

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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April 24, 2020
Start: 11:09 a.m.
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing

B E F O R E: YDANIS RODRIGUEZ
Chairman

COREY JOHNSON
Speaker

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Mark Levine
Andrew Cohen
Fernando Cabrera
Ruben Diaz, Sr.
Peter Koo
I. Daneek Miller
Robert Holden
Donovan J. Richards
Stephen T. Levin
Antonio Reynoso
Carlos Menchaca
Chaim M. Deutsch
Deborah Rose

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

Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner
Department of Transportation

Eric Beaton
Department of Transportation

Oleg Chernyavsky, Assistant Deputy Chief
NYPD

Michael Pilecki, Deputy Chief
NYPD

Gale Brewer, President
Manhattan Borough

Mary Beth Kelly, Founder
Families for Safe Streets

Dahlia Goldberg, Member
Families for Safe Streets

Nikia Whittington, Member
Families for Safe Streets

Raul Rivera, Member
Families for Safe Streets

Marco Connor, Deputy Director
Transportation Alliance

Dr. Nicholas Gavin, Physician
Washington Heights and Inwood

John Orcut, NYC Resident

Greg Mahalovich [sp?], Community Advocacy
Director
American Heart Association

John Sanchez, District Manager
Bronx Community Board Six

Dale Corvino, Co-chair Transportation Planning
Committee
Community Board Four

Samira Behrooz, Director of Program
Design Trust for Public Space

Lisa Orman, NYC Resident

Patrick McClellan, State Policy Director
New York League of Conservation Voters

Eric McClure
Streets PAC

Philip Leff, Chairperson
Transportation Alternatives

Wendy Brower, NYC Resident

Graham Weinstein, Cofounder and President
Out Cycling

Charles Todd, NYC Resident

Steve Scofield, NYC Resident

Samir Levingia [sp?], NYC Resident

Janet Liff, Director of Neighborhood
Empowerment Project
Open Plans

Jim Burke, NYC Resident

Cecil Brook, Bronx Chairperson
Transportation Alternatives

Billy Freeland, Member
Community Board Eight

Queen Lucy Woody, NYC Resident

Catherine Willis, NYC Resident

David Warren, NYC Resident

Nula Odarty Noranho [sp?], NYC Resident

Melody Bryant, Member
Families for Safe Streets

Jonathan Hawkins
Garment District Alliance

2 UNIDENTIFIED: Okay. John, we can
3 start.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning, everyone,
5 and welcome to the New York City Council remote
6 hearing on the Committee on Transportation. We ask
7 that all cameras be places on viewing mode so that we
8 are able to identify all parties in attendance. We
9 ask that your microphone be muted until it is your
10 turn to speak. We ask for all background noise to be
11 limited when on muted. Please set all electronic
12 devices to be placed on vibrate or silent. You can
13 submit your testimony via email to. Once again, that
14 is testimony@council.nyc.gov. We will prompt to you
15 when it is your turn to speak. Should you choose not
16 to follow the rules, the Sergeant-at-arms well block
17 your video and possibly remove you from the hearing.
18 Thank you. Chair Rodriguez, we are ready to begin.

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,
20 Sergeant. Thank you, Speaker Johnson, all my
21 colleagues, and all New Yorkers. As everyone knows,
22 we're going through a tough time. All our prayers to
23 all New Yorkers, the 8.6 million, that we are going
24 to get through this coronavirus situation.
25 Especially my prayer to Chief Murray, someone that I

2 personally worked so hard with him when he was to be
3 in charge of northern Manhattan [inaudible 00:01:48].
4 And now, with the vision zero, and everyone that is
5 dealing with critical condition, this hearing is so
6 important because [inaudible 00:02:00] the bill lead
7 by Speaker Johnson and all our colleagues, we want to
8 do whatever we have to do to support all our New
9 Yorkers, especially those who live in underserved
10 communities who need more help than anybody else.
11 But also we need to be strong and move on as a city.
12 So I am Council member Ydanis Rodriguez, the Chairman
13 of the Transportation Committee. First, I would like
14 to recognize some of my colleagues that was here.
15 Speaker Corey Johnson, Council member Rose, Diaz,
16 Cohen, Rivera, Holden, Menchaca, Levine, Koo,
17 Cabrera, Yeger. And before I continue, I would like
18 to turn it over to the Speaker so that he would give
19 his opening statement and whatever and anything that
20 he would like to address. [inaudible 00:02:45]

21 SPEAKING JOHNSON: [interposing] Thank
22 you. Thank you, Chair Rodriguez. Good morning,
23 everyone. I hope everyone is safe and healthy. It
24 is actually so nice to see so many New Yorker's
25 faces. It's the best part of my day doing these zoom

2 conferences to actually be able to stay connected to
3 New Yorkers during this hard time. Before I give my
4 opening statement, I want to take a moment, just like
5 Chair Rodriguez just did to recognize Chief William
6 Morris of the NYPD who is currently battling COVID-
7 19. As the Department's Chief of Transportation, his
8 work on vision zero has saved lives and made New York
9 a better place. And on behalf of the entire Council,
10 our hearts go out to his family and we keep him in
11 our thoughts. I know him from working with him when
12 he was at Manhattan South and he has been just a
13 wonderful person to interact with and to work with
14 over the years and I'm really devastated to hear the
15 difficulty that he is having and I'm really thinking
16 of him and I have been the past few days. I also
17 want to thank the NYPD for being here today and for
18 everything they have been doing to keep New York
19 safe. They put their lives on the line every day for
20 New Yorkers no matter what we face as a city and we
21 have all felt the impacts of this crisis. But the
22 sacrifices of the NYPD and the cost to the department
23 has been particularly high. We have lost 31 members
24 of the NYPD to COVID-19 related illnesses. Over 4500
25 members of the department have tested positive.

2 Nearly 2900 are back at work and their dedication is
3 a testament to the commitment of the NYPD to keep New
4 Yorkers safe. I know that we are hear under--
5 excuse me-- under incredibly different
6 circumstances, so I want to thank everyone from the
7 administration, the NYPD, and the Department of
8 Transportation for joining us and for their work in
9 keeping the city running. Today, we're here to
10 discuss a bill that I am co-sponsoring with Council
11 member Carlina Rivera that would give New Yorkers
12 more space on our streets. New Yorkers need to be
13 able to get some exercise during these trying days to
14 maintain their peace of mind and sanity and we need
15 space to social distance when we're out doing errands
16 or going to work or bringing our children to the
17 park. Every day that we have nice weather, open
18 spaces are getting more and more crowded. May is
19 right around the corner. I have been doing a seven
20 to 10 mile walk every single day in the evenings and
21 I end up walking through four small community parks
22 on the course of my walk and people are doing the
23 best job they can to socially distance in those
24 parks, but on the nice days when it's really warm and
25 when it's nice outside, it's hard for people because

2 so many folks come out to try to enjoy the weather.
3 Especially with playgrounds being closed, especially
4 with pools potentially be closed over the summer, and
5 beaches being cut back. So we are going to need to
6 be able to create more space. I don't think it's
7 going to get better and we need to move quickly.
8 Other cities have shown we can do this without
9 overburdening the police with enforcement. I agree
10 with the mayor that New York City is exceptional. We
11 are the greatest city in the world, but we shouldn't
12 use New York's exceptionalism as an excuse for
13 settling. We should be trying to do more. To do
14 better. It can't mean that we don't even try. New
15 York is unique, but I will not accept that cities are
16 the world like Oakland and Paris and Milan and Boston
17 can overcome challenges that we can't. New York
18 should be leading and I don't think we should blame
19 New Yorkers for government's failure to innovate. I
20 don't buy the idea that our drivers can't adjust. I
21 have more faith in New Yorkers. New Yorkers rise to
22 the occasion. That's who we are. We've done it
23 before. And I know that we will do it again. And
24 just to be clear, we are talking about a bill that
25 opens up about one percent of our streets across New

2 York City. Let me repeat that. One percent of our
3 streets across New York City. I don't think that's
4 too much to ask. So I want to thank you, Chair
5 Rodriguez, for holding this hearing. I want to thank
6 the advocates and the Council members and the
7 community boards that have been advocating for this
8 and I want to thank New Yorkers for joining us today
9 virtually. And it's so nice to see so many faces of
10 people that I know and that I am used to seeing at
11 City Hall testifying. It's good that we can still be
12 and have it is important hearing. So, with that,
13 Chair Rodriguez, I am happy to turn it back over to
14 you or to Council member Rivera who is the prime
15 sponsor and I look forward to today's hearing.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Speaker.
17 Let me say a few words before calling on the prime
18 sponsor, co-prime together with you, Council member
19 Carlina Rivera. As everyone knows, we are currently
20 going through an unprecedented moment in the city's
21 history and is, you know, all of us should do every
22 day, I would like to play a moment of silence for all
23 the front-line workers, our healthcare workers, FDNY,
24 NYPD, transit workers, delivery workers, and all
25 essential workers. Personally, I can say to the

2 great [inaudible 00:08:30], I have seen living my
3 [inaudible 00:08:32] the critical role that home
4 attendants play to those women who take care of the
5 elderly or the [inaudible 00:08:43]. So I first
6 would like, again, to call for a moment of silence to
7 those individuals who are the first responders.
8 Thank you. [speaking foreign language] Today, the
9 Committee on Transportation holds its first ever
10 remote hearing to consider Intro number 1933, a bill
11 sponsored by Speaker Johnson, Council member Cabrera
12 and Rivera, which I also have the honor to be a
13 sponsor. That would amend the administrative code of
14 the city of New York in relation to temporary space
15 for pedestrians and cyclists. We, as a city and as a
16 nation, are going through an unparalleled health
17 crisis in our battle against COVID-19. social
18 distance, quarantine, and isolation have become the
19 norm for all of us during the past month and still I
20 got to say that, even though the number has been
21 going down of people dying, we need to look at
22 different [inaudible 00:10:26] and looking at those
23 people who are still in their apartment that have
24 been told to stay there, to deal by themselves with
25 the coronavirus. So the coronavirus is not over. We

2 are still fighting this fight. And as we are
3 addressing this bill, this bill is important. We
4 also have to consider thinking about how we have two,
5 again, maintain isolation calling to all New Yorkers
6 to understand that we are still going through this
7 battle. Our normally busy streets and roads have
8 become deserts. A shelter in place order has been
9 taking fact and we practiced social distance.
10 Traffic on our usually congested streets have become
11 virtually nonexistent. However, some New Yorkers,
12 like our healthcare professionals, emergency, policy
13 responders, public transit workers, and documented
14 New Yorkers that they don't have the privilege to
15 work from their house. Now they have to make a
16 decision between staying in the apartment or going to
17 work to make some money. They also need to continue
18 walking our streets. And all of us still need to go
19 out occasionally to buy groceries, medicine, and
20 other necessities or to get routine exercise,
21 especially with our children. As we encourage and
22 enforce social distancing guidance, it has become
23 apparent that we need to create additional space so
24 that New Yorkers can walk and cycle in safety
25 throughout our city streets during these difficult

2 times. We have also seen a troubling increase in
3 speeding drivers during this time. We must continue
4 expanding protections for cyclists and pedestrians.
5 We cannot burn in our hospitals with preventable
6 injuries or worse, death, because the reckless
7 drivers did not follow the law. By the way, during
8 this period of time, we have also seen some hit and
9 runs happen in our streets. We've been paying
10 attention and we know that the NYPD are following
11 those cases. Intro number 1933 would help us to do
12 that by requiring the DOT to provide additional
13 street space to pedestrians and cyclists in now few
14 than 75 [inaudible 00:12:47] street while social
15 distancing requirements are in place. Yes, in my
16 [inaudible 00:12:52] I have said before that we
17 dedicate a lane of roadway from Yonkers to [inaudible
18 00:12:58]. That can happen in our own borough. That
19 can happen also in the five boroughs of the city of
20 New York. These additional spaces would be created
21 for the use of share the street or closing at least
22 one lane on the street to vehicular traffic. This
23 open street would help the city to combat the spread
24 of COVID-19 and allow all the practice social
25 distancing while outdoors. I would now like to call

2 on Council member Carlina Rivera, co-prime of the
3 bill together with Speaker Corey Johnson.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you so much.
5 Thank you, Chair Rodriguez and to Speaker Johnson and
6 to everyone who is attending. It really is nice to
7 see people's faces. So, good morning. I am Council
8 member Carlina Rivera and I would like to think,
9 again, Chair Rodriguez and members of the Committee
10 on Transportation for letting me speak briefly at
11 this hearing on my bill, Introduction 1933, which
12 will temporarily require the city to open
13 approximately 75 miles of city streets to pedestrians
14 and cyclists during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to
15 provide New Yorkers with more room for social
16 distancing. I know this legislation has garnered
17 quite a lot of attention for simple, but powerful
18 methods of ensuring proper social distancing in our
19 neighborhood. And I am excited today to explore and
20 unpack how this kind of program can be implemented.
21 But let's be clear. We cannot wait to pass this bill
22 through the Council. With congestion in New York
23 significantly reduced by this pandemic, our open
24 streets program presents us with the immediate
25 opportunity to address the decades of an equity in

2 zoning, infrastructure, and green space investments
3 that have, in part, led to Sir and neighborhood
4 facing higher rates of COVID-19 than others. A
5 neighborhood filled with mostly detached one into
6 family homes, backyards, parks, and people working
7 from home doesn't need open streets the same way as
8 the neighborhood where families pack into one bedroom
9 apartment or children are forced to congregate on
10 cramped and cracked black tops. My bill would
11 quickly redistribute space to these communities to
12 allow for our essential workers to pursue safer
13 commuting options, provide outdoor opportunities for
14 vulnerable New Yorkers, and is families a chance to
15 play beyond the four walls of their home. At the
16 same time, an effective open streets program must be
17 one that is community led from the beginning. Cities
18 from Denver to Oakland have done just that, with
19 street locations, enforcement, and monitoring of
20 their programs led by community groups instead of
21 unneeded police officers. Each open street can also
22 look very different. It could be as simple as
23 movable barriers and a local traffic only sign at the
24 end of a neighborhood block, sidewalk extension with
25 cones in the space where a bus would normally stop,

2 or a temporary transformation of a major Avenue into
3 a linear park. And with this initial 75 mile stretch
4 required to be built out in 30 days, we will be able
5 to clearly assess and decide where and how we expand
6 or change this program on the rest of the city's
7 roughly 6000 miles of streets. Now, I know, as a
8 pedestrian, a bike rider, and a park lover how this
9 program can be effective, but I am fighting for this
10 legislation first and foremost because, as chair of
11 the Hospital's Committee, I have had far too many
12 calls with doctors infuriated in despair and at the
13 images and scene of parks crowded with New Yorkers
14 while they are still struggling to save lives.

