson Avenue into a main hallway, which is what it is. But, I'll just speak as a New Yorker as well. You folks who govern us, you have to outsmart us. We're all in too big of a hurry. You need to slow us down, and do it in ways that the State will allow it. [bell] Thank you. [applause]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

EDDIE GARR: Hi, I'm talking about two points, one hyper local, one national. First, we

1 need more visible integration of the bike path
2 system. Sometimes it drops off and it picks up after
3 a large artery. I was hit on January 11 cross over
4 from the Sunnyside rail yards into Queens Plaza for
5 that reason. So we need a bike system that's also
6 visible to the drivers. I understand that there's a
7 path that's going to be carrying traffic. The driver
8 who hit me ran the light. I think he thought he
9 could beat it because he didn't see any pedestrians
10 crossing.
11

12 The other is the U.S. Conference of
13 Mayors is a great tool for us to work with California
14 as a state, which sets the National Automobile
15 Standards to have smart traffic integration with our
16 future vehicles. So that cars will be able to inform
17 drivers when they're in a different speed zone and
18 when they're breaking speed limits and things like
19 that. And other safety features that could be
20 integrated. Because we don't have the market
21 influence California does. [bell]

22 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

23 [applause]

24 IRA GOLDSTEIN: Thank you for giving me
25 the opportunity to speak today. My name is Ira

1 VISION ZERO - QUEENS TOWN HALL MEETING 64
2 Goldstein. I'm the Executive Director of the Black
3 Car Fund. The Black Car Fund provides full Workers
4 Compensation benefits to over 12,000 drivers at no
5 cost to the drivers or the bases. But through a
6 nominal surcharge to the passengers on every trip.
7 As we all work together to achieve the Mayor's goal
8 of zero traffic fatalities, I'd like to point out the
9 results of an interesting study. This independent
10 study found that the reported accident rate for all
11 vehicles in New York City was 6.7 vehicles per
12 million miles traveled.

13 Now, if I told you that there was an
14 industry where the reported accident rate was 4.6
15 vehicles per million miles traveled, and another
16 industry that was 3.7 vehicles per million miles
17 traveled, I would think that we might want to examine
18 these industries and see what they're doing better.
19 People may be surprised to learn that the safer
20 industries are the taxi and for-hire vehicle
21 industries of New York City. Yet, the most punitive
22 measures under the Mayor's Zero Vision plan [bell]
23 and new intros being considered by the City Council
24 are being reserved for the Black Car livery industry.
25

The Black Car Fund has always been a strong supporter of driver safety.

Since 2007, we've funded the Driver's Safety Institute. The core curriculum of the Driver's Safety Institute not only satisfies the defensive course curriculum, but also includes additional safe driving material. Additionally, we pay the driver \$300 to take the course. However, we know there is always room for improvement. The Black Car Fund wants to assist in reaching the Mayor's goal of zero fatalities. We are prepared to further enhance our Driver's Safety courses with any material that the de Blasio Administration or the City Council may produce, or would like to see us produce and include in our classes. And we do reach out. We have 12,000 drivers that are eligible to take the -- to take our classes. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause]

ANDREW VOLLO: Thank you, and it's a honor being here, Council Members and Chairman, Councilmen, and it's almost a dream come true. The Commissioner of the TLC and the DOT. My name is Andrew Vollo, and I'm the Director of the Taxi and

1 VISION ZERO - QUEENS TOWN HALL MEETING 66
2 FHV Driver Institute here at La Guardia Community
3 College. I've been training taxi drivers for over 30
4 years. I have a few issues that I'd like to bring up
5 that may help confront this epidemic of traffic
6 fatalities and injuries. The first that I'd like to
7 address is the taxi driver. I agree with the Vision
8 Zero that taxi drivers set the tone of how other
9 drivers behave. If we truly believe that, let's make
10 sure that the taxi drivers get the best training we
11 can offer.

12 And I have some thoughts and how we could
13 do that, and I'd be very interested to continue that
14 dialogue. [bell] The main thoroughfare on Thomson
15 Avenue, which is also an approach to a major water
16 crossing that transverses over 200,000 vehicles,
17 20,000 students, it deserves comprehensive pedestrian
18 safety and improvements. The real opportunity here
19 that I see is that it's location, location, location.
20 It is from such a strategic point over here that the
21 very visible and user-friendly solution prevails
22 that's going to echo throughout the city and beyond.
23 And it will inform people about Vision Zero that it's
24 a good thing, sorely needed, and a very real thing
25 that should happen. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause] And with that, we bring that page I'm going to start with Lorraine Cohen, and Asman Chovi [sp?]

