

Testimony of Meera Joshi
NYC Taxi & Limousine Commissioner/Chair
Budget for Fiscal Year 2015

City Council Transportation and Finance Committees
May 15, 2014

Good afternoon, Chair Ferreras and Chair Rodriguez, and members of the City Council Committees on Finance and Transportation. I am Meera Joshi, Chair of the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC).

First, let me say to Chair Ferreras that I look forward to working with you and the Finance Committee to ensure that TLC is managed in a fiscally prudent manner, and that we're appropriately resourced to help our licensees provide the safe and reliable taxi and for-hire vehicle service across all five boroughs that New Yorkers deserve.

Chair Rodriguez, I would like to thank you for your support of Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero action plan and for being such a strong voice at the Vision Zero town hall events. I appreciate the open line of communication and look forward to working together on legislation in the future.

And thank you both for giving me the opportunity to speak today on the TLC's budget for Fiscal Year 2015.

The budget for Fiscal Year 2015 is just under \$63 million. Of that amount, \$34.4 million is for Personal Services and \$28.6 million is for Other Than Personal Services (OTPS). The budget for Fiscal Year 2015 also includes \$1.1 million in new funding dedicated to TLC's Vision Zero initiatives, including the addition of 15 more positions. The Vision Zero funds will allow us to create a safety squad, safety PSAs for the riding public, and educational and outreach material for our licensees. With these additional funds in our budget, we will have the means to fully and effectively support Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero initiatives.

The most effective way to keep our streets safe is to take wholly unlicensed vehicles off the road. The tow pound contract that went into effect in April 2013 increases our ability to keep

our streets safe immensely. Prior to the tow pound contract, we had a limited amount of space to store vehicles, and this affected the number of vehicles we could seize. Today, there is no cap on the number of unlicensed vehicles we can take off the road. So far in this fiscal year, the Commission has seized over 8,000 cars, which is almost a thirty percent increase over Fiscal Year 2013, and we still have a month and a half to go. We also continue to partner with the police department to seize unlicensed van operators, and together, we seized over 500 unlicensed vans in this fiscal year. In addition, we ramped up our seizure efforts at JFK airport now that the TLC has a satellite office on airport grounds. In this fiscal year, TLC inspectors seized over 2,000 unlicensed cars and approximately 50 unlicensed vans at JFK airport alone.

Our drivers – unlike the drivers who do not have a TLC license – must pass background checks and drug tests in order to operate a TLC-licensed vehicle. And TLC-licensed vehicles are inspected several times a year and carry insurance well beyond the state's minimum.

Since November 2013, the TLC auctioned 400 wheelchair accessible medallions, which is expected to generate over \$400 million in revenue for the City over the next two fiscal years. The sale of these medallions increased New York City's wheelchair accessible yellow taxi fleet by approximately 170 percent. This increase, together with the potential auction of additional wheelchair-accessible medallions and our recently-passed rules to make 50 percent of the yellow taxi fleet wheelchair-accessible by 2020, will ensure that persons who use wheelchairs will have greater access to the taxi system.

This concludes my testimony for the TLC's budget for Fiscal Year 2015. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify, and for allowing me to share some of the TLC's accomplishments with you. At this time, I would be happy to answer your questions.

**Statement by Doug Johnson, MTA Director of Budget
MTA New York City Transit
before the New York City Council's Committee on Transportation
Thursday, May 15, 2014 at 11:30 a.m.**

Good morning, Chairwoman Ferreras, Chairman Rodriguez and members of the City Council. I'm Douglas Johnson, the MTA's Budget Director. Thank you for holding this hearing and for inviting me to testify here today. I'm joined by Craig Stewart, MTA Sr. Director, Capital Program, Aaron Stern, Director of New York City Transit's Office of Management and Budget and Lois Tendler, New York City Transit's vice president of Government and Community Relations.

As you may remember, I testified before this committee in March regarding the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2014 Preliminary Budget as it relates to the MTA's budget. I discussed the fact that the MTA's operating budget is \$13.5 billion, of which New York City will provide \$885 million, or about six and one-half percent. I outlined each of the recipient agencies, explaining that New York City funds are used to support:

- MTA New York City Transit, including Paratransit;
- MTA Bus;
- MTA Staten Island Railway; and
- the maintenance of commuter rail stations within New York City.