15 Lastly, ask for epidemiologist Britta Jewel and
16 Nicholas Jewel presented research showing that, had
17 social distancing measures had been implemented on
18 March 2nd, a mere two weeks before federal policies
19 were put into effect on March 16th, an estimated 90
20 percent of COVID-19 related deaths could've been
21 prevented nationwide. Implementation, even just one
22 week earlier on March 9th, would've resulted in a 60
23 percent reduction in deaths. We may have begun to
24 flatten the curve, but we must do everything for our
25 heroic healthcare workers to ensure that curve

2 doesn't trend upward once again. We hear a lot from
3 city and state leaders about how imperative it is to
4 practice social distancing, but we don't hear too
5 much in terms of concrete plans to actually achieve
6 this once we leave our homes. And as the weather
7 gets warmer and warmer, the time for a real solution
8 becomes that much more necessary. I hope this bill
9 can be the start of a larger and successful solution
10 for healthier, safer New York and I look forward to,
11 hopefully, working with the deBlasio administration
12 to achieve this effort. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Council
14 member Rivera. Before I call right now on the
15 administration, I would like to say that we also
16 would hear from the [inaudible 00:18:13], especially
17 on any ideas and suggestions that they can have
18 related to being sure that, we will work on this bill
19 being proven on more space for cyclists and
20 pedestrians, also go along with continue improving
21 the above flying and bus services. One dysfunctional
22 bike lane or space for cyclists and pedestrians are
23 not against the maintaining our buses. We need to do
24 both. So, I just want to be sure that, again, I
25 share that with the public that I will also be

2 listening to the TWU on any ideas and concerns that
3 they can have. And I want to guarantee all New
4 Yorkers, as we have done it before. We have seen our
5 buses as the opportunity to turn buses [inaudible
6 00:19:08] above the ground trains in our city, so we
7 will do both things together. Now, I will have our
8 moderator and committee counsel call on the
9 administration to testify and to administer the oath.

10 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.
11 Before I call on the administration, I'm going to go
12 over some procedure for the hearing. I am Elliot
13 Lynn. I am counsel to the Transportation Committee
14 at the New York City Council. I want to remind
15 everyone that you will be on mute until you are
16 called on to testify. At that point, you will be un-
17 muted by the host. Please listen for your name to be
18 called. I will be periodically announcing the next
19 panelist will be. During the hearing, is Council
20 members would like to ask a question, please use the
21 Zoom raise hand function and the Chair will call you
22 in order. We will be limiting Council member
23 questions to three minutes. Please also note that,
24 for ease of this virtual hearing, we will not be
25 allowing a second round of questioning. Thank you.

2 I will now call on members of the administration.

3 From the Department of Transportation, Commissioner

4 Polly Trottenberg, deputy commissioner for

5 transportation planning and management, Eric Beaton,

6 Assistant Commissioner of intergovernmental and

7 community affairs, Rebecca Zach, and from NYPD,

8 deputy chief Michael Pilecki, and assistant deputy

9 commissioner, Oleg Chernyavsky. I will now read the

10 affirmation and then I will call on each individual

11 to confirm their response to the affirmation on the

12 record. Please raise your right hand. Do you affirm

13 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but

14 the truth in your testimony before this committee and

15 to respond honestly to Council member questions?

16 Commissioner Trottenberg?

17 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Yes.

18 LEGAL COUNSEL: Eric Beaton?

19 ERIC BEATON: Yes.

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: Rebecca Zach?

21 REBECCA ZACH: Yes.

22 LEGAL COUNSEL: Deputy Chief Pilecki?

23 Deputy Chief Pilecki? I'm not sure if we have him.

24 Oleg Chernyavsky?

25

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2 ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: Yes.

3 And just to note that I'm having technical
4 difficulties with the camera, so I called in via
5 conference call.

6 LEGAL COUNSEL: Do we have deputy chief
7 Pilecki on?

8 UNIDENTIFIED: He's here, but he's
9 having audio issues.

10 LEGAL COUNSEL: Okay. Thank you. And
11 you may begin when ready.

12 COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: Well, I think
13 we were going to start with chief Pilecki. So-- Oh.
14 There he is.

15 LEGAL COUNSEL: If we can't get the
16 Deputy Chief on right now, could DOT start first or--

17 COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: Sure.
18 Although, maybe give him one more second. I think we
19 had to--

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: orchestrate
22 PD's comments would-- Ours would follow theirs. And
23 maybe if the Chief isn't on, maybe Oleg can present
24 the PD's testimony.

25

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Oleg, can you present
3 the Chief's testimony or should we go on to DOT?

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Oleg, are you there?

5 ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: Yes.
6 I'm here. Sorry. We're just having an issue. My
7 computer is frozen, as well, so I'm trying to pull up
8 the testimony to read. Just bear with me one second.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. Okay.

10 ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY:

11 Yeah. My apologies. Once I opened up Zoom on
12 the laptop, it froze the computer. So, to try to get
13 to the testimony is a little difficult. I see Deputy
14 Chief Pilecki is holding up a sign. You are not
15 muted, Chief Pilecki. You're unmuted.

16 LEGAL COUNSEL: If the Deputy Chief is
17 having trouble with accessing Zoom via the computer,
18 he can also call in via phone.

19 ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: Ay.
20 Ay. Ay.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: They're asking for the
22 telephone number, Elliot.

23 LEGAL COUNSEL: Okay. Deputy Chief, the
24 numbers should have just been sent to you.

2 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Can you hear us
3 now?

4 UNIDENTIFIED: Can you hear us now?

5 LEGAL COUNSEL: Yes. We can.

6 UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes. We can.

8 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Okay. I'm very
9 sorry about that. We had to bring in attack fellow
10 to straighten things out. Would you like me to
11 begin?

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes, please.

13 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: All right. Good
14 morning, Chairman Rodriguez and Council Speaker
15 Johnson. I would like to first thank you both for
16 your kind and thoughtful words about Chief Morris.
17 Members of the Council, I am Deputy Chief Michael
18 Pilecki. I am the operations chief of the
19 transportation bureau within the New York City Police
20 Department. In addition to my colleagues from the
21 Department of Transportation, I am joined today by
22 Assisting Deputy Commissioner Oleg Chernyavsky. On
23 behalf of the police commissioner, Dermot Shea, I
24 would like to thank the Counsel for the opportunity
25 to comment on Intro 1933 of 2020, which would mandate

2 the closure or narrowing of 75 miles of city streets.

3 The Department wholly endorses the practice of

4 responsible social distancing during this pandemic

5 and we have taken extraordinary measures to ensure

6 that people using the city streets, sidewalks, and

7 parks are acting appropriately and maintaining a self

8 distance-- a safe distance-- from each other. Last

9 month, we detailed nearly 700 officers and

10 supervisors to a task force specifically created to

11 address this issue with the primary goal being to

12 ensure those not observing social distancing do so.

13 And these efforts have been overwhelmingly effective.

14 Since the start of the emergency, we have taken

15 minimal enforcement in those few incidents where all

16 other efforts to gain compliance have failed. Today,

17 I want to speak primarily to the overarching concern

18 this legislation would pose to the NYPD. The level

19 of man power that would be necessitated to ensure

20 this proposal and use executed safely. At the peak

21 of this crisis, just last week, the Department had a

22 daily sick count of over 7000 officers or nearly 20

23 percent of our uniformed officers. We are still

24 seeing daily sick reports of between 4000 to 5000

25 officers, which is about four or five times higher

2 than the norm. During the daily manpower deficits,
3 we have to deploy our resources strategically to
4 those areas most in need as [inaudible 00:28:08]
5 around changing day-to-day. Given these realities,
6 the employing officers or agents to the police an
7 area that is roughly the equivalent of three full New
8 York City Marathon's and would not be possible. If
9 the intent is to mimic the mixed-use streets model
10 that Oakland will be installing, then I would urge
11 caution. This is a situation that has potential to
12 severely impact public safety, as pedestrians may be
13 lulled into a false sense of safety and complacency
14 by streets that appear to be closed to traffic, but
15 are, in fact, not. In addition, while Oakland
16 announced they would be closing 74 miles worth of
17 streets, it did not do so simultaneously, as this
18 bill would have the city do. Today, nearly 2 weeks
19 after it was first announced, roughly 9 miles worth
20 of roadway has been closed with limited information
21 on its success. Even if we establish these areas
22 without a fixed police presence, I feel compelled to
23 mention that police officers will, nevertheless, be
24 summoned to risk and is 311 complaints are made that
25 individuals are either not distancing or wearing face

2 coverings. This is currently the case in public
3 parks and essential business is that I've remained
4 open throughout this national emergency. Moreover,
5 closing that many streets would still require NYPD
6 personnel to direct traffic in and around the street
7 closures or restrictions. Likewise, the concern
8 would be the permitting of pedestrians to walk in
9 and shared roadways with motor vehicles and bicycles
10 who all have the simultaneous right-of-way. The
11 risks posed by such amount of to pedestrians and
12 bicyclists alike appear to be significant, especially
13 in the absence of police presence. Regardless of
14 what some may see as a success in Oakland, there is
15 no one size fits all solution. We would not be able
16 to deploy unmonitored barricades on the scale
17 envisioned by this legislation, which will,
18 inevitably, be moved and not replaced. Closing
19 restricting 75 miles of city's streets is not the
20 equivalent of a one day block party. This proposal
21 appears to be a citywide measure with no particular
22 end date and affecting nearly all areas of the city.
23 Creating the model envisioned by the legislation
24 without an adequate level of police presence is not
25 workable and creating it with a police presence is

2 not operationally realistic in today's climate. To
3 ensure the safety of those who use our street and to
4 facilitate the flow of emergency vehicles, the
5 Department would need to pose an officer or traffic
6 agent at every impacted intersection to enforce the
7 restrictions and to move barriers when needed. In
8 some ways, it is a Catch-22. If we use movable
9 barriers, there must be personnel present to ensure
10 motorist compliance and to move those barriers for
11 emergency vehicles and deliveries. If we use them
12 movable concrete barriers, emergency vehicles,
13 deliveries, and residents on those streets will be
14 indefinitely rerouted. And we must have personnel
15 present to direct this traffic. Not to mention, the
16 valuable minutes ambulances, fire trucks, and police
17 vehicles will spend taking alternate routes to
18 respond to emergencies. If an immovable barrier is
19 installed which leaves enough space for that
20 emergency vehicle to pass, we are back to square one
21 and must place an officer or traffic agent at that
22 location to enforce the restriction. This is, of
23 course, complicated issue and we should work together
24 to, with creative ways to provide individuals with
25 functional public spaces they can use while

2 maintaining safe distances. The Department stands
3 ready to work with the Council and our sister
4 agencies to ensure New Yorkers are afforded such
5 spaces in a manner that does not require a
6 significant investment of police resources or the
7 word create situations that will require enforcement
8 of emergency health and safety orders currently in
9 place. We thank you for the opportunity to speak
10 about this critical issue and we look forward to
11 answering any questions that you may have.

12 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well, would
13 you like me to go next?