BRENDA: Hello, my name is Brenda, and I'm a resident of Long Island City. In two months we had two accidents that could have had fatal consequences on 51st Avenue and 5th Street in your section. And two more accidents on 47th Street and 5th Street intersection. The accidents caused the vehicles to drive onto the busy sidewalk in front of my building, which is the Foundry Building. Cars collided onto parked cars and knocked over the one-way street sign. This is the same sidewalk that students from Hunter Points High School walk on; kids going to PS-78; Brighter Babies Day Care; Little Ones Pre-School; and LIC Kids' Program.

We have lots of kids in my community, including two -- I have two. Today, we had a crosswalk painted on the intersection of 51st Avenue and Fifth Street. This is great, but Fifth Street was left unchanged. Fifth Street only has one stop sign, which is located on 48th Avenue, and it's a two-way [bell] street even though it's narrow and

1
2 extremely busy. Cars speed because we have no speed
3 limit signs, not even one with so many kids around.
4 Central Boulevard has no speed limits as well, and no
5 stop signs. This is the main boulevard in front of
6 Hunters Point High School and PS-78. How can we not
7 have speed limits and stop signs on the school main
8 boulevard. So I please urge you --

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]

10 Thank you.

11 BRENDA: --to just implement and improve
12 our safety in that area--

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]

14 That area.

15 BRENDA: -- please. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thanks.

17 [applause]

18 LORRAINE COHEN: Hello, my name is
19 Lorraine Cohen. I'm a Professor of Sociology here at
20 the college. I'm also Chair of the Social Science
21 Department, and former Chair of the Union here. I
22 want to support my colleague, Danny Lynch, who talked
23 about the bridges and the icing of the bridges. I'm
24 here really to speak and voice the name of Robert
25 Fitch, who died last year. Two years ago -- excuse

me -- because the ice was not cleared. He was walking to the train by City Core and he slipped and fell, broke his leg very badly.

And then was trying to recover and then fell again near where he lived, which ultimately proved to be fatal. But that was really the accumulation of the injuries that began with walking over that iced bridge. It's been hard to figure out how to get attention to the bridges. [bell] And also, how to just clear basic bus stops. I broke my ankle this year, and was taking the bus, and in the snow there was no place to get off. There was so much snow and so much ice. So I'm happy that you're here, all of you, and I hope that we'll have a quicker response to these issues. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause]

[Pause]

ASHMAN CHOVI: Hello. Good evening, everybody. My name is Ashman Chovi [sp?], and on behalf of the New York City Taxi Drivers Association, the taxi driver's advocacy group, I've been driving the last 17 years. I know all what happens in the accidents. I see all the time, a lot of them very

1 close, and most of the don't have any give area. If
2 you drive to close, you get a chance, an opportunity.
3 We've been waiting on one light, the next light
4 driving them crazy. That's why they're making turns,
5 that's what happens in the accidents. This is the
6 one point.

8 Number two, the Highway Commission joined
9 the distant road crossing. They need to put two
10 bumps. The one beginning and then I put this -- I
11 put another one to make the speeding of the crossing,
12 the high commission. Like on Thomson Street, those
13 people alert this guy, the high commission area is
14 getting more dangerous. Where they're forcing the
15 people to put that bump right where they're going to
16 speed up to go forward. But two bumps are not going
17 to help us with a pedestrian accident. I don't hear
18 any pedestrian, or by the taxi driver in the heap,
19 even about I don't hear any taxi driver killed by
20 another car that [bell] had behind the stack.

21 Both sides needs to. And also, the
22 pedestrian has not followed any traffic law. They
23 all go walking and taxi -- and they're walking. They
24 don't care about what happening. They need to notify
25 these. Also, if you had provision of the summons,

then maybe you're going to broadcasting please don't do that or you're going get the summons. I believe that is what is needed. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause] Now, Rebecca Olinger [sp?], Robert Siegel [sp?], and Laverna Cunningham.

[Pause]

REBECCA OLINGER: Good evening. I'm Rebecca Olinger. I'm a resident of Long Island City, and I walk to work everyday. I live on 21st Street. I work for the Department of Health. Of three intersections in the three years that I've been there, and previous commissioners asked. The first is Hunter Street and Crescent and 44th Drive where we have CitiBank and CUNY, the new Link LIC, there are no -- nothing to stop traffic from coming up Crescent. They come speeding up coming from Hunter. They don't yield. If you're walking, there's no crosswalks.