I also mentioned that the Mayor's 2014 budget proposes to allocate \$100 million to the MTA's Capital Program. To reiterate, the funds we get from New York City are critically important to the MTA, and much appreciated.

Since that time, there's been one critically important development in terms of our budget: Thanks to Governor Cuomo's help, we were able to reach a labor agreement with Transport Workers Union Local 100—by far our largest group of unionized workers. There's not much I can say publicly while the TWU contract awaits ratification, but I can say this: This contract offer—if ratified—will not require us to cut service or raise fares higher than the rate of inflation in 2015.

In closing, I want to remind the Council that we'll present the 2015 to 2019 Capital Program to our Board in September, for submission to the Capital Program Review Board in Albany on October 1. Some of you may have heard that last week, Governor Cuomo directed us to create a Transportation Reinvention Commission in advance of the next Program. This panel of experts will focus on how climate change and rider growth should affect our next Program, and we couldn't agree more with the Governor's directive.

We need to do more than keep our network reliable through the Capital Program—we need to prepare for a changing climate and adapt to changing demographics and travel needs. Make no mistake: Protecting the MTA network against future storms will carry a huge cost in time and resources, but as Sandy proved all-too painfully, the cost of inaction is simply unacceptable.

The truth is, a healthy Capital Program is our best path forward—our only path forward—beyond restoration—beyond long-term repair—all the way to a Superstorm-ready transit network—a Superstorm-ready New York.

Again, thank you to inviting us here today. My colleagues and I will now be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**NYC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TESTIMONY
JOINT HEARING BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
May 15, 2014**

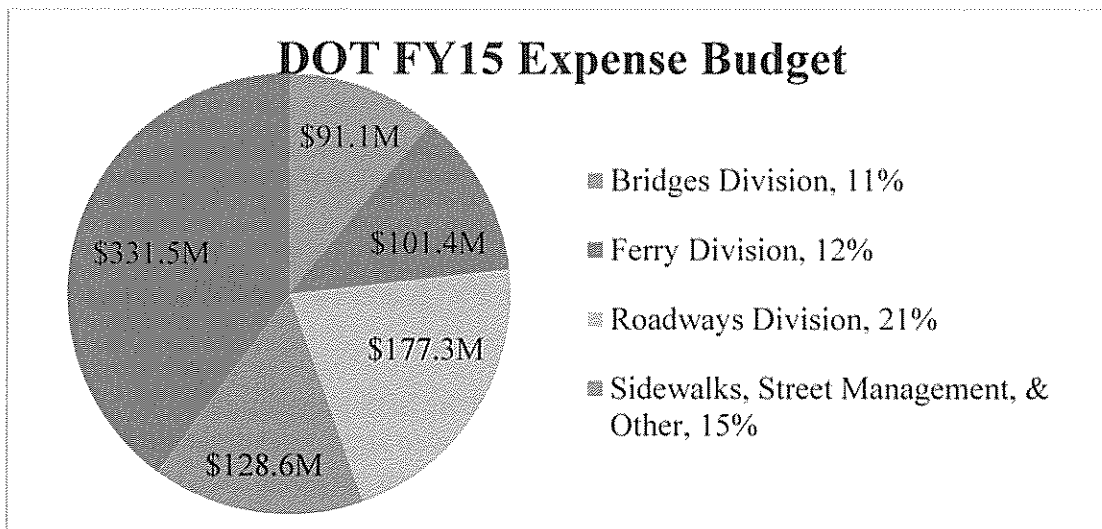
Good morning Chairwoman Ferreras, Chairman Rodriguez and members of the Finance and Transportation Committees. My name is Polly Trottenberg and I am the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT). With me today are Joseph Jarrin, Deputy Commissioner for Finance, Contracting, and Program Management, and Jeff Lynch, Assistant Commissioner of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Thank you for inviting me to discuss DOT's fiscal year 2015 executive budget. I am honored to be the first Commissioner testifying on Mayor de Blasio's FY15 budget proposal, which I am proud to say makes infrastructure investment a high priority.

The Mayor has also made an unprecedented commitment to his Vision Zero plan for making our streets safer, and to enhancing mobility and access for all New Yorkers with Select Bus Service. I want to thank the Council for sharing these priorities.