14 LEGAL COUNSEL: Yes, please.

15 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Okay. Thank
16 you, Chief Pilecki. Good morning, Speaker Johnson,
17 Council member Rivera, Chairman Rodriguez, and
18 members of the Transportation Committee. I am Polly
19 Trottenberg, Commissioner of the New York City
20 Department of Transportation and you heard joined by
21 Deputy Commissioner for traffic planning and
22 management, Eric Beaton and, assistant commissioner
23 for intergovernmental and community affairs, Rebecca
24 Zach. DOT and NYPD thank you for the opportunity to
25 testify on but have of Mayor Bill deBlasio on the

2 legislation before the committee tasking DOT with
3 opening 75 miles of city streets up to pedestrians
4 and cyclists during the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent
5 years, DOT has been proud to aggressively design and
6 implement hundreds and hundreds of street safety,
7 bike lane, bus lane, and pedestrian plaza projects
8 throughout the five boroughs and we passionately
9 share the goal of opening more of our city's streets
10 to mass transit, banks, and pedestrians. During the
11 COVID-19 crisis, New York City government is facing
12 profound personnel, operation all, and budgetary
13 challenges. We have taken ahead like almost no other
14 city in the world and we are still grappling with the
15 virus every day. We want to work closely with the
16 Council to find common ground on our shared goal of
17 making many more miles of our streets and sidewalks
18 safer and more available for New Yorkers seeking open
19 space, but we ask the Council recognize the many
20 challenges and competing demands all of us in city
21 government, especially the NYPD, are facing. As we
22 all know, we are the epicenter of this global
23 pandemic and both NYPD and DOT, like many of our
24 sister agencies, have felt the impact of the virus
25 directly, with many employees infected, out sick, and

2 some lost forever. And we certainly join with every
3 wind here today and our thoughts and prayers are with
4 Chief Morris and with some of our own employees who
5 are also hospitalized and gravely ill. You know, we
6 have mourned the loss of colleagues and our hearts go
7 out to all New Yorkers who have lost loved ones. And
8 the crisis has circulated should radically changed
9 city streets. Street activity has plunged, which has
10 led to one bit of good news. We have had the longest
11 period without a pedestrian fatality-- I think it's
12 40 or 41 days-- since we began tracking by mode in
13 1983. But, unfortunately, in our much emptier
14 streets, some drivers are speeding recklessly and we
15 can never let up on our vigilance. DOT speed cameras
16 have issued almost double the number of violations
17 compared to the above for says and, as the chart
18 shows, included in my testimony. And we are
19 continuing our pace of installing 16 new speed
20 cameras each month and planned to meet our goal of
21 standing up the largest speed camera program in the
22 real world. At DOT, we are also maintaining the
23 agency's critical functions, including emergency
24 roadway, bridge, sidewalk, and traffic operations,
25 infrastructure repairs, as well as running the Staten

2 Island ferry 24/7. And we are working closely with
3 our union partners to ensure that our workforce is
4 properly social distanced, well-equipped, and fully
5 supported. You have heard Chief Pilecki testify,
6 when closing streets both agencies want to prioritize
7 public safety, first and foremost, including the
8 safety of all street users and ensuring the safe
9 operations for buses, trucks carrying supplies, and
10 emergency vehicles. Thus, while we share the
11 underlying principles of the bill before the
12 committee today, opening up 75 miles of streets to
13 pedestrians and cyclist, about 800 blocks, doing it
14 in the timeframe that bill mandates, would not be
15 possible to do safely and effectively given the
16 significant strain all the relevant city agencies are
17 under. Many supporters of extensive closures have
18 cited Oakland's plans as a model New York City could
19 follow. As Chief Pilecki noted, while Oakland
20 announced it would discourage car traffic on 74 miles
21 of streets on April 11th, thus far, as he testified,
22 the city has implemented fewer than 10 miles and what
23 Oakland is doing is discouraging, but not completely
24 prohibiting car traffic on its streets in phases that
25 a deliberate pace and not all in a week. At DOT, we

2 examined Oakland model and see cities with some
3 different realities and possibilities. Alameda
4 County, where Oakland is located, has had fewer than
5 1350 known COVID cases, about 366 in Oakland, and 46
6 death countywide. Oakland is just one city and
7 Alameda County. A small fraction of the number of
8 people compared to what New York has lost on a per
9 capita basis. I think we all know New York City is,
10 tragically, still seeing more COVID fatality use
11 every few hours than Alameda County has seen to date.
12 Our agencies are there for under a very different
13 strain resource wise, and I think Chief Pilecki spoke
14 eloquently about that. And that makes us also want
15 to be far more cautious about enforcing social
16 distancing and any public spaces we create.
17 Additionally, our cities are built very differently
18 and our streets see disparate uses. New York City is
19 the densest city in the contrary, a source of pride
20 for us in good times, with around 27,000 people per
21 square mile citywide, almost 70,000 people per square
22 mile in Manhattan, compared to 7000 people per square
23 mile in Oakland. The street that will be opened up
24 to pedestrians and bikes in Oakland are typically low
25 density, single or multi-family residential streets

2 where overcrowding is not a major concern. In
3 contrast, New York City's density varies greatly by
4 neighborhood and ensuring close streets are equitably
5 distributed, particularly in minority and low income
6 communities, will require closures in dense areas
7 with complicated uses in higher traffic volumes. We
8 think there are some challenges to the Oakland model,
9 but we do want to work with the Council to find ways,
10 given the city's current resource constraints, to
11 create more miles of open space for pedestrians and
12 cyclists, while not causing crowding that requires
13 additional NYPD enforcement or significant disruption
14 to emergency vehicles, trucks carrying supplies, or
15 mass transit. We are currently evaluating multiple
16 strategies to meet this need and help in the coming
17 days we can find common ground with you and other key
18 stakeholders with whom DOT has also been talking.
19 Beyond any temporary measures, which will be
20 challenging to implement while the pandemic is still
21 raging, we are starting to plan larger term about
22 what our transportation system will look like when
23 our city begins to reopen, including talking to our
24 regional transit partners, business groups, expert
25 advocates, and our counterparts in other cities,

2 especially in Asia and Europe. We will face a new
3 reality with many unknowns, but it will also present
4 a unique moment to rethink our streets, both in the
5 immediate recovery and over time to ensure that they
6 are safe, healthy, sustainable, more bike and
7 pedestrian friendly, and supportive of a rekindled
8 civic and economic life. We look forward to working
9 with the Council in the days and weeks ahead. Thank
10 you for the opportunity to testify and we look
11 forward to your questions.

12 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Speaker
13 Johnson or Chair Rodriguez?

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes. Hold on one
15 moment.

16 LEGAL COUNSEL: Okay.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Commissioner
18 Trottenberg. Thank you, Chief Pilecki, as well. I
19 want to start with the pilot program. I know you
20 think it didn't work, but I don't understand what the
21 administration would have considered a success. We
22 didn't want this streets to be too crowded. That
23 would defeat the point. So, what were the metrics
24 that were being looked at? What would a successful
25 pilot have looked like? Do you really think that

2 launching this pilot with barely a days' notice and
3 run a net force you rainy, cold days was giving it a
4 fair shot? And, if you had to do it again, would you
5 run the pilot in the same way? Either the Deputy
6 Chief or the Commissioner can answer that.

7 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, maybe
8 we'll both take a crack. I can answer-- You know,
9 no question we stood the pilot up quickly. And, you
10 know, this is, I think, a learning curve that we are
11 all on. I think, obviously, the measure of success
12 is creating space that people can enjoy, but does not
13 become so crowded that NYPD has a lot of enforce--

14 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah, but you didn't put
15 sugar on top of the creamer, did you?

16 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I think,
17 obviously, look, it got some criticism and I think it
18 is something we are still thinking through. How to--
19 and I think Chief Pilecki talked to the dilemma. How
20 to create space that we know is safe where we can
21 accommodate emergency vehicles, trucks, things we
22 need. And not have it the soap personnel intensive.
23 We are exploring different ways to do that, that you
24 have mentioned. Perhaps more permanent physical
25 barriers. I mean, there are other ways we can do it,

2 but I think that that is proved the element of this
3 that is the most challenging. I don't know what the
4 chief would say.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Chief Pilecki, you're--

6 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Topside, can you
7 hear me?

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Now we can hear you.

9 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Okay. So, I mean,
10 listen. I would agree with everything that the
11 Commissioners said. I think that, preliminarily,
12 when we looked at the amount of people that were out
13 on the streets utilizing the open spaces, there were
14 not many at all. There were extremely, extremely
15 light, so it seemed like, although the space was
16 provided, it really was very much underutilized.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Earlier this week, the
18 mayor said that one reason we can't have street
19 closures like the ones we are seeing on the West
20 Coast is because driving culture is different in
21 California. That they are more likely to stop for
22 pedestrians. What is that based on? Do you have any
23 data that you could share to back that up?

24 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I don't have any
25 data that can back that up.

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Commissioner?

3 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, I
4 guess I will save this. It's funny. You know, we
5 have seen some-- in my time as Commissioner looking
6 at vision zero, we've seen a lot of tragic crashes.
7 And I have to say, I think, a lot of irresponsible
8 driving by New Yorkers. We are seeing speeding going
9 up extraordinarily. The speed cameras that we have
10 are issuing twice as many tickets. So, I don't know
11 what the mayor was referencing to in terms of the
12 West Coast, but I can say I know it is something
13 we've been talking to PD about, the level of
14 confidence we have of doing a West Coast model where
15 we just, you know, basically put up the sawhorse and
16 hope that folks won't drive through it. It is
17 something, I think, we want to make sure if we do it
18 here we are doing it in a way that is safe.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And it's not just the
20 West Coast. Cities all over the US and all over the
21 world are ahead of us. How many open streets
22 programs have DOT and the NYPD looked at and
23 evaluated?

24 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, I
25 think we've-- I'm not sure. Maybe my staff can jump

2 in. We have probably looked at eight or nine of
3 them. You know, again, I think I can reiterate from
4 my testimony, many of the cities that we have looked
5 at, and Oakland is a good example, have seen very,
6 you know-- luckily for them and I wish we were them,
7 believe me, very little-- you know, relatively
8 little impact from the coronavirus. Far fewer people
9 sickened. Far fewer people dying. And so both their
10 city government ranks that they have much more people
11 available and, I think, less of a struggle with
12 social distancing. On the other cities we have
13 talked to, at least, don't have the same level of
14 density as New York City. So, were learning from
15 talking to other cities, but I do think we sort of
16 phase a particular set of challenges here in New York
17 right now. And I think, over time, you know, we
18 have, you know, thank God, started to see the curve
19 easing off and that is wonderful news, you know, as
20 was mentioned in the testimony, members of our
21 workforces who were out sick, some are coming back
22 and we will, hopefully, get back to being more at
23 full strength, but we're not there yet.

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Have you looked at
25 Milan?

2 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: We have taken
3 a look at Milan. Yes. And northern Italy--

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] That
5 region of Italy, as we know, has been one of the
6 hardest at places.

7 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Right. No
8 question.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [inaudible 00:45:32]

10 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Northern Italy
11 has been very comparable, probably, in terms of the
12 impact. They are, you know, further along the curve
13 of coming out of it now than New York City. I think
14 they are looking at doing-- my last read and maybe
15 there's more developments here-- about 22 mile bike
16 and pedestrian routes. And, again, I think we are,
17 as we are saying in our testimony, very interested in
18 working with you all on that. I just think you are
19 hearing from us, you know, particular struggles in
20 this immediate moment with workforce and social
21 distancing and PD resources.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I hear that and I
23 understand that, but what I haven't heard in the
24 testimony and what I haven't heard over the last few
25 days or few weeks are what are the administrations

2 ideas? What ideas do you all have? I haven't seen
3 anything proactive for a word by you all does say,
4 okay. We are not the same as Oakland. We are not
5 the same as Milan. We are New York City, but here
6 are the things that we think we can do. Here are the
7 places that we need to think we can safely close.
8 Here is the data that we are looking at. Here is
9 where we have successfully done things like this in
10 the past where we can start off. I haven't heard
11 that, so I would like to hear that. I would like to
12 hear what your ideas are at this point, not here are
13 the operational concerns. Those are real. We
14 understand those. We can talk through those, about
15 what are the ideas that you all have on what we can
16 be doing? That's what I would like to hear.

17 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well, I think
18 you heard we alluded to some of them the day. You
19 know, wind news looking particularly at models that
20 are not labor-intensive. And, as Chief Pilecki
21 mentioned, you know, particularly, again, looking
22 more physical barricades. The challenge is being to
23 the extent that you are, you know, really making
24 streets and permeable and how do you make sure that,
25 you know, it's not too much rerouting of emergency

2 vehicles, ambulances, etc. But I think that is one
3 model that we are looking at. And the other, you
4 know, certainly, the Oakland model relies more on
5 local neighborhood groups. You know, sort of
6 nonprofit partners. And I know [inaudible 00:47:52]
7 have certainly shown some interest and we have been
8 talking to them. You know, again, we want to make
9 sure that things we do there would be safe and I know
10 Chief Pilecki has some thoughts on that.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And just to be clear,
12 the bill allows you to do all of that. Everything
13 that you just mentioned, the bill allows you to do
14 that.

15 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Boy
16 understand. And that's why I think-- Again, I think
17 we can have a lot of common ground with you all on
18 achieving the goals of the bill. I just think, you
19 know, while we are still in a pandemic mode where
20 they ambulances raising through our streets, we want
21 to make sure that we get right.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But it just want ask,
23 when you all of been looking at other plans from
24 other cities around the world, what issues have you
25 seen with emergency vehicles and places that have

2 done plans to allow for more streets for pedestrians
3 and cyclists and other folks? What issues--

4 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: [inaudible
5 00:48:51]

6 SPEAKER JOHNSON: have you identified for
7 emergency vehicles?

8 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Right. I
9 mean, I think in, at least, one of the other cities
10 that we have been looking at, there is much less
11 density and they are in sort of a different place in
12 terms of hospitalizations, fatalities, and
13 ambulances. I think, if you look at cities that were
14 in still very much the heat of the pandemic, some of
15 those areas in northern Italy, they haven't sort of
16 gotten to what they are looking at now, which is, you
17 know, changing streets. So I think it's been an
18 evolution for them. I think it will be an evolution
19 for us and, you know, again, I'll see if Chief
20 Pilecki wants to add to that.