Sort of there's a triangle, and so they don't pay any attention. The only stop sign is where Hunter comes into 44th. The second intersection is 43rd Avenue, 23rd -- 27th Street and Hunter Street. This -- there's a V. Where 27th comes in, Hunter

1 goes this way, 43rd is two-way. There are no
2 crosswalks. There's one stop sign, which is set
3 back. They don't stop at it. They stop at the
4 street. [bell] So if you're walking, forget it. And
5 I've been almost hit several times. And the last is
6 right by the Department of Health, which is Hunter
7 Street, 42nd Road and 28th Street, and the only stop
8 sign is coming from Jackson.
9

10 And even when they don't stop, there are
11 a lot of buses because it's a Central Park point for
12 a lot of the Queens buses. Bus drivers pay no
13 attention to pedestrians if you're already crossing.
14 Cars don't. There's no -- Hunter Street comes in.
15 There's no stop sign. It's I am really, really
16 surprised that no one has been hit. I've been almost
17 hit several times. I even had this winter someone
18 who stopped to let me cross, and the person behind
19 him was in such a rush, pulled around, and almost hit
20 me because they were impatient. So these are really
21 critical especially with all the developing that is
22 now going over in the Queens Court House Square area,
23 and it's an accident waiting to happen. And knock on
24 wood it hasn't yet. Thank you.
25

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thanks.

[applause]

ROBERT SIEGEL: Good evening, Robert Siegel. In the year that I've been a student at La Guardia, I have observed perhaps a dozen violations of the traffic laws that the officer mentioned earlier, maybe two or three of them egregious. Another dozen, or so, cases of illegal parking by four-wheel vehicles. And maybe another dozen violations by two-wheel bicycles on the sidewalk or whatnot. But what shocks me is that I have seen personally no accidents involving pedestrians. And I'm shocked because I have seen new universal refusal to obey the "Don't Walk" signs by the students at La Guardia and associated high schools, the staff, the administration, and the faculty here. Nobody [bell] with one exception, and that would be myself, seems to give a damn about that orange hand.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. [applause]

ROBERT SIEGEL: I hope that you support Commissioner Trottenberg as she does mighty things because you need to redesign this whole area because you won't redesign the students here.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause]

SHIA PALIAL: Hi, my name is Shia Palial [sp?]. I'm one of the founding members of Family for Safe Streets. So I'm her today to kind of -- Well, first of all, I'll just make an announcement to let everyone know that we're joining Juan Martinez of Transportation Alternatives to go to Albany on May 6th. So if anybody wanted to join with us, please let me. So for our family or our group, we definitely want to focus on culture change as in we do not -- We'd rather see people be more conscious of what they're going.

We don't want people to go around thinking actually to be treated as a badge of honor to say, Oh, I got to the location in half the time I did yesterday. That's not what we're looking for. So hopefully to make that change, we want people to slow down, and look at what -- You know, make sure that they know what they're driving into. One of the things is to actually slow down the speed limit 10 miles per hour in the City of New York. We definitely know that just that ten miles of hour

would increase the chance of the survival rate by more than 90%. [bell]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

SHEE PALIAL: And so, hopefully in this time where people are slowing down, it will help the situation even for my child. Where the driver would at least see her walking with grandma, and not run her over with both tires. Okay. I hope you can actually make that change. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause]

LAZAN: Hi, my name is Lazan. I'm from Southeast Queens. I'm very nervous. But anyway, I just wanted to say we have speeding on the South Conduit, and the vans are always in my house. You know, cars just drive off the South Conduit into my yard, and it's from 220 Fifth Street to Brooklyn Boulevard. That's on the Brookville Park, and it's a lot of speeding, and I think we also need transparency. We need to have this on television because everybody can't make it here. [applause] And Do It needs to be reformed. I called them about Channel 74 because I don't just vote. I'd be

involved also, and they need to work on that channel.
Channel 74 needs to be reborn. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause]

[background discussion]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Doug McPherson,
Charles Castro, Jack Ryder, and McCarthy -- Edward
McCarthy.

DOUG MCPHERSON: Hi everybody. My name
is Doug McPherson, and I'm representing an
organization called Friends of the Queensway.
Friends of the Queensway is a community-led effort to
convert the old abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch Line
into a linear park that would offer a new
transportation option for people who want to bike or
walk as part of the working needs. As anyone who has
taken a bike onto Woodhaven Boulevard and lived to
tell the tale can say we sorely, sorely need a new
safer transportation option between Central and
Southern Queens in the neighborhoods of Rego Park,
Forest Hills.

That's the park where I'm from. And
we're just asking this panel, the people who are
putting the Vision Zero plan together to just

1
2 consider more creative transportation alternatives
3 that will hopefully reduce the risk of transportation
4 accidents, and get us closer to the goal that brought
5 us here. And one thing that I'll say since I have a
6 few seconds, for those who are interested in finding
7 out more about the Queensway, or about our community
8 and outreach, or the ongoing feasibility studies that
9 we're currently engaged you can checked the site at
10 queensway.org. Thanks. [bell]

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thanks.

12 JACK RYDER: Good evening. Jack Ryder
13 from Jackson Heights. A couple of people have talked
14 about the culture of lawlessness, and the dangers
15 that are on the roadways, bicycles and taxi cabs. I
16 wonder if anybody on today would respond to what I
17 consider to be really the most dangerous menace that
18 operates with impunity for decades that I've lived
19 here and watched. Those are green garbage trucks,
20 and I represent pedestrians. That's what I'm here
21 for tonight. Anybody who walks on these streets of
22 this city at night, in any borough of the city knows
23 the danger and the risk that they create.