This upcoming fiscal year will allow DOT to better execute our five priorities: safety, state of good repair, innovative project delivery, mobility and livability. DOT's proposed expense budget for FY 15 is \$830 million, including:

- \$332 million for traffic operations and planning;
- \$177 million for roadway maintenance;
- \$129 million for DOT operations, including sidewalk management;
- \$101 million for ferry operations and maintenance; and
- \$91 million for bridge maintenance and inspection.



We have discussed Vision Zero here at the City Council several times, and DOT, NYPD and TLC have attended remarkable Vision Zero town hall meetings and workshops in neighborhoods across the five boroughs. From Springfield Gardens to St George, Mount Eden to Midtown, DOT has heard directly from New Yorkers who want intersection improvements, more bike lanes, and slower vehicle speeds so that we can be safer on our streets.

I want to thank Speaker Mark-Viverito, Chairman Rodriguez, Chairwoman Gibson, Chairwoman Ferreras and so many other Council Members for your commitment to public engagement on Vision Zero. On behalf of the Mayor, I want to express our gratitude to the Council for passing Resolution 111, to allow New York to lower the citywide speed limit to 25 mph. Your action yesterday will be invaluable to us as we lobby Albany for this change.

The Mayor's FY15 budget provides \$52 million in new capital and expense funding to make our streets safer. This new funding allocation includes the following:

- \$23 million in capital and expense funds to procure, install, operate and maintain 120 new speed cameras recently authorized in Albany.

We anticipate beginning procurement for the additional cameras once Governor Cuomo signs the legislation recently championed by Speaker Silver and Senate Majority Co-Leader Klein.

- \$13 million to comprehensively redesign problematic corridors and intersections, including \$10 million to update and maintain street markings and \$3 million to pay for planning and implementation staff.
- \$2 million for speed humps. This will allow DOT to respond to individual requests, reduce speed limits near more than 50 schools, and implement 16 new Neighborhood Slow Zones by 2016.
- \$11 million for improvements to the signal and streetlight network. DOT will also enhance street lighting at 1,000 key intersections by increasing the number of light poles from two to four. We will re-time the signals along high-crash corridors and at dangerous intersections in conjunction with reduced speed limits.
- \$3 million to purchase new safety classroom materials and launch the new Vision Zero media campaigns, teaching kids and adults alike safer behavior on our streets.

In addition to major safety enhancements, our FY15 budget includes \$7 million in expense funding for the Select Bus Service program starting in FY15, and \$49.3 million in capital funding in FY15 through 18.

This money will help DOT and MTA ultimately expand the SBS program up to 20 routes as promised by Mayor de Blasio. Select Bus Service is a proven success, delivering on average 20 percent faster travel times and attracting 10 percent more riders per route.

I would like to thank the MTA and New York City Transit for their partnership in instituting the SBS program, which has vastly improved the daily commute of more than 200,000 bus riders.

The FY15 budget also includes funding for the operation of the Staten Island ferry and for new bike lanes. By improving our transportation options, DOT is giving all New Yorkers better access to jobs, education and opportunity.

I am also very pleased, and I know you will be too, that the Mayor's executive budget provides DOT with \$7.3 million more in expense funding this year for filling 100,000 more potholes. We have been working at record pace to fill over 340,000 potholes this year, and I want to thank our dedicated roadway crews who work tirelessly every day.

Thanks to DOT's recent Hamilton Avenue asphalt plant redesign, which I announced yesterday with the Mayor and Council Member Menchaca, DOT is also focusing on the environmental sustainability of our roadway work, using more locally-made recycled asphalt, reducing truck trips, emissions and oil consumption.

Our new Hamilton Avenue plant will save the City as much as \$5 million annually, meaning the \$25 million redesign will pay for itself in about five years. DOT plans to replicate these cost savings and efficiency measures through a similar \$25 million upgrade to the Harper Street asphalt plant in Queens.

To make New York a more livable, walkable city, the FY15 budget also includes \$19 million for adding public plazas, and \$8 million for installing wayfinding signs and City Benches to the city's sidewalks.