21 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I'm muted.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yeah.

23 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Can you hear me
24 now?

25 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes.

2 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Okay. I have not
3 done an analysis of the emergency vehicles and other
4 cities and how they are able to traverse the streets
5 where we have these types of, UH, closures in place,
6 so I really can't speak to that. With regard to
7 suggestions-- You had asked, hey, what kind of
8 suggestions do you have? As the commissioner and
9 mentioned, Diana, we want to work with the Council in
10 coming up with a program that would be safe, that
11 would be not labor-intensive or would not require
12 some NYPD resources being deployed. There's a few
13 things that we had discussed that, you know, maybe we
14 can come together on.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: When you looked at these
16 other cities, was there an increase in traffic
17 crashes or fatalities?

18 COMMISSIONER TROTTENBERG: I mean, I
19 think most of them are just getting started and I
20 haven't really had a chance to pour over their
21 statistics. I know Eric Beaton, one of my to city
22 commissioners is here. I don't know if he wants to
23 add to that. I think for a lot of them it is just
24 been sort of a week or two.

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Were there any-- Have
3 you--

4 ERIC BEATON: Yeah.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: seen any problems
6 because of a lack of enforcement?

7 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: And I know,
8 Eric, if you had anything to add to that.

9 ERIC BEATON: Sure. Other cities have very
10 much used models like what we talked about with
11 Oakland and that has been sure to whether it is
12 Burlington, Minneapolis. You know, there's a list of
13 cities that they inherently rely on very little
14 enforcement because they don't actually prohibit any
15 vehicles from the streets which means that there is
16 no issue with emergency response or that sort of
17 thing. But that also means that there is potential
18 conflict on the street and may very much use single-
19 family low density, extremely low density, areas of
20 those cities. So, when we look at New York, say,
21 even our state, the number of trucks, the number of
22 emergency vehicles, the number of even private cars
23 of people go away in place is, it is substantially
24 higher. And so, we try to learn what we can from
25 those cities and we have absolutely been talking to

2 them and seeing what works and what doesn't and a
3 very short amount of time, but the land use is really
4 pretty different and having our streets-- you know,
5 imagine they are in Manhattan or and enter Brooklyn
6 or Queens Street, you know, there is just a lot more
7 activity going on that we want to make sure is either
8 accommodated or not in some safe way.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Are we letting the
10 perfect become the enemy of the good? I mean, how do
11 you, you know-- sounds like you are setting a bar
12 that is so high that it's impossible to actually
13 clear. It's just hard for me to understand, when you
14 step back and you talk about this issue more
15 generally, you know, for a minute, that they are--
16 this is happening in other busy cities, as you said.
17 Other densities, maybe not as Dan says here. Other
18 cities that have a lot of drivers, other cities that
19 rely on deliveries. Other cities that need emergency
20 vehicles to get around. Do you all believe that New
21 York City is so different from all those other cities
22 that we can't apply any of those lessons here?

23 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I don't
24 believe that, but I do believe, at the moment, we are
25 different from, at least, every city in the United

2 States and mostly around the world in the severity of
3 what we are experiencing with the coronavirus. In
4 that regard, I think we are a tragic outlier with the
5 level of infection and fatalities and needs for
6 medical supplies is, I think, in that regard, we are
7 pretty different. I hope over time we all pray that
8 will change and we want to find ways to, you know,
9 accommodate in our city street as it does, but I
10 think that is-- In talking to a couple of my fellow
11 DOT commissioners, that's a very different reality we
12 have here in New York City, unfortunately.

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, if you stepped back
14 for a moment and you just think generally about the
15 city, it's not-- you know comment about this issue,
16 it's not just about getting more space for people to
17 exercise to get fresh air. This is also about
18 recreation. Water New Yorkers still need to go out
19 and shop for food, to do laundry. For essential
20 workers to get to work. And they need to be able to
21 do that safely. Do you know what percentage of the
22 sidewalks in New York City are at least six feet
23 wide?

24 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I was trying
25 to get an answer to that question for the hearing. I

2 don't know if we dug it out, but I need, I am going
3 to say there is probably a very good percentage of
4 sidewalks in New York City that, if you count trees
5 and street furniture and other things, it's-- You're
6 not going to have an ability to perfectly clear six
7 feet between two folks. You know, what I've seen is
8 New Yorkers being adaptable and stepping out of each
9 other's ways and crossing the street and, look, we
10 know, as the weather gets warmer, this is going to be
11 a bigger challenge, but, I think, most old cities
12 have large proportions of sidewalks that are pretty
13 narrow. It is definitely a challenge we are all
14 going to face.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: just a couple more
16 questions. I actually think that we have been lucky
17 when it comes to the weather. We have only had a
18 handful of warm, sunny days this spring, but we are
19 heading into May and if we are still in this
20 situation when we get some may or get to June, you
21 are going to have a lot of kids with a lot more free
22 time once the official school year ends. You have
23 closed playgrounds. It looks like pools and beaches
24 may not be available in the way that they have been
25 in the past this summer. What is our plan to make

2 sure New Yorkers have some options of other than a
3 park? Are you all working with the Parks department
4 and with City Hall on potential contingency plans to
5 allow for more space for New Yorkers?

6 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: mean, I know
7 that the exact issues you are raising, Mr. Speaker,
8 are certainly under discussion at City Hall with all
9 the relevant agencies. And I think you know the
10 mayor made none of those decisions lately about
11 closing playgrounds and other things. He is, as a
12 parent, very sympathetic to the needs of kids to get
13 out and get exercise and we know the warmer weather
14 is coming. So there is, I think, a lot of thinking
15 and planning going on and how we are going to address
16 that.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. Well, I look
18 forward to hearing your ideas. I mean, I haven't
19 heard a plan from you all. We've been talking about
20 this for weeks and I would have thought that you all
21 would have come in today and said, we've identified X
22 number of streets that cover X number of miles where
23 we think that we can actually do this and I hope that
24 is what will happen in the coming days. So, I want
25 to thank you, Mr. Chairman. I turn it back to you

2 and the committee counsel. I thank you,
3 Commissioners Trottenberg and Deputy Chief Pilecki.
4 And I look forward to hearing from the other members
5 and the members of the public today. Thank you very
6 much.

7 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Thank you, Mr.
8 Speaker.

9 CHAIRMAN RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Speaker
10 Johnson. [inaudible 00:57:00] my end we are not, I'm
11 not, a sole one that represent a heavily Latino
12 district and so, one that has been spending hours and
13 hours walking around in the Bronx and Manhattan
14 knowing that, even though when we know someone who
15 died [inaudible 00:57:31] person, you make it to the
16 newspaper, but when you look, even when we get the
17 lower numbers of people dying in the 400 and still
18 it's like too much. And we know that now we're used
19 to hundreds of people dying every day. It's
20 [inaudible 00:57:48]. So, those individuals who are
21 not well known-- and we don't want anyone from the
22 8.6 million people to die. And mostly they are the
23 poorest ones. They are the ones that, you know,
24 close 40 percent [inaudible 00:58:03]. They're
25 African-Americans. They're Asian. And poor

2 individuals besides the few that we don't want even
3 to die. So by no means, in my case, I'm looking at
4 reopening the city of New York in these days. I
5 think that, if the numbers of people dying is right
6 now in hundreds of thousands of people, Speaker
7 Johnson, that we have no track on people who deal
8 with the coronavirus. Like the city of New York, the
9 state of New York, we don't have the numbers of how
10 many people call 311 and they say we have the
11 symptoms of the coronavirus and they're being told to
12 stay in your apartment and, as I said before, it's
13 not an apartment of someone that is working
14 [inaudible 00:58:53] being able to get a large
15 apartment. It's someone that's I share the story of
16 11 people who live in [inaudible 00:59:03] with 10
17 people who live together in an apartment in the Bronx
18 and the same number that you would see, especially in
19 the poorest neighborhoods. So, when I, again,
20 believe on closing or opening the street to
21 pedestrians and cyclists, first of all, the pilot
22 project that we did, I think that we put ourselves to
23 fail. I think that to look at the just closing a few
24 blocks of Grand Concourse, a few blocks of Manhattan,
25 it was not a vision to say, let's close the whole

2 street. Let's identify areas close to the park, as
3 we did on Central Park. I mean, on Park Avenue. I
4 was not saying Grand Course [inaudible 00:59:43]. So
5 I think, again-- first, definitely, I support this
6 bill co-primed by Speaker Johnson, Council member
7 Cabrera, and all of my colleagues because I think
8 that we need to have this conversation. But I want
9 to be clear. That even though some people we are
10 talking about, we need to start looking at reopening
11 the street. Don't bring that conversation to the
12 poorest neighborhoods. Don't go to the South Bronx
13 or Washington Heights or Queens, Brooklyn, Staten
14 Island where there is hundreds of thousands of people
15 that they are poor living together and an apartment
16 dealing with the coronavirus. When you check out a
17 hospital, and a hospital you ask how many people
18 called the 311 and you already track those people as
19 ones that they have the coronavirus, no one has put
20 that information together. So, and even though,
21 again, as we heard that Bloomberg would be leading
22 that thing to track-- I said from day one, please
23 sit in the front table, the leaders and the faces of
24 the Latinos and the Black and the Asian communities
25 who are the ones dying. So in this plan, in this

2 bill, as we are discussing the ideas to reopening the
3 streets, I call the non-Black and Latino brothers and
4 sisters, you know, the stakeholders, to please, let's
5 look at the top priority areas that we have as a
6 transportation desert. Communities that we have that
7 they don't have access to buy an expensive bike or to
8 pay for the city bike. And let's look about the
9 NYCHA program that [inaudible 01:01:22] look and stop
10 at some place or some point on the corner in
11 Manhattan, in Brooklyn. Look at the faces of the
12 cyclists. Count how many are Black and Latino. We
13 have many of them delivering food, but when it comes
14 time to get into their bike, working, using their
15 bike as a mode of transportation, I will be working
16 with my colleagues, be sure, that in this plan of
17 opening the 75 miles that we look first at those
18 communities that, in this time of coronavirus, most
19 people who are dying, who are getting the
20 coronavirus, first they are dealing with asthma and
21 obesity. So question to you, Commissioner
22 Trottenberg, as someone who also knows very well, as
23 I have said before and not only the city, but our
24 country, and with the bailout that will provide
25 opportunities, I would [inaudible 01:02:19] they

2 would not be doing so bad. Many of them have been
3 getting hundreds of millions of dollars. Even close
4 to 1 billion dollars a larger hospital will get. And
5 I think that this plan also has to be seen the
6 prospective of health. So as we know that there's
7 going to be some cost involved, do you see-- and as
8 both of you, the Chief and the Commissioner have been
9 saying that you're open to work with the Speaker, to
10 work with Council member Cabrera and the whole
11 Council to continue this conversation with this bill.
12 Do you see an opportunity to bring the hospital to
13 the table? So as I know [inaudible 01:03:05] they
14 will get close to 1 billion dollars. That's the
15 expectation in this bailout plan. So they also
16 should take some of this money and put that money
17 together if there is any cost involved, again, in the
18 surrounding area. So what opportunities do you see
19 also to bring the hospital to work together to spend
20 some money to make this plan a reality?

21 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well, Mr.
22 Chairman, I want to thank you because, as you know,
23 we have worked with you on Columbia-Presbyterian and
24 improving, you know, access to the bike share and we
25 are going to do that with some of the other hospitals

2 in Northern Manhattan and in the Bronx. And I think
3 we have been having a good dialogue with the
4 hospitals and Greater New York Hospital Association
5 throughout the crisis, helping them with parking and
6 transportation and another needs. So, I think,
7 obviously, you are absolutely right. We should bring
8 them in to this dialogue. You know, I have certainly
9 heard from various institutions around the city who
10 have an interest in working with those going forward
11 and the hospitals, I think, will be key players in
12 that.

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Do you feel that,
14 Chief, again, if we get this bill moved on and, of
15 course, I support, Speaker Johnson, and the rest of
16 my colleagues, do you see an opportunity also to
17 expand those streets, giving more space in the
18 streets for cyclists and pedestrians in underserved
19 communities or do you understand why is that so
20 important in underserved communities?