24 And I have video in my cell phone of
25 green garbage trucks, 150,000-pound green garbage

1 trucks that have -- I have recorded knocking over
2 parking meters, smashing the curbside benches,
3 smashing parked cars. I've seen people literally
4 flee up onto the sidewalks and crossing streets as
5 these guys have, as the Chief of Police has talked
6 about, you could watch them ride through [bell] ten
7 red lights in a row. You could watch them go the
8 wrong way down one-way streets for blocks. You could
9 watch them back up onto curbs, and crush the curbs.
10 Absolute impunity, and we talk about setting a
11 culture. I wish somebody would tell me why it is
12 that they get away with that, never get a ticket, and
13 yet the rest of us are certainly suffering from that.
14 Thank you. Please hold somebody responsible. Thank
15 you.

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thanks.

18 [applause]

19 CHARLES CASTRO: My name is Charles
20 Castro. I'm from Astoria, and thank you for this
21 meeting. It's unfortunate that only a couple of
22 people here, that gentleman over there and this
23 gentleman over mentioned the pedestrian
24 responsibility. Not one of you have thought about
25 it. All you think about is slow down, and issuing

1
2 summonses to the drivers. But you know how you stop
3 accidents? Pedestrians have to learn to wait for the
4 light to cross. Okay. [applause] If you walk on
5 Roosevelt Avenue on 74th Street at any given moment,
6 they don't wait for the light to change. They wait
7 for a little break in traffic, and 50 people from
8 both sides just converge.

9 Okay, you need to increase summonses for
10 jaywalking. As simple as that is, that might make a
11 difference, but no one addresses that. So just the
12 driver, just the driver. Little kids, when I was a
13 kid they had commercials, Cross at the green, not in
14 between. Why? Because it was dangerous and people
15 learn to cross at the corner. They wait for the
16 sign. You have to have a campaign where the people
17 can see it on television, learn in schools. So
18 little kids [bell] eight years old don't walk under
19 the tires of an 18-wheeler. He wasn't speeding, the
20 kid was not aware. You have to be -- you have to
21 make pedestrian awareness.

22 MALE SPEAKER: [interposing] [Shouts]
23 That's why they need right of way.

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Thank
25 you.

CHARLES CASTRO: The right-of-way has nothing to do with it. Of course, he had the right of way.

MALE SPEAKER: [off mic] [shouts]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Sorry, sorry.

CHARLES CASTRO: But he didn't see it.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Sorry. Okay, first of all Vision Zero -- That's okay, but I want to let you know like Vision Zero if you go to the website that we have on Vision Zero, it's about bringing everyone together. So, yes, we have it. It is might be limiting. [sic] Yes, we will put the source of the education of this. There's going to be resources on educating, using our -- both shelters, there's going to be resources doing also public announcements, and there's going to be education also in our schools. Everyone is invited to be part of this initiatives from pedestrians, to drivers, to motorcycle, everybody, everyone is part of Vision Zero.

CHARLES CASTRO: That's the exact attitude: We have the right-of-way. The pedestrians, that's why they get killed. People play chicken.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Thank you. [applause] Okay, did you sign up?

CHRISTIAN: Hi, I think --

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I'm sorry. Did I call your name?

CHRISTIAN: My name is Christian.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Did I call your name?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, was it Christian? I'm not sure if I --

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No.

CHRISTIAN: No? I apologize.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thanks.

EDWARD MC CARTHY: Good evening, all. My name is Edward McCarthy. I'm a resident of Sunnyside, and I want to say thank you all for attending tonight, and a big thank you to my Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer. Two points after reviewing the Vision -- Zero Vision Plan that's missing is drunk driving. I don't understand how there's any tolerance whatsoever. If someone drinks and drives, take away their car and off to prison they go. There should be zero, zero, zero tolerance for that.

So many lives have been lost. And number two, when it comes to the Yellow Taxis, if you understand how a driver thinks. He has to continuously keep going back to Manhattan. That's where he makes all of his money, and in the process he's killing people because he's zip -- he or she is zipping back and forth between JFK, La Guardia, and Manhattan, and really we need to clamp down on the regulations for taxis. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause] [bell] Vincent Chong [sp?], Ann Alton, Arthur Hopson [sp?], Mohammed Ottoman [sp?].

VINCENT CHONG: Hi, my name is Vincent Chong. So there's a 83-years-old older gentleman that live at Flushing at the top of the hill. No matter where he go, will he come back? He cannot use the regular bike to go home. He had to stop and meet at the road, and walk with the bicycle. So the electric assist bike is low speed, and really it's very convenient for the older people. And also, you know, he just used to go to the street, go to see the doctor like very close way.