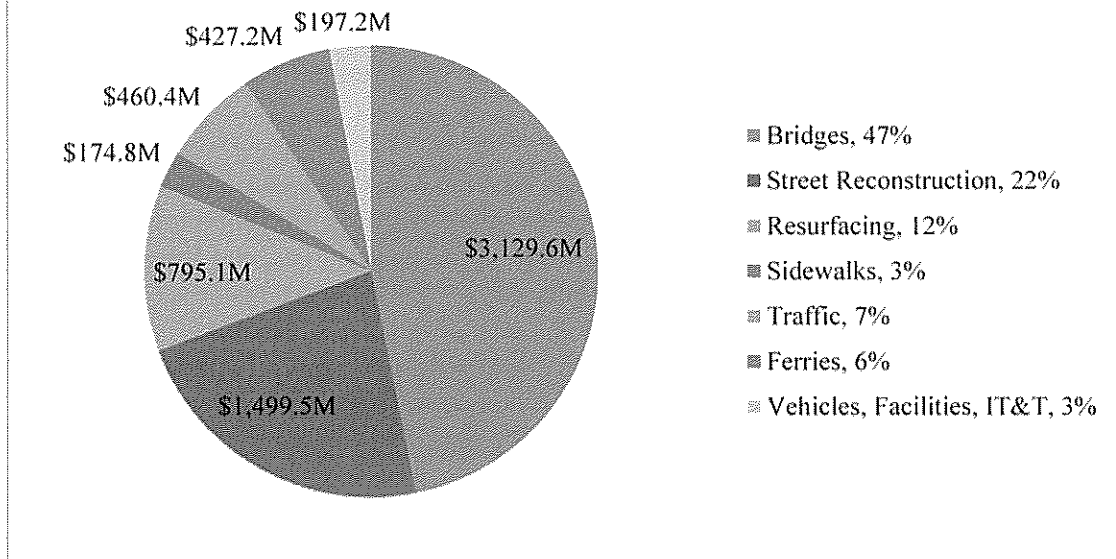
Moving to DOT's capital budget, the Mayor's budget proposes a \$6.7 billion capital investment for DOT for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. This will help renew our roads and bridges, and represents a \$500 million increase in City funding over the FY15 preliminary plan. This expanded commitment to the City's transportation infrastructure is a very good start on restoring needed funds to DOT's ten year capital plan.

From now through January, the key capital agencies, including DOT, will be working together with OMB to craft a ten year capital plan that prudently invests in the City's vital infrastructure over the long term.

DOT's proposed five-year capital budget includes:

- \$3.1 billion for bridge reconstruction
- \$2.3 billion for street reconstruction and resurfacing
- \$460 million for streetlights and signals
- \$427 million for the Staten Island Ferry
- \$175 million for sidewalk reconstruction; and
- \$197 million for the facilities and equipment needed to support DOT operations.

FY14-18 Capital Commitment Plan,



This budget funds critical capital construction projects in all five boroughs. In FY15, DOT will start construction on the West Street and Flushing Avenue segments of the Brooklyn Greenway, and on a major intersection project at East 177th Street and the Sheridan Expressway in the Bronx.

We will begin the 185th Street streetscape improvement project in Manhattan, and a complete street reconstruction in South Jamaica, Queens to address flooding conditions. We will also deliver five different capital projects to bring busy Staten Island intersections up to a state of good repair and mitigate traffic congestion.

The capital plan also provides an additional \$49 million to allow DOT to repave 1,000 lane-miles of City streets next year.

The capital plan includes an increase of \$346 million for bridge repair. I am so proud of the work we are currently doing on some of the City's 789 bridges. I recently toured the Mill Basin Bridge in Brooklyn, which is a great example from our \$1 billion Belt Parkway bridges program.

The Mill Basin project will begin construction next year and improve safety and traffic flow with better visibility for motorists, increased lane widths, added shoulders on both sides of the roadway, and removal of an obsolete drawbridge. DOT will also start construction next year on a \$181 million project reconstructing the Harlem River Drive Viaduct in Manhattan, and on the \$110 million reconstruction of the Roosevelt Avenue Bridge over the Van Wyck Expressway in Queens.

But in the future, DOT could bring the costs of capital projects down by tens of millions of dollars and speed the delivery of improvements through the use of design-build bidding. Design-build can eliminate the costly and time consuming process of procuring design and construction

work separately. I want to thank the Council for their support of State legislation for the authorization of the City's use of design-build contracting, and look forward to working with you to see this bill pass in Albany.

In conclusion, this testimony highlights just some of the many ways DOT will continue to execute our top five priorities with the cost to taxpayers in mind. We look forward to working with all of you to pursue Mayor de Blasio's vision for a safe, equitable and accessible transportation system for all New Yorkers.

Thank you again on behalf of Mayor de Blasio and I am happy to take your questions.

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