21 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, I
22 think, Mr. Chairman, you're right in, you know, as we
23 have looked at-- and I hear what the Speaker is
24 saying that we're not laying out a lot of specifics
25 today, but I do think we want to sit down as soon as

2 possible with the Council and talk through more
3 specifics. And we totally recognize how important it
4 is to make sure that underserved communities are
5 benefiting from open space. And, you know, it's part
6 of why, as much as, again, we've seen some of the
7 bids who want to volunteer in a lot of low income
8 neighborhoods around the city. You know, the bids
9 may not be well resourced or able to help make these
10 types of projects happen and we want to make sure
11 that the city can be there to help. So, again, an
12 area we certainly want to talk to the Council about
13 as soon as possible.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. I just,
15 again, I share the [inaudible 01:05:25] conversation
16 as I believe in any area and also we lived that
17 experience after 9/11 that when it was time to sit
18 down and then about ideas and suggestions, to come
19 out of that crisis, and this time also. And I feel--
20 and this something that I've been calling-- I'm
21 calling to my white progressive New Yorkers to
22 understand that sometimes they have to step out
23 sometimes for [inaudible 01:05:53] space and create
24 the opportunity to sit on the front lines. Those
25 individuals of those institutions who know block by

2 block. You know, are aware of those people who are
3 dying and, I think, at this moment, we have seen one
4 more time that the city of New York, unfortunately
5 when you see who are dying, they are the poorest
6 ones. Who are dying? Those people they have not
7 access to the bicycles, to buy the bike or to pay the
8 monthly fee for city bikes. Or to rent it or buy an
9 electrical car. So, again, I hope that we will be
10 able to work around this bill, but I also want to be
11 sure that the city of New York, for that sake,
12 understands that, you know, sometimes, because a
13 little [inaudible 01:06:33] is a privilege and I
14 think that we need to share that spaces, especially
15 that's causing the need to open the streets. Not
16 everyone lives across a park. Not everyone is in a
17 position to say, you know, I can walk in this park
18 together with my one or two children. We're talking
19 about most people dying that live in overcrowded
20 apartments. Most of the people dying, they live in
21 transportation area. Most of those people dying,
22 they close to [inaudible 01:07:05]. And yet, asthma,
23 obesity, and diabetes are so associated with most
24 people who, as we are holding this hearing right now,
25 they are dying in hospital. So, [speaking foreign

2 language]. Thank you. Now, I would like to have and
3 call on one of the co-primes on this bill together
4 with Speaker Johnson. Council member Carlina.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Hi. I just want
6 to-- Is there a timer?

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No. You can take
8 your time. The rest of the colleagues, they will
9 have three minutes, but the co-prime is-- don't
10 worry about the time.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Don't worry. I
12 won't take too much time. I know there is a lot of
13 people that want to ask questions and there is a long
14 list of advocates that is certainly want to get to
15 because I think that their input is going to be
16 important. As we are all saying, this is to promote
17 safe social distancing. Not every neighborhood is
18 going to utilize a program like this, compared to
19 many, many others. So, I just want to follow up on a
20 couple of things. I wanted to reiterate what the
21 Speaker said in terms of being a bit disappointed.
22 You know, there really is no plan from the Department
23 of Transportation. There really is nothing
24 presented, after all of these weeks, after the pilot.
25 1.6 miles, I believe, was the original pilot with I

2 thought was already way too limited in scope and was
3 got implemented, I think, with the community the way
4 that it should have been and what of lead the more
5 success. So, just a few questions. Then, again,
6 mostly disappointed in some of the comments that
7 people, in terms of the trust in New Yorkers, I just
8 ask that we can tell when streets are open. We can
9 assess our own communities and where we can go and
10 what is the safest thing for our families. We may
11 still have challenges, but, as you've seen, many of
12 us have significantly changed our behavior, even
13 overnight. And so, I think this is just one program
14 as a part of the long-term solution that we have kind
15 of been exploring historically with summer streets
16 and plays streets and do you have some of these
17 street as places that continue to be closed every
18 year, so I don't know why we can't just start with
19 some of those recommendations. Bad I am just going
20 to ask a few questions. So, in terms of the pilot,
21 you know, you mentioned time meeting to implement
22 things. It's already been many, many weeks. Or, at
23 least, any data points that you collected as part of
24 the pilot review?

2 COMMISSIONER TROTTENBERG: I'm sorry.

3 You mean the four sites we tested?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Is there anything
5 that you learned that you are, perhaps, applying to a
6 program that you seem to want to collaborate with us
7 on, but has yet to be unveiled?

8 COMMISSIONER TROTTENBERG: I mean, I
9 think all turned to the Chief. I mean, I think the
10 challenge we had was how to do it and a way that was
11 not so PD intensive. And I'm not sure we, obviously,
12 found the right formula. I don't know, Chief, if you
13 want to--

14 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I absolutely agree
15 with that. I mean, we want to sit down with the
16 Council. We want to come to a consensus on a plan
17 that is not labor-intensive to the NYPD. And we,
18 again, just want to stress that there is a danger
19 involved in not staffing intersection and relying
20 solely on barricades to prevent vehicles from turning
21 onto the streets that we are going to close and
22 prevent them from turning onto those streets and
23 injuring people. It's not a question of not trusting
24 New Yorkers. New Yorkers are great people, but we
25 know that there could be a small percentage of people

2 who, for whatever reason, might want to get onto that
3 block and move the barrier and drive on to the street
4 and, maybe, not put the barrier back which would
5 invite other cars to turn onto the street at will and
6 it would present a danger to people. I can't tell
7 you how many times or details that I have worked to
8 where we have had police tape up, and the interior of
9 crime scenes taped up and it is clear is day wrapped
10 around, perhaps, tree. May be taking up half a block
11 and people will walk up and see that tape. They well
12 lifted up and just walk right through. So, there are
13 people who will disregard barriers. There are people
14 who will disregard signs. Then our concern is just,
15 again, that it just poses a safety risk to the people
16 who are going to be utilizing the street.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I just ask that we
18 don't categorize the public for a few of the bad
19 actors. You two have movable barriers. You have
20 used-- similar measures are often used for
21 construction projects with fairly limited enforcement
22 or oversight needed in those cases, so I think we can
23 implement something similar. That is the question is
24 staffing-- If staffing is a concern, how far does
25 the curve need to be lowered for work to begin on

2 this? Milan and northern Italy have seen a few
3 weeks-- Has been a few weeks ahead of us, so this is
4 something you can do in a few weeks? I know you
5 mentioned seven days has been a concern and I just
6 want to note on the density, Milan which is
7 implementing a similar program, as was mentioned by
8 the speaker, is so dense it would be the second
9 densest in the nation. So, how much time would you
10 need to be able to do something like this? And if
11 you have noticed, in the bill, there is also a
12 reporting structure so that we can review this and
13 figure out whether, one, it's working-- which I
14 think it will be successful because we want to use
15 community groups-- and two, maybe there are certain
16 areas where could be more of a long-term solution.

17 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I think that before
18 we can give you some type of time estimate, we first
19 have to sit down with the Council and DOT and
20 together come to consensus with regard to the amount
21 of roadway that would be involved, the location of
22 the roadways that would be involved, and then, once
23 that is determined, figure out what the staffing
24 levels would be at that point and how we could police
25 the streets with a minimal amount of resources.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: So, there was notes
3 and the testimony that there hasn't been a single
4 traffic fatality for the last 40 days. The longest
5 period of time without a fatality in the history of
6 tracking this information.

7 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: A single
8 pedestrian fatality.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: One? There
10 wasn't--

11 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: No. I'm just
12 saying not all traffic fatalities. We have had a
13 motorist fatality, but a single pedestrian fatality.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Well, no. I
15 appreciate you correcting me because every single
16 fatality that we have experienced tightness in
17 someone's loved one. So, I appreciate the
18 correction. Doesn't that show that our streets are
19 safe enough curve leave for an open streets program
20 in the right areas?

21 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, I will
22 say I think it's-- I feel like the data is
23 challenging for us because, on the one hand, because
24 so many people are staying home-- and you all are
25 correct. The weather has helped us. We had kind of

2 a cold and rainy April people have not been out. But
3 speeding have been pretty extraordinary, I think,
4 anyone who has spent a little bit of time walking
5 around the streets of New York, I've seen some cars
6 engaging in some pretty reckless behavior. So I
7 think it is, as we are encouraging people to come out
8 and be in the street, I think you are hearing from
9 the Chief, we just want to make sure we are doing it
10 safely. I think there are ways that we can come up
11 with the model. We are very committed to working
12 with you all on it, but there are just some competing
13 tensions there and I think, for all of us, we just
14 never would want to see a situation where we were
15 meeting people to believe it was safe to be out in
16 the street and we have motorists who, you know,
17 inadvertently or maybe even a bad actor, did
18 something dangerous.

19 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I'd like to make a
20 couple of points, if I might. Just like to address
21 the issue of speeding. We had, obviously, identified
22 the fact that there was an uptick in speeding earlier
23 in April, so, starting on April 7th, we kind of
24 shifted gears a bit and we deployed more highway cars
25 to conduct radar enforcement. So, from 3/20 to 4/6,

2 the average number of speed summons was issued by a
3 Highway Patrol or was 115. After we stepped up our
4 increased enforcement, from 4/7 to 4/19, the average
5 number of speed summons is issued by Highway Patrol
6 went up to 222 a day. So, it's over 100 speed
7 violations summons is being issued on our highways
8 since we stepped up our increased enforcement. In
9 addition to that on the highways, we have deployed
10 additional cars from our citywide traffic task force.
11 These are the cars that don't ordinarily patrol on
12 the highways, but patrol, instead, on the local
13 streets. We deployed them to the highways throughout
14 the city and we have them patrolling in the left-hand
15 lane of the highways with their turn lights on the
16 physically slow down cars on the highways. And we
17 found that cars are extremely reluctant to pass these
18 cars for fear of getting a summons. So, that seems
19 to be working out very well. We have an increase in
20 speed summons is that are being issued. We have more
21 highway officers coming back to work from sick. We
22 had a high of 50 Highway Patrol officers out at one
23 point. We're down to about 20 now, so we are getting
24 more resources out there in the field. In just one
25 other thing with regard to, Commissioner, the DOT

2 speed cameras. We found that, taking a look at the
3 data-- and just bear with me one second. So, the
4 speeds identified by the DOT speed cameras seemed to
5 have peaked on April the 6th. There was 200-- I'm
6 sorry. 2.03 million cars pass the cameras on that
7 date with 31,911 or 1.59 percent of the vehicles
8 exceeding the limit. It has steadily reduced from
9 April the 6th to the point where on, April the 21st,
10 2.05 million cars past the cameras which was 24,541
11 were exceeding the limit which was 1.3. So, that's a
12 nice reduction. That 24,541 on April 21st was a 24
13 percent reduction in speeders from the 31,000 number.
14 So, on the side streets, we are showing some
15 encouraging dad and we are cautiously optimistic that
16 that trend will continue. In addition, we have
17 officers from our citywide traffic task force who are
18 deployed to specific locations throughout the city.
19 Strategic locations conducting stepped-up speed
20 enforcement. So, we are really kind of doing
21 everything that we think we can be doing the try to
22 get people does slow down and drive with than the
23 speed limit. And just again, we had talked to him on
24 the number of vehicles out there. Again, the speed
25 camera data indicates on January 6th to January 10th,

2 the average weekday number of cars passing those
3 cameras was 3.08 million and we are down to 2.03
4 million on the week of April 13th to April 17th. So,
5 there is still a substantial amount of cars out
6 there, although it is down over 1 million.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I just want to
8 ask a clarifying question because he gave us a lot of
9 percentages and statistics right now which I
10 certainly appreciate it. It's not every hearing we
11 get actual numbers. So you mention those speeding on
12 the highways. So, when the increases in vehicle
13 speed seen uniformly across the city? Does it differ
14 on highways and avenues? You said something about
15 the side streets?

16 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: So, I spoke with
17 all of our highway commanders around that time and I
18 turned out the platoons to address the officers
19 personally. And, based on what they were saying at
20 the time throughout the city, they had noticed an
21 uptick in speeding violations. So, it wasn't
22 particular to one specific borough. And, again, I'm
23 talking about the highways, not the side streets.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Well, you know, I
25 just feel like there is also an opportunity here on

2 medicine gene. I mean, a know that this is an
3 unprecedented time, but even something like a
4 citywide slow zone-- you know, just letting people
5 know how careful they should be when people are
6 trying to take walks. Let me just ask very, very
7 quickly on some of the staff being. How many school
8 crossing guards are currently still doing work
9 related to the schools safety?

10 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: That I can't
11 answer. Maybe Oleg, if you are on, you can touch on
12 that.

13 ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY:

14 Yeah. I think we are going to have to get back
15 to you with that number.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: While, I know that
17 some--

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [inaudible 01:19:37]
19 have that information?

20 ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: I
21 mean, I know that there's programs running out of
22 certain schools. You know, with respect to pick up
23 lunches and--

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes.

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2 ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: And
3 yeah.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] That's not
5 a difficult number to get. Like how many--

6 ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: No.
7 No. I'm not saying--

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: schools--

9 ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: I'm
10 not saying it is.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: were deployed to other
12 places.

13 ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY:
14 Yeah. I'm not saying it's a difficult number. I
15 just don't have it. But I will have it for you
16 today. I don't think that's going to be a problem
17 the get.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: So, and really
19 quickly, did you say there was speeding on our side
20 streets or you found that low number to be a good
21 thing?