And also, like a lot of people with walker they go 10, 12 hours a day. Depending on the

1 regular bike it's not the exercise. So the electric
2 assist bike is really, you know, for like health.
3 [bell] Ten, twelve hours it would cost like 10 to 50
4 cents [sic]. So I think the City Council should
5 really concern what do people like they need for a
6 walker, and older people. And the electric bike is
7 environmentally friendly. It's good. It's like less
8 than 40 miles per hour. It's a bike.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

11 [applause]

12 MALE SPEAKER: The Police Department is
13 at fault. They are not enforcing the law now.
14 They're putting rules on the books. We see people
15 rampantly going through red lights. At every
16 intersection, all you have to stand is one minute,
17 and you'll find people. And I've spoken to patrolmen
18 on the street, and they say, Well, how come they
19 didn't tell us we give tickets for that? And another
20 said, Well, how are we going to catch these guys?

21 And I think it's very simple to stand
22 across the street, and then you could see someone go
23 through the red light. It's happening all the time.
24 And all the other concerns that have been raised
25 here, any of them can be solved with enforcements.

So I see a bunch of officers here. Talk to your men. Get them out there. Forget about this traffic signal light times on some intersections. You need much more enforcement. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause]

ACTOBA JOSE: Hi, my name is Hector Jose.

A 16-year-old boy was struck by a speeding automobile this past Monday, April 21st in front of the Jamaican Muslim Center in Jamaica [sic] located at 85-37 168th Street, Queens. The accident left this boy in intensive care unit in Long Island Hospital with brain trauma, injuries to his eyes, legs, broken most of his body parts and he's in critical condition. And his brain trauma is still unknown. My name is Actoba Jose [sp?]. The Jamaican Muslim Center is the largest Islamic congregants where countless people pay every week, weekend, 300 kids.

Weekdays there are 200 kids everyday. On the same street we have the Jamaica High School, Thomas Edison High School. And normally school 5,000 kids to us, a very tiny street, a two-way street where they're fighting to get this one-way and a speed bump. Where we repeatedly asked [bell] our

1
2 elected officials and leaders to help get in traffic
3 light, speed bumps, and we did not get any results.
4 I hope this will help us. So Vision Zero should take
5 a look at this. Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

7 [applause]

8 MOHAMMED ADEAN: Hello, Chairman and
9 everyone. My name is Mohammed Adian [sp?], and I
10 live in at 87-35 168th Street in Jamaica. So Brother
11 Actoba mentioned already. I support the same one.
12 So I'm supporting him, and that's all. Thank you
13 very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

15 [applause] Fran Rushkin [sp?], Lanna Ivos [sp?] ,
16 Leslie Lamu [sp?]

17 FRAN RUSHKIN: Thank you everyone. I'm
18 Fran Rushkin [sp?]. It's my 20th year teaching here
19 at La Guardia. I was hit by a truck parked on a
20 sidewalk that backed up into me, and the driver never
21 received a ticket. And then I was almost hit here at
22 La Guardia at the same corner young Tenzan Drujak was
23 killed by an SUV making an illegal turn on Thomson
24 from Skillman, and it happens all the time. And I
25

put this sequence of events of You Tube. We need to enforce the laws that are already on the books.

And some preventive measures that aren't to stop the highway cowboy mentality of drivers especially exiting the highways like Skillman. Some of which have not been put in place a year after the fatality that occurred here. And so, what we need is speed limit signs through the city as in cities throughout the world [bell], and at dangerous intersections we need speed cameras, speed bumps, speed boards, speed traps, split phasing traffic signals, synchronized with crosswalks, which is not the case here at La Guardia on Thomson. We need crossing guards. I mean they stand at the exit of the Cox Bridge but at Skillman where the kid got killed. A barrage of speeding tickets, pedestrian overpasses, a longer median over Thomson to prevent the constant illegal U-turns that are going on. Decoy policemen acting like pedestrians. That was from Council Member Van Bramer's office, which is a great idea. Trucks with cameras, even old trucks, they should be retrofitted with camera; beepers; blinking lights in the back of them. So something like what happened to me doesn't.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

FRAN RUSKIN: The model should be London where when a person is crossing a street, drivers come furiously to a halt.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause]

DONALD RODRIGUEZ: Hi, my name is Donald Rodriguez. I wanted to echo the plea for the New York City DOT to recheck Queens Boulevard, look into the redesign of that, our dangerous boulevard. Perhaps with bicycle lanes to encourage bicycle use, perhaps with bus lanes for Bus Rapid Transit, and pedestrian amenities. Make that boulevard into a safe place where people feel safe to cross the street as well as to bicycle and to use public transit. The other issue I wanted to bring us is before I went through a career change about eight years ago, I worked as a Transportation Planner in an engineering and consulting firm where we were looking at the implementation BRT. We were actually part of the team with the New York City DOT and New York City Transit. And that was eight years ago, and I have not seen that route or a BRT project open up yet in Queens. And it's been eight years, and I hope it's

not going to be another eight years for BRT or select bus service to be brought into Queens. And I hope that as part of the Vision Zero project [bell] to encourage transit use, to reduce vehicular use that will look into BRT in a much shorter time than eight years. Thanks very much.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause]