22 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: So, Council member,
23 we, utilizing the data provided by DOT speed camera,
24 again, on April the-- I believe it was the sixth--
25 the vehicles driving in excess of the limit passed

2 those cameras peaked. And I'm just trying to get my
3 notes here. Okay. On April the 6th, 2.03 million
4 cars passed DOT speed cameras. 31,911, or 1.59
5 percent, exceeded the limit. That's when the number
6 of vehicles exceeding the limit peaked. It's
7 decreased or declined to the point where, on 4/21,
8 2.05 million cars passed the camera. 24,541, or 1.3
9 percent, exceeded the limit. And that's also, when
10 you consider the fact that DOT has been adding 60
11 cameras per month. The reduction is even more
12 impressive. So when you take that number, that
13 24,000 number and you compare that to the 31,000
14 number, it's 24 percent decrease.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I think and I hear
16 you--

17 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: What the point, I
18 guess I'm trying to make-- and I don't mean to
19 interrupt you and I apologize for that, is that we
20 are trending in the right direction and we want to
21 continue to trend in the right direction. Our
22 resources have been stretched very, very thin. Our
23 officers in the precincts that ordinarily into
24 traffic safety-- and every precinct has a traffic
25 safety team-- officers who focus on this type of

2 pain, because of the reduction in staffing levels,
3 they haven't been able to get the focus that they
4 ordinarily would get because they are doing and they
5 are responding to radio calls, etc. So, we see this
6 as a positive indicator that things are trending in
7 the right direction. I guess that's the implying--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Well--

9 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I was trying to
10 make.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I understand. I
12 just think we really have the data on what kind of
13 streets those cameras are located on unless you can
14 help us out with a map-- an easy-to-read map-- we
15 could use a breakdown on street speeds based on those
16 kind of streets. And when you say that the resource
17 says are stretched thin, I totally understand. But
18 what we are trying to put forward, one-- or, one,
19 let me just say I understand your resources are
20 stretched thin, but I did ask you for a simple number
21 of school crossing guards and you could not get me
22 that number.

23 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Oh, I didn't know
24 that number. I didn't come prepared to discuss
25 school crossing guards.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Well, I would say
3 that I have been very vocal in saying that I think a
4 program terribly implemented successfully would
5 utilize traffic enforcement agents, school crossing
6 guard, as well as the best organization, civic and
7 block associations, business improvement districts
8 and a whole host of many others that are supporting
9 this program. S, let me just go to the sidewalks
10 very quickly. Commissioner Trottenberg, according
11 to your own street design manual, minimum width per
12 sidewalks are five feet in residential areas and
13 eight feet in dense areas. Do you believe this needs
14 to be updated after the pandemic ends? Your
15 testimony did say that this was the needed
16 improvement and that we have in common ground.

17 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well, look.
18 Here is the challenge we face. I think it was
19 alluded to some point during the testimony today.
20 New York City is 12,000 miles of sidewalks and, you
21 know, in some places they are quiet wine, but, in
22 some places where they are wide, populations are very
23 dense. And some places they are quite narrow and
24 populations are very light and then there is a whole
25 mixture in between. I think, as we do our planning

2 and, obviously, work with the Council and start to
3 work our way out of this pandemic, we want to focus
4 most intensely on places where we think the crowding
5 on sidewalks is going to be a real danger. And,
6 look, we have all been looking at the epidemiology
7 and sort of the nature of how we are supposed to walk
8 by each other in the pandemic and it seems like one
9 of the biggest deciding factors in transmission is
10 duration of encounter. If you walk by someone in,
11 hopefully, one second or two, you are both wearing
12 masks, that doesn't seem to be a big factor. No
13 question if people get squished together, starts to
14 be a vector. And, you know, we are going to have to
15 take a look. I think it is going to be different
16 neighborhood by neighborhood. I think in places
17 where we see the most density is where, obviously--
18 and DOT started to do some of this. Seventh Avenue
19 in Flushing and other places. We are going to want
20 to widen sidewalks and the parts of the city where we
21 see the biggest population density.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Well, I just want
23 to reiterate that, you know, my calls with doctors
24 and nurses and frontline staff who were just
25 despondent on some of the images that they've seen in

2 crowded parks, they are just infuriated. And they're
3 working really, really hard and I think that, based
4 on street closures that have already existed, based
5 on the desperate need for proper social distancing,
6 that this could be a program that could really,
7 really be successful. And you said that there is
8 common ground. You said you want to work together.
9 I hope that that becomes a reality. I just have one
10 last question because-- And thank you, Mr. Chair. I
11 know there are people with many, many questions.
12 Will the DOT and NYPD be producing or has Ed already
13 produced a written report on the results of the pilot
14 program? This goes back to my data question. And
15 canned that be shared with us and posted for the
16 public to review?

17 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I don't think
18 we ever did a formal written report. I mean, I think
19 we would concede rape here it was a quake and not
20 entirely perfectly done pilot project. I don't know
21 whether PD ever did anything form all.

22 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Yeah. I don't
23 believe that we did.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Okay. Well, I
25 would just-- Again, I'm looking forward to working

2 with you on this. It seemed like you were
3 interested. I realize that each open street can look
4 very, very different. Not everyone has a backyard.
5 Their families cramped into apartments. Sidewalks
6 are very, very narrow and I think we can all be a
7 leader, finally. I mean, we are bound behind many,
8 many cities, but in terms of what we can do in our
9 open space and some of the support, I think we can be
10 a leader in this country and really looking out for
11 those families that need the space to just promote a
12 healthier and safer New York City. So, thank you, to
13 Deputy Chief for your testimony. Thank you,
14 Commissioner Trottenberg. In looking forward to
15 getting this done.

16 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Thank you,
17 Council member. So are we.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Council
19 member Carlina Rivera. Speaker Johnson, I don't know
20 if you have any additional questions to follow up for
21 we go to the other [inaudible 01:27:03].

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Just one very quick
23 question. And now, Deputy Cheese and Commissioner,
24 in Central Park, you guys have been putting up a
25 single tiny need small barrier to block cars from,

2 mean into Central Park. It is not very big. Are you
3 getting reports that cars are violating that? That
4 people are entering Central Park and violating that
5 barrier that exists? Cops are not stationed there.
6 There is no enforcement personnel. Do you have a
7 sign that is there that says do not enter with a very
8 tiny barrier that doesn't even take up the whole
9 thing. Are you getting reports that cars are
10 violating that and entering the roadways in Central
11 Park because you don't have substantial barriers and
12 you don't have cops, police officers and every single
13 entrance to the Central Park?

14 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I am not aware of
15 any reports of that nature.

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. Mr.
17 Chair, thanks.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. And
19 before calling on our colleague, Council member
20 Cabrera, Menchaca, Koo, and Cohen, I just want to ask
21 a question to Commissioner Polly Trottenberg which is
22 do you see a-- and, first, would like to, you know,
23 explain my thought before asking the question, which
24 is, at my age and my 11 years as a Council member, we
25 have learned that we have to develop, you know, all

2 [inaudible 01:28:42] to be united. And we will win
3 this battle by being united as a city, but I can tell
4 you that one thing that I am committed, myself, and
5 names of all of those phase is of people that they
6 have been dying, especially those-- the poorest
7 ones-- that I would dedicate my time in government
8 for I go back in teaching, if I do whatever in my
9 life, to fight against inequality in a city that now
10 is showing a face worldwide that there's a lot more
11 that we've got to do. And I know that we have a big
12 heart and we need to work hard to enforce our agenda
13 to lift up and bring opportunity to all New Yorkers.
14 But it's not a secret and I know that everyone knows,
15 in 2020, we have built a city of the two New Yorkers
16 that's still today. Like even with city bike, when
17 city bike was created, it was not intended to think
18 about the poorest neighborhood. It was intended more
19 to the upper class and middle class New Yorkers. And
20 I would like to see, for now on, especially those of
21 us, the men and women of the NYPD, the doctors, the
22 nurses, the EMS-- by the way, they should be paid
23 more. They're showing one more time that they are in
24 the front lines saving lives. And all of those in
25 different roles that we play that whatever we do,

2 please, in the name of the future generations to
3 come, in the name that we celebrate Martin Luther
4 King, everything that we do should be based more on
5 need than being popular. I feel that, you know, any
6 policy, any legislation that we do should be focused
7 about where do we need it the most?

8 UNIDENTIFIED: Amen.

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Because even making
10 everything, in order to make it popular, we need to
11 invest educating the poorest New Yorkers about the
12 benefit of riding a bike. About the benefit of
13 walking our streets. Instead of, you know, like just
14 only thinking one area where we have largest and more
15 support. So, how do you think, again-- and when you
16 say we're open to sit on the table, to walk around
17 this legislation, on this and many other
18 legislations, how can we end our [inaudible 01:31:38]
19 not just think about if we move this bill think about
20 later on to see it on the table in planning where
21 it's more popular, but where are those things needed
22 the most? So if you think about opening a street for
23 cyclists and pedestrians and these are related to
24 people dying and there's a pattern of people dying
25 and having asthma and obesity and being poor, will

2 you commit to bring, again, your experience to think
3 about putting a policy, ideas, and suggestions around
4 this bill to start looking at underserved
5 communities, not necessarily what is more popular?

6 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean,
7 absolutely, Mr. Chairman. I think, and I know, the
8 Mayor and many members of the Council have spoken
9 eloquently about, you know, how we have seen-- the
10 coronavirus has shown us what we all know. The
11 tremendous social and economic disparities in the
12 city and I think, you know, it has been heartbreaking
13 to see the disproportionate effect that this disease
14 has had on minority populations by the way, that's
15 been true in the city workforce, as well. And, of
16 course, being on the main goals of this program is we
17 want to design it for to target those communities
18 most where we see in the most crowning, where we
19 perceive the biggest health impacts and getting that
20 model right. Wanting to make sure that we are also,
21 you know, in places, though, in those communities
22 where there are hospitals and other things that we
23 are insuring that. We have good access to those.
24 So, I think we all share that that would be a very

2 important goal with design mean this program as we go
3 forward. We certainly commit to you on that.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: That's nice. And
5 where we see more crowding is in the midtown area.
6 You know what I mean? When we see more of the need.
7 If you just let that, you know, what we had seen as
8 what we will guide us as mean that we will work and
9 pass this bill and the Mayor to sign, we will not
10 start an area where most people [inaudible 01:33:46]
11 with aspirants. And I just think that we are open.
12 I think that, you know, from the Speaker, listening
13 to you, I know that we care for them. But I have
14 seen over and over, as I said, look at the cyclist
15 community that lives in the [inaudible 01:34:03] or
16 whatever. I've said before. They need to their
17 dollars to bring education initiatives in the
18 underserved community because we have created the
19 kind - and for cyclists to be seen as something of
20 the middle class and the upper class and the face is
21 of 35 percent New Yorkers who live in poverty are the
22 ones that we have seen dying in larger numbers. So,
23 you know, I just want to encourage that, you know, we
24 can explain it and we can say we all care for this.
25 We are all in the same boat, but if you go to the

2 underserved communities, it's a different reality.

3 And I just want to see how, again, I want to

4 highlight it so that we can have that in mind. Let's

5 say--

6 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: And I--

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [inaudible

8 01:34:50].

9 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: And, Mr.

10 Chairman, look. There's no question, you know, city

11 bike, which started now seven years ago, it started

12 in the dense parts of Manhattan. I think we have--

13 in all, we are now on track to double the service

14 area. And, as you know, this summer we are on track

15 and that is one piece of essential work we are going

16 to keep doing. Bringing more bikes and more stations

17 all the way up in Manhattan and into the South Bronx.

18 So, you know, we keenly recognize we need to keep

19 expanding this and make it affordable for low income

20 folks and do all the education and outreach that we

21 need to encourage folks to ride. We are very

22 enthusiastic about that mission.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,

24 Commissioner. Now, let's hear from the Council

25 members. We will put the clock in two minutes.

2 Council member Cabrera followed by Council member
3 Menchaca, Koo, and Cohen.

4 UNIDENTIFIED: Council member Cabrera--

5 LEGAL COUNSEL: [interposing] And just
6 a quick reminder, Council members, if you would like
7 to ask a question, please use the raise hand function
8 on Zoom.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Council member Cabrera,
10 your time will begin now.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so
12 much. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair and may I suggest
13 in the future we have a little longer than three
14 minutes. Waiting almost two hours to ask a three
15 minute-- to have a real discussion with the
16 administration for 30 minutes is a bit unrealistic.
17 But let me just ask, literally, just one question
18 which we only have time for here. In order to
19 avoid--

20 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council member
21 Cabrera?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Yes, sir?

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Following
24 suggestion. But please put the clock in five minutes
25 so that we--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: so that we can have
4 more time.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: That is much
6 appreciated and I will try to use as little as
7 possible of that. Thank you so much. In order to
8 avoid a sharp increase in car travel as the city will
9 begin to open in the future or near future, we need
10 to provide transportation alternatives. We know that
11 New York State has legalized scooters and ebikes.
12 Will the city, the administration, embrace the ebikes
13 and scooter as an alternative mode of
14 transportation?

15 COMMISSIONER TROTTENBERG: Good to see
16 you, Council member Cabrera. And I think you know
17 the administration supported Albany's efforts. We
18 were supportive of the legislation that the governor
19 has just signed. It requires action by the Council.
20 There is a local option, but we are enthusiastic
21 about talking to you all about that and coming up
22 with a plan that is going to work for the city. So,
23 for sure. We certainly recognize the bigger point
24 that you are making. As we come back out of this
25 crisis, we have to think about mobility, making sure

2 people feel safe getting back on mass transit, and
3 certainly accommodating more biking and walking, as
4 well.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Well,
6 Commissioner, it warms my heart and I know all of the
7 transportation in alternative advocates applaud you
8 looking forward to having a conversation in with you
9 and, of course, with our counsel staff to make a
10 matter reality. Thank you so much. I didn't use on
11 time, but, Mr. Chair, thank you for the extra time.
12 I really appreciate it.