JESSAMY: Hi, I'm Jessamy [sp?]. I'm from Rego Park. In defense of pedestrians, a lot of people keep talking about wait for the light when you're safe. Well, you're not safe when you have light. That we've seen in all the statistics about failure to yield. So when you have a population of human beings that know they're never safe, there's not a whole lot of incentive towards following the rule if the rule actually doesn't protect you. So just to throw that out there. In terms of cracking down on the victim, I don't think is the right approach. And also, as a Rego Park resident, when I first moved here, in spite of knowing that I was moving to the boulevard of death sandwiched between Queens Boulevard and Woodhaven, and quickly found out that the best way for me to get anywhere in Queens or

1
2 Brooklyn was my bicycle. There aren't very many good
3 routes around Queens. I could transfer to three
4 trains to get to Astoria, or I could ride my bike 20
5 minutes, but Queens Boulevard is by far the
6 straightest route to anywhere else in my borough and
7 it just is not safe. And it really should be, and I
8 really would look forward to that being the next
9 arterial slow zone. I was really excited when I saw
10 that plan announced. So that's it.

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

12 [bell] [applause] And I would also like to say thank
13 you to the sergeant, from the Council and Paul
14 Cathwell [sp?] for the great job that they're doing.
15 So thanks very much. [applause] Getting into the
16 next 15 minutes where we will be done. And thank
17 everyone for giving your input. As I said,
18 everything that people have said are being recorded,
19 and we are taking notes. And we will use your
20 information. So hopefully, those two hours that you
21 have invested, it was it was very important, and
22 we're going to use that.

23 So now to close this Town Hall Meeting
24 everyone here will have two minutes. First starting
25

with my first two minutes, we want to hear from Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you very much. First of all, I just want to say thank you to so many people for coming out. There was an extremely strong presence from my District, the 26th. I want to thank everyone for [applause] caring about this issue. And I wrote down every single comment. So I just want to very quickly say La Guardia Community College, professors, students, administrators thank you for coming out. That student said he was done. We wrote a letter to DOT in fairness, and I told the Commissioner I would say this, it was under a different Commissioner. That Commissioner said there were no needed changes on Thomson and Van Dam. And then, several months later Tenzin Drujak was killed right outside the building. So we were there before. We were there after. I will never walk away from the safety here at La Guardia Community College. We will fight for Vision Zero to be rallied around this school. [applause] The women from Long Island City Center Boulevard, Fifth Street incredible issues. The Commissioner and I talked about it up here right here tonight.

1 VISION ZERO - QUEENS TOWN HALL MEETING 91
2 Outrageous that we don't have crosswalks, painted
3 lines, stop signs, any kind of [applause] traffic
4 timing measures. We've fought for two years to get a
5 four-way stop sign on Fifth Street. It shouldn't
6 take two years to get a stop sign, but we will keep
7 fighting. I want to say something about pedestrian.
8 The eight-year-old boy who died at PS-152 was with
9 his 11-year-old sister. He was crossing legally, and
10 it is outrageous to blame an eight-year-old child for
11 getting killed by a tractor-trailer. [applause]
12 Outrageous.

13 Nancy Silverman, I hear you on safety for
14 cyclists. You know that we are one. My husband just
15 got injured this past weekend. But he was -- and
16 illegal car stopped short, threw him over the
17 handlebars. He's okay but that happens far too
18 often, far too often. Modifying the lights, and
19 clearing the snow and the ice on the pedestrian
20 bridge at Thomson a big issue. My office has been
21 working on it. We need more action from DOT. And
22 drunk driving, speed bumps, multiple speed bumps.
23 This one she already said, but already said but thank
24 you for this one on that. Hunter at Crescent Street,
25 all the issues that you mentioned, we are working on

1 VISION ZERO - QUEENS TOWN HALL MEETING 92
2 that as well. Illegal parking around La Guardia, and
3 police enforcement issues, speed limit signs, all of
4 these things I want you to know this is a priority
5 for my office. We work on [bell] this day and night.
6 I will never stop until Vision Zero is a reality in
7 this district and in this city. Thank you.

8 [applause]

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Commissioner
10 Trottenberg.

11 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I, too, want
12 to offer my thanks. This was a really spirited and
13 great discussion. And, look, I actually really
14 appreciate all of the suggestions we've gotten, and
15 they may really help to inform our work. And one
16 thing I want to highlight because we didn't get to do
17 our presentation. We will actually be holding two
18 Vision Zero Workshops in Queens, which we are going
19 to put maps up and we're going to give people
20 stickers, and we really want to invite folks to come.
21 If there's a particular intersection, a light,
22 whatever it is where you think real action needs to
23 happen -- and I can hear from everyone in the room
24 you do -- we will have this. And maybe Warren from
25 my office can just stand up if you've got the

information and say when and where those are going to be. And I want folks to make note of it so they can come.