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. You only use
14 two minutes. Council member Menchaca followed by
15 Council member Koo and Cohen.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Council member Menchaca,
17 your time will begin now.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: It looks like
19 Council member Menchaca is not there, so we will
20 follow by Council member Koo.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Hello? Can
22 you hear me all?

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: We do now. Yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay.
25 Wonderful. Thank you. Yeah. I am also just going

2 to jump on the sentiment of equity that we really
3 restructure how our Council hearings go. At this
4 point, three Manhattan Council members have dominated
5 the time and I think the equity question is going to
6 be an important thing to move beyond. And I think we
7 can do something different, so I'm looking forward to
8 working with all of you to figure out how we solve
9 that equity time to distribute it. Not just to
10 Council members, but folks who are going to help us
11 solve these problems on the ground, like our
12 advocates. Because I think they know what we know
13 which is this COVID is changing everything and I'm
14 not worried about the planning issues. We are going
15 to hear from the advocates, so I am not going to
16 spend time there. I am going to focus my questions
17 on Deputy Chief Pilecki and the NYPD's response. I
18 think that there is a labor issue that you are
19 claiming, but we just saw the Mayor decimate SYEP and
20 all the summer programming and I believe that more
21 policing is not good. Not the right signal that we
22 need to send to the communities. And SYEP would be a
23 great place to relaunch a youth program this summer
24 to get them into this conversation. To hire them.
25 To pay them. To train them. Let them be part of our

2 neighborhood-based response. And so, I'm not worried
3 about the planning issues. I think the planning
4 issues can get solved. It's really kind of gadding
5 through you all that it doesn't mean that we need
6 more police officers. We need a community response
7 that can be a partnership with NYPD. And so, if you
8 can talk a little bit of about how you can join our
9 efforts to change the mind of the Mayor who believes
10 something different, it would be great to kind of
11 hear from you directly about that idea.

12 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Okay. So I guess
13 the question is how can we encourage the
14 administration to hire more of the youths this summer
15 to work in conjunction with the police department?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: And this plan
17 that is kind of being stopped by all of you that says
18 we don't have enough people power within the police
19 department. And ways, okay. That's not the problem.
20 We need people power. And that could come from the
21 youth.

22 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Well, I don't know
23 is necessarily, as civilians, we can utilize those
24 young people in the intersections to direct traffic.
25 I don't know what the legal requirements are with

2 regard to that. I mean, certainly air-traffic
3 agents, some of whom are special patrolmen, but they
4 have the authorization to do that, but I don't know
5 where that would lie with regard to these young
6 people. We can certainly pass that message along to
7 the chain of command, but I can't make any commitment
8 about that. As you know, we have our cadet program
9 where we have young people who are actually going to
10 college and working for the department. The--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Uh-hm.

12 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: turn shift program,
13 which is a great program, but what you are discussing
14 right now, we would have to pass that up and that
15 would have to be worked out.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay. I think
17 that's it. I just wanted to make sure that you
18 understood that. It would be great for you to join
19 in this effort and I think our young people can be a
20 part of it and really rethink how we utilize our
21 neighborhoods and the youth that, right now, have no
22 summer programming whatsoever. So help us save SYEP
23 and get them to be part of this plan. Thank you.

24 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Council
3 member Menchaca. So, you use the less than the five
4 minutes and the intention was not to dominate by
5 Manhattan, but it was more Speaker Johnson and
6 Carlina Rivera, they are the two co-primes and this
7 is the--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Transportation
10 Committee hearing, so by we [inaudible 01:42:114]
11 everyone their fair share to make comments and asking
12 the question. Council member Koo, followed by
13 Council member Cohen.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Council member Koo, your
15 time will begin when you start speaking.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you. Thank
17 you, Chair Rodriguez. Thank you, Speaker. I also
18 want to thank Commissioner Trottenberg and Deputy
19 Chief for coming to this online conference. We all
20 know COVID-19 is a nasty disease. It affects people
21 of every color in every age and every gender, but
22 there's a big difference of outcome between those who
23 are healthy and those with underlying disease like
24 hypertension, high blood pressure, high cholesterol,
25 and diabetics, and obesity. Actually, obesity is the

2 underlying cause for all of those diseases. So, that
3 obesity is very easy to cure. It doesn't cost any
4 money to cure. We just need space so that people can
5 go out and do their jogging, walking, walking,
6 dancing. You know, that's why we introduce this bill
7 to have more open space on the streets so that people
8 in minority neighborhoods, they have a chance of
9 outside, no walk, to read the bicycles or to dance.
10 And I think we should also work with-- in
11 coordination with the Department of Transportation.
12 You also want to work with the Department of Health
13 and Mental Hygiene to have some programs on open
14 streets. Like they have the [inaudible 01:44:12]
15 dancing or yoga in the open space. So people can
16 watch and they can participate. So if you go to
17 Asian countries, they have a lot of sitters send them
18 Dan's things everywhere. In the parks, and not
19 parcel. They're called parcel dance. There one or
20 two teachers have some music and then hundreds of
21 people will follow them on the Plaza are on the pass-
22 through to dance. So, this is a concept that we,
23 after the pandemic, we have to encourage and we have
24 to educate people. They need to go out. Don't stay
25 in their apartment and-- you know, in order to be

2 healthy, you have to really like exercise and follow
3 your diet. That's something we have to teach and
4 educate and remind our citizens all the time. So I
5 want to ask Commissioner Trottenberg, maybe you can
6 like--

7 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: you know,
9 coordinate for these programs. Yeah. Thank you very
10 much.

11 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Sure. Thank
12 you. Thank you, Council member. And certainly, you
13 know, Council member Rivera and others have mentioned
14 summer streets and other programs that DOT has done
15 where we very much work with yoga groups and dance
16 groups and fitness and parkour and we certainly have
17 a template for that. And, love, we are very
18 sympathetic to the fact that New Yorkers cooped up in
19 their apartments are anxious for exercise. And I
20 think that is a great suggestion. Let's make that
21 one of the components we work through as we, you
22 know, come together on opening up some streets.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah. I forgot
24 one point. I read a study that if you do just 30
25 minutes of walking a day will cut down your chances

2 of having a heart attack by almost 50 percent. So,
3 walking is really important. Just walk slowly if
4 you're a senior citizen. If you are young, you can
5 jogger you can run a half hour a day or more. And it
6 will become fit. And when disease comes to attack
7 you, you will survive. So, this is a good learning
8 lesson for all of us that before and other--
9 pandemics hits us, we have to stay healthy. Learn
10 all the sanitation habits like wash your hands and
11 keep a distance. All those things we are all-- We
12 have to be-- they have to become our habits not just
13 like because we do it because of the virus. All will
14 keep all those habits. These are good habits we all
15 can do every day. Thank you, Commissioner.

16 COMMISSIONER TROTTENBERG: Thank you,
17 Council member.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Now,
19 let's hear from Council member Cohen followed by
20 Council member Rose and Levin.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Council member Cohen,
22 your time will begin when you start speaking.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you, very
24 much, Chair. First, to my colleagues, it's always--
25 I'm happy to see everybody's face again. It's good

2 to see you, Commissioner Trottenberg. I really think
3 I have a question for the Chief and I'm-- I wonder
4 from a police strategy point of view if we don't have
5 sort of a situation analogous to the prohibition. I
6 think the compliance of social distancing is going
7 well in my district, from, you know, from what I can
8 see. But you and I both know that not everybody is
9 compliant. And I think that one of the advantages
10 offered by this piece of legislation is that people
11 will be out in the open. If you see people and they
12 are like, well, they are too close. We could tell
13 them there too close. Whereas, the people who are
14 going to break the rules are doing so in the shadows
15 or doing so, you know, privately. You know, I have
16 heard anecdotally, you know, people gathering and
17 barbershops and doing things that really are-- that
18 no one knows what they are doing. So, don't you
19 think from an NYPD perspective that you would have a
20 better chance of being able to promote public health
21 if it were at least not-- if people were out in
22 public?

23 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Yes. I mean, I
24 think there is certainly something to be said to
25 that.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Okay.

3 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: I think that,
4 again, that way we are looking forward to coming to a
5 consensus with the Council and DOT and arriving at a
6 plan that accomplishes the goals that you are seeking
7 to accomplish, which is to provide public space for
8 people to exercise social distancing, get fresh air,
9 get outside in the sunshine and to do it in a way
10 which, once again, it is not, you know, manpower
11 intends says that will provide additional strain on
12 our resources, but accomplishes those goals safely,
13 Council member.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you very
15 much, Chief. Will you extend my regards to the men
16 and women of the NYPD? I have been thinking about
17 everybody and I have not had the same interaction
18 that I normally do. So, thank you for your service.

19 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Thank you so much.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you, Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And as Council
22 member Cohen said, we've been working with the men
23 and women of the NYPD. I know all Council member
24 through all the person and persons to be sure that we
25 [inaudible 01:49:20] the message that physical

2 distance is [inaudible 01:49:23] to be respected and,
3 as you say, not only in the barbershops, but we know
4 that there's a lot of challenges being shown in
5 schools and some religion building that we need to
6 send a message that no one should gather in one
7 place. That we need to practice physical distance
8 and we will be working with the men and women that
9 want to do the enforcement. A team of people who are
10 doing a great job to be sure that not only everyone
11 knows that there are consequences of even being fined
12 if they gather in large numbers. So, this is how I
13 think that we will continue working, you know, with
14 you guys from the NYPD and anyone who is enforcing
15 physical distance. Now, let's hear from Council
16 member Rose, followed by Council member Levin.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Council member Rose,
18 your time will begin when you start speaking.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Debbie, we can't hear
20 you. You have to unmute yourself. I think--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Go ahead. There you go.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you. Thank
24 you so much, Chair Rodriguez. And I want to thank
25 NYPD and DOT for all of your efforts to keep us safe.

2 Even though, Commissioner Trottenberg, you know, it
3 created some challenges for Staten Islanders, but I
4 just want to ask what criteria was used to identify
5 and determine what streets were going to be open in
6 the prior open streets program? Why was Staten
7 Island eliminated and where do you consider opening
8 streets and in our denser communities like our NYCHA
9 area where social distancing is really a very
10 difficult thing to achieve? Could you explain, you
11 know, while we were excluded the first time around
12 and if we can look at other possibilities in terms of
13 opening up the streets? Or closing--

14 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Sure.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: streets.

16 DEPUTY CHIEF PILECKI: Closing streets.

17 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Yeah. I'll
18 take a crack at that and then turn it over to the
19 Chief. And thank you, Council member Rose. It is
20 interesting now it has become one of the largest
21 parts of my job working on keeping the Staten Island
22 ferry running and keeping our cruise there's safe and
23 the boats clean and social distancing. And we know
24 we have had to make some changes in the service and
25 it has been an inconvenience, but thank you for

2 working with us on that. You know, it's like a small
3 microcosm of what the MTA is going through running
4 big public transit systems during the coronavirus.
5 It's the day-to-day challenge. Again, I think, we're
6 not going to say that the pilot project we rolled out
7 a few weeks ago was perfect. And I think we
8 certainly want to make sure we get all five boroughs.
9 We were admittedly trying to do something quickly.
10 We were looking for streets that were wide enough
11 that we didn't think that there would be a potential
12 crowding and where we wouldn't necessarily have to
13 tell a lot of vehicles at the time when we were
14 telling people to stay home. We were trying to stay
15 away from bus routes and major truck routes and major
16 routes for emergency vehicles. And then, looking at
17 areas that we saw were densely populated-- and I
18 know PD was kind of looking at the staffing
19 questions. I think we readily concede we can improve
20 on the model and anything we do going forward we
21 definitely wanted to bail five boroughs.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I think, when you
23 talk about, you know, we were looking at the
24 disparities in New York City and we understand that
25 part of the problem is that people can socially

2 distance in our more denser neighborhoods. That this
3 is the perfect opportunity to be able to allow that
4 sort of equalize, you know, access to the rest of the
5 communities.

6 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Understood.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council member
9 Levin?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

11 LEGAL COUNSEL: Before Council member
12 Levin starts, if I could just remind everyone, if
13 Council member s would like to ask a first question,
14 could you please use the raise hand function on Zoom?
15 Thank you.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Council member Levin,
17 your time will begin when you start speaking.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very
19 much, Commissioner and Chief. My question is so we
20 are going to be approaching, in the coming weeks, a
21 lower rate of infection. We are all staying inside,
22 impacting the social distancing now and that is going
23 to have an impact by the end of May. You know, much
24 lower rate of infection akin other cities that we
25 aren't talking about. So, whether that is Oakland or

2 of other cities in the US. We just won't be at the
3 same volume that we are now, but we are going to
4 still have to social distancing measures moving
5 forward. So as we bend in the next phase of this,
6 you know, and it well be kind of a longer-term
7 containment phase where we, hopefully, will not have
8 a high volume of cases, but we will still have to do
9 social distancing. So, I think that there is a
10 strong argument to be made for kind of how we want to
11 plan this out for a time when, you know, we are
12 going-- more so is a kind of a longer-term strategy
13 of, say, you know, 12 to 18 months of kind of what--
14 This is going to be alone. Of social distancing and
15 how do we want to operationalize this? So, that's my
16 main question. Is how do we want to look at that not
17 so much in the short term, that in this longer-term
18 vision for it.