WARREN: [off mic]

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Yeah, but thanks -- thanks Warren. I just want to add. Again, I want to say because I have a lot on my team here from DOT. I want to say we have actually done a lot of terrific work around the city, and clearly there is more to do. There will always be more to do. And I do have to just take a minute to talk about the snow because I'm hearing about that from your council member and from some of the audience. I just want to talk a little bit about this winter. This winter was a pretty tough winter.

We had five feet of snow give or take. It was the snowiest winter on record. We had a lot of freezing and thawing. I will tell you that the men and women who are out on road crews at New York City DOT they do snow removal. They take care of the bridges. They take care of the pedestrian overpasses. Then they get to work on potholes. So they have been working round the clock for months. They have done an amazing job. And look, I would

1 just say, we try to get to them all as quickly as we
2 can.

3
4 Obviously, this winter was a challenge
5 for us, and one thing that we discovered
6 unfortunately is there's a certain number of
7 pedestrian overpasses, which over the years people
8 don't notice them as much. There wasn't as much ice
9 on them, and it wasn't clear which agency. And this
10 winter, they all came to light. We're working now
11 with our sister agencies and the Department of
12 Sanitation to try and have as good a game plan as we
13 have for future work. So we've heard the complaints.
14 I just want to say I think our team has done the best
15 they could this winter. It was a pretty tough
16 winter. [bell] So thanks, Mr. Chairman. [applause]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER: I think the -- one of
18 the speakers mentioned the DWI arrests. Currently,
19 that is certainly a part of our plan, increasing the
20 number of DWI arrests throughout the City and also
21 the 5-11, which is suspended license because the
22 individuals who have suspended licenses are going to
23 be the individuals who hit somebody and take off. So
24 certainly, we are concentrating on both those
25 particular areas. That's part of my job, and also

1 the precinct managers. We have the borough
2 representatives here to make sure that our officers
3 are concentrating their enforcement and focusing it
4 on the speeds. And also as I had mentioned the
5 failure to yield. They will continue the fight.
6 They will have the additional equipment and make sure
7 that we are addressing and following up on these
8 particular instances and situations on specific
9 streets and intersections that you are concerned
10 about. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

13 [applause]

14 MEERA JOSHI: Thank you all very much for
15 your input. I heard several people raise concerns
16 about whether drivers will be considered in Vision
17 Zero legislation that increases or establishes
18 penalties against drivers who demonstrate poor
19 driving or unsafe driving. One, I want to echo what
20 Ira Goldstein mentioned, for-hire transportation
21 drivers licensed by the TLC are historically very
22 safe. The majority of them are safe drivers, and the
23 TLC has proposed several initiatives that are part of
24 Vision Zero. They basically fall into four buckets.

And I want to emphasize that if the first three are successful, the fourth, which is increased penalties against drivers becomes less necessary. If our efforts to educate drivers, and make them learn what safe driving really means is successful, we never get to penalties. If technology is integrated into the fleet that breaks unsafe driving patterns, we don't get to penalties. And if incentives are effective and drivers are encouraged to drive safely, we do not get to penalties. Really, it is a group effort. We need to change what our expectations about what is acceptable driving.

And I ask you as passengers to do your part. When you get into a for-hire transportation vehicle, tell the driver you expect a safe drive. And show the driver that you reward safe driving through your tip. It is an immediate way to change the way people think about what is acceptable in driving. And I encourage those people that voiced concerns about legislation, to attend the April 30th hearing that Chair Rodriguez will be hosting. It will be an excellent opportunity. There's some really important legislation at stake there, and your input is vital. So thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[applause]

FEMALE SPEAKER: I just want to thank everyone for coming out here today. I also took very copious notes on what you were all saying. And I'm particularly interested in making all of our streets safe, but our major arterial streets -- I grew up along Queens Boulevard and Woodhaven Boulevard as well, and so I'm really looking forward to seeing our arterial streets being traffic calmed. Thank you.

[applause]

JUAN MARTINEZ: I think we're on the brink of something really big, and I just want to emphasize what I was saying earlier. That if this is going to actually come through, it's because the people in this room continue to put pressure to make sure that it happens. At the end of the day this is going to be a basket of reforms. A couple of dozen different small steps are going to amount to something very, very big. More education, getting everybody to make better decisions for smarter enforcement, and that kind of thing.

It's going to take a little bit of time.
And a lot of folks tend to have a short attention

span in media and elsewhere. But if we keep on making sure that everybody knows it's a priority, it will remain one. And then finally, May 6th you can find out more about it by stopping me or visiting our website transalt.org. The folks in Albany like to say no to New York City a lot, but it's really hard to when we show up at their offices. So thank you.
[applause]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Hi, I'm Council Member Mark Weprin, and I apologize for being late. It's one of those nights we were running around. But I'm delighted to be here. I wanted to stop in just to say hello. It is so amazing to me because I got involved in this movement a couple of years ago. And truthfully, at the time -- and I joked with this with the Transportation Alternatives people -- They were looked at as a bunch of crazy people to a lot of, you know, most of the public and most of the press and everybody else. And a lot of people in this room probably were part of those crazy people as well. But all of a sudden we're the establishment, and that's a wonderful thing on occasion. And the fact that we have the Commissioner here, and the

1 VISION ZERO - QUEENS TOWN HALL MEETING 99
2 Police Department here, all committed to trying to
3 make our streets safe. To trying to make it that you
4 don't have to worry about walking your child across
5 the street, and getting them killed. Or that we're
6 going to have accidents and drivers who recklessly
7 drive. It is a difficult thing. It has taken time,
8 but I give the Mayor so much credit for embracing
9 this idea. It takes a lot to get us all together,
10 and I'm committed to trying to help anyway I can.
11 I've told this to the Transportation Chair Ydanis
12 Rodriguez, as well as many of my colleagues. We're
13 going to work together. Whether Vision Zero is a
14 goal we could actually get to completely, we'll see.
15 But we certainly have made so much progress so far,
16 and with this team in place, and this not a bad
17 thing. The establishment with everybody on board, I
18 don't think there's any stopping us from making
19 enormous progress and saving lives. So I'm happy to
20 be here tonight. Thank you. [applause]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you again
22 to each and every one of you for your presence
23 tonight and for giving such passionate speeches.
24 Truly heartfelt and certainly recognize the crisis
25 that we're in. I want to thank all of the agencies,

1 VISION ZERO - QUEENS TOWN HALL MEETING 100
2 NYPD, TLD, the Mayor's Office, DOT, all of the staff
3 that really put together these Town Halls. I've been
4 joining with my colleagues and Chairman Rodriguez.
5 We've been going on all of these different Town Halls
6 throughout the city because we want opportunities for
7 the public to help educate us.

8 This is a partnership. This is a
9 framework that has started to stimulate conversation,
10 and I am very big on education, on advocacy, and
11 awareness. We don't want to scapegoat any community
12 because we are all involved, pedestrians, drivers,
13 bicyclists, truck drivers, bus drivers. We are all
14 involved, and we all play role in this. And so,
15 years ago crosswalks used to be the safest part of
16 the street, and that is no longer the case.

17 This has to be a culture shift, a shift
18 in the conversation. Because too many people are
19 being killed and injured a the hands of everyone,
20 drivers, as well as pedestrians are being injured.
21 So I am really thankful to be here in Queens tonight
22 to hear so much conversation. And someone mentioned
23 it, and I have to echo it: We have got to have
24 better coordination between agencies. We have a lot
25 of new development, a lot of new schools.

1 The population is growing, and we are not
2 aware of where we need to highlight a lot of these
3 dangerous intersections across the city. And so, in
4 addition to education, I've been working with our
5 Council Member Rodriguez on what we can do working
6 with Albany to increase the fines and penalties for
7 drivers who leave the scenes of accidents, who kill
8 and injure people [applause]. Because there are
9 loopholes in our State law that have not been changed
10 in many years, and that is unacceptable. So this is
11 a long campaign. We're not done yet.

12 So please allow us time. Continue to
13 work with us to all the advocacy groups [bell] and I
14 also have to mention very quickly, Families for Safe
15 Streets. Ydanis and I have met with many families,
16 and I applaud their bravery for coming together in
17 pain. Turning that pain into a plan with a purpose.
18 I applaud all the work the advocates do. Look
19 forward to a lot more discussions on this. So we can
20 truly achieve Vision Zero. So I thank you all for
21 being here, and I want to thank my colleague and our
22 Majority Leader for their leadership on this issue.
23 Thank you. [applause]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So with that, I'd like to again thank everyone for your presence and your input and commitment to continue building safe in our streets. Next week on the 30th, you can be present in our hearing at 1:00 p.m. You also can follow the hearing on the webcast. So those of you who are not able to make it here, you also can follow through the website of the City Council. And if you have any questions that you would like for us to ask to any of the representatives or the Mayor, feel free to send it to your representative or directly to our Council. And we will be sure that your question also gets to be asked. This is very important. We will turn New York City into a place that is safe and that 20, 24, we will reduce to zero, the number of children and New Yorkers that lose their life because they've been hit by a car in a crash. So that's our commitment. We're going to be working together. You have opportunity, any question they have to ask to the Commission. Thank you very much. Have a good night. [applause]

1	VISION ZERO - QUEENS TOWN HALL MEETING	103
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

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. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date May 8, 2014