19 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, I can
20 speak a bit on the transportation and, but,
21 obviously, we are just one piece of, you know, what
22 are some very uncharted waters. And we are looking
23 at a lot of other countries and cities where they
24 are, you know, trying to calibrate that where they
25 are opening up a little bit and then, in some cases,

2 seeing cases start to spike up again. Tragically,
3 that is actually happening a little bit in California
4 right now. And we are learning together. On the
5 transportation and, I think, as we have said and the
6 mayor, I think, talked about it, actually, in his
7 press event this morning, I mean, New York City needs
8 to function with the mass transit system that needs
9 to be safe. We are also going to have to provide
10 alternatives. And I think, as I said in my testimony
11 for DOT, the longer-term, that is our focus. Talking
12 to the MTA and other regional transportation
13 partners. Talking to experts. Talking to advocates.
14 Preparing for the next phase where, you know, right.
15 We are trying to get our city back to normal and
16 people working, but we still need to social distance
17 and doing that safely. We are doing a little bit of
18 thinking and planning on that. It extends beyond
19 transportation to restaurants and workplaces and, you
20 know, so many different elements of society. And,
21 clearly, PD is, I think, going to continue to play a
22 big role in the staff enforcement of that, at least
23 in public spaces.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yeah. You know, to
25 follow up on Council member Koo's suggestions, I

2 mean, I think that we ought to look at some of the
3 cities in Asia and countries in Asia nowhere, you
4 know, they-- whether it is in China or Hong Kong,
5 South Korea or Singapore or where they have been
6 doing-- where, obviously, they have been dealing
7 with this for a couple months longer than we have,
8 but if started to figure out ways to have people out
9 of the house doing exercise in ways that are
10 responsible and allow people to practice social
11 distancing. I would think it is a smart idea to work
12 with DOHMH along the lines of Council member Koo's
13 suggestion and look at what they are doing in places
14 like Hong Kong.

15 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Totally agree.
16 I mean, I think one thing we all know, because it is
17 in the papers every day and I know some of you have
18 been on the front. I mean, one challenge we event
19 compared to Asia, obviously the Asian countries, is
20 just the lack of testing and the lack of deep sort of
21 epidemiological knowledge and contact tracing and the
22 things we know in South Korea and China and other
23 places, they've had a better handle on it. I know
24 the city and the state and the state has, obviously,
25 now started a program of random antibody testing. I

2 think as we get sort of that deeper epidemiological
3 profile, that is also Joe's going to help us a lot
4 and planning now the coming [inaudible 01:59:09] and
5 how we reopen the city and, right, try and create
6 those recreational spaces and make sure we're keeping
7 people healthy and active.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Hm. Okay. Thanks
9 so much, Commissioner. Thanks.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. I think
11 that we also had Council member Holden in who is turn
12 to ask questions. Okay.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Council member Holden,
14 your time will begin when you start speaking.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay. Thanks,
16 Commissioner, and thanks, Chair Rodriguez. I just
17 want to, you know-- I have some questions on the
18 bill. The bill requires that DOT consult with and
19 notify affected Council members and community boards
20 and consult with any business improvement districts
21 or neighborhood associations which is right. The
22 only thing I would like in the bill is if the
23 community board actually requested it or that a
24 neighborhood association requested at rather than
25 they are just notifying us. So, I know consultation,

2 bad I really want-- if we requested like the Council
3 member requested or the community board requested and
4 it is looked at, that it is not just DOT's saying we
5 have to close down-- since this bill went through,
6 we have to close 75 miles of streets. And they might
7 be putting it where it is not necessarily needed.
8 Like, and my district in Queens, I'm not saying it
9 won't happen in the future, but we really don't have
10 congestion on our side walks like Manhattan or some
11 other areas of Brooklyn or other areas. So, I would
12 just like in the bill-- and I don't know how you
13 support this, Commissioner, but there could be other
14 ways to do this. Like I think you are doing-- You
15 mentioned something about extending sidewalks-- not
16 closing the streets, but extending sidewalks or
17 doubling the sidewalks phase with bollards or
18 barriers. But what is your opinion on like sort of--
19 like your input on this bill that it doesn't have to
20 be 75 miles or it could be in areas that are
21 requesting it?

22 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well, I think,
23 Council member you are hearing us say we think that
24 it would certainly be a struggle, at least, in the
25 very short term to get the 75 miles. And,

2 absolutely, we are very interested in a model where
3 community boards, Council members, bids, local,
4 neighborhood groups are interested partners. I
5 agree. Your district is certainly, I think, not high
6 on our list as a place where there is a lot of
7 crowding in a big need to do this. So, I mean, I
8 have no interest in-- I don't think anyone has an
9 insurer is-- We are already feeling resource
10 constraints, so I don't think we want to go into any
11 neighborhood that wouldn't want us to. You know, I
12 think the challenge is that there are some
13 neighborhoods that really do and how do we serve them
14 the best? But certainly, I think we are very much
15 envisioning a partnership model. We are going to
16 need partners here.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: But have you
18 identified certain areas that you can extend the
19 sidewalk or pub bollards up? Have you identified a
20 number of neighborhoods that that could happen?

21 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, we
22 have started to look at that list and, I think, as
23 you would expect, it is in pretty intense parts of
24 the city, you know, where we are seeing big
25 populations and big commercial activity. It's not in

2 the, you know, the less stands more residential
3 areas.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: But have you
5 identified like, offhand, can you mention one area
6 that we are having some problems now with the
7 sidewalks?

8 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: You know, I
9 think, right now, we're seeing, you know,
10 occasionally sidewalk crowding in some commercial
11 districts. As you mentioned, places in Manhattan and
12 Brooklyn and Queens, and tends to actually be an
13 issue. And I know the Chief can talk about this.
14 Around park center around like grocery stores. In
15 all, luckily people are still mostly staying home, so
16 I don't think it's a huge problem citywide, but I
17 think we agree that, as the weather turns warmer, we
18 will start to see more of that. And we want to get
19 ahead of it, you know, working with you all. So and
20 lay I think out in your district way are not saying
21 that I was a big issue that there is sidewalk
22 crowding.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Great. Thanks,
24 Commissioner. Thanks so much.

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Thank
3 you. Commissioner, before we go into the public, a--
4 first of all, you think about 51 Council members and
5 think about the numbers of Council members that say I
6 can work with [inaudible 02:03:35] DOT and NYPD and
7 give you five miles in my community that, you know,
8 can fill the need to have more space and, Council
9 member Rose, you know, you were right to say opening
10 the street. So it's not closing the street. We
11 don't want to close the street. We want to help in
12 the street for pedestrians and cyclists. So I think
13 that if we can agree-- and I say coming from you
14 guys in City Hall with the Speaker and co-lead prime
15 of this bills and us, and say, you know, we can get
16 it done. I think about [inaudible 02:04:15] Columbia
17 New York [inaudible 2:04:17] and that we can identify
18 areas that surround here. I'm thinking about the
19 [inaudible 02:04:23] Park and I feel that the same
20 thing you will hear from probably some of the Council
21 members in the South Bronx and other areas. So, I
22 would like for us just to be open. You know, it
23 doesn't have to be 20 miles straight on one avenue.
24 It can be also depending on how, of course, in
25 conversation with the staff of the speaker and all of

2 us together to be open. And I think that there is so
3 many-- It's not only about, you know, opening some
4 areas close to Central Park or Park Avenue. Let's
5 think outside the box. Think about the outside
6 [inaudible 02:05:59]. The underserved community.
7 But I have one question related to what is been your
8 experience as the leader of the transportation
9 community of implementing these types of initiative
10 and bills and our street without having a negative
11 impact and our buses? And I say that the I had a
12 conversation last night and some leadership of the
13 TWU and, for me, one thing that I explained to them,
14 I know that we at the Council are so committed, and
15 the city, too, to expand our buses because that's the
16 only mechanism-- the most important mechanism that
17 we have-- right now is a public mass transportation
18 throughout the city of New York, especially in the
19 underserved community. How can we assimilate between
20 City Hall and also we can [inaudible 02:05:55]
21 implement this plan of opening more streets to
22 pedestrians and cyclists and at the same time that
23 doesn't have any negative impact in our buses?

24 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well, and,
25 first of all, I just want to say you are mentioning

2 the TWU and, you know, I just want to say that our
3 hearts go out to them and their members and they have
4 suffered some tremendous losses and we are so sorry
5 about that. I mean, actually, when Council member
6 Rose asked what were the criteria we used for that
7 initial pilot, I'll admit, one of the criteria was we
8 said no bus routes. We just decided those words
9 straight to where we wanted to try and slow down
10 vehicles. Now, I recognize, if we're trying to do
11 more mileage, working with the Council members, we
12 can take a look at that, but I think, you know,
13 number one, those probably aren't necessarily good
14 streets. You know, good candidates to make as shared
15 streets. You know, as you know, Mr. Chairman, we had
16 before the coronavirus had come in, you know, some
17 very ambitious targets to continue to build out bus
18 routes. Our next focus was very much going to be up
19 in the Bronx working closely with New York City
20 Transit as they did their borough wide bus route
21 redesign. I think, you know, as the pandemic lifts,
22 those agencies will get back to that work. But, that
23 is certainly one of the things we will want to
24 continue to balance as we transform our streets. I
25 think we do want to continue to prioritize buses. I

2 think that is going to be a mass transit mode that
3 people are going to want to keep writing as we come
4 out of the pandemic.

5 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. So,
6 with that, now we are going back to the counsel of
7 this committee and the team to then call for the
8 other first panel. First of all, thank you. Unless
9 Speaker Johnson, Carlina Rivera, or Council member
10 Rivera has a question, we now will thank you, the
11 administration, and then we go to the public. But,
12 first, Speaker Johnson or Council member Cabrera, do
13 you have any final questions? I guess not. Then,
14 thank you, Deputy Chief and Commissioner and the
15 whole team, for being here today. We are in this
16 battle together and we will win this battle together
17 and, you know, we will continue being a stronger city
18 that we have ever been. But, please, of someone an
19 immigrant, you know, the guy living in underserved
20 communities, whatever we do, have that in mind.
21 Enough is enough. A lot of policies in our city, it
22 doesn't matter who the major administrations are,
23 usually it starts with her more popular and usually
24 starts and that it will follow through other cities--
25 through other communities. So it would like to get

2 partnerships and friends of people who truly
3 understand that now is the time to put the
4 underserved communities as the top priority. Thank
5 you, Commissioner.

6 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Thank you.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: No questions from me.
8 Thank you, Commissioner, and thank you, Chief. I
9 know that borough president, I believe, is up next
10 and I do look forward to hearing from the public.
11 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Thank you, Mr.
13 Speaker.

14 LEGAL COUNSEL: Okay. We will now--

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And the borough
16 president?

17 LEGAL COUNSEL: Well, just make a quick
18 announcement, Chair. We will now turn the public
19 testimony. I would like to remind everyone that,
20 unlike our typical Council hearings, we will be
21 calling on individuals one by one to testify.
22 Council members who have questions for a particular
23 panelist shed, again, use the raise hand function in
24 Zoom and I will call on you or the Chair will call on
25 you after the panelist has completed their testimony.

2 For panelists, once your name is called, member of
3 our staff will unmute you and the Sergeant-at-arms
4 will give you the go-ahead to begin your testimony
5 after setting the timer. Please wait for the
6 Sergeant to announce that you may begin before
7 delivering your testimony. And if there are any
8 audio issues, we will move on and then try and circle
9 back to you. First up, I would like to welcome
10 Manhattan borough president, Gale Brewer, to testify.

11 GALE BREWER: Thank you very much, I
12 appreciate it.

13 LEGAL COUNSEL: Ma'am--

14 GALE BREWER: I want to say I am Gale
15 Brewer. I am the Manhattan borough president and I
16 am strongly testifying in favor of the legislation
17 introduced by Speaker Johnson and Council member
18 Rivera and we have had a wonderful discussion to talk
19 about pedestrians and cyclists and social distancing
20 during this awful epidemic and I think everybody, DOT
21 and NYPD and the good questions. I recently sent a
22 letter where Council members Johnson, Rivera, Chin,
23 and Powers to the Mayor requesting that our city
24 reinstate its temporary pedestrian expansions. We
25 are focused, in this case, on Broadway between Times

2 Square and Chinatown, but all discussions and
3 locations certainly should be discussed. This
4 particular letter and location have the support of
5 the many business improvement districts along the
6 Broadway corridor and have since picked up support
7 from Manhattan community boards four and five, as
8 well as the financial district neighborhood
9 association. And I think it is very telling an
10 important that the business improvement districts are
11 thinking about how to recover. And they believe--
12 and it's not just the local ones-- the recovery
13 includes more open space for their businesses. My
14 letter and the Councils proposed legislation
15 recognizes the unfortunate fact that our streets are
16 poorly designed to properly respond to this crisis.
17 In many cases, particularly in lower Manhattan, the
18 sidewalks are narrow, as we know, and that makes
19 social distancing difficult. People may not return
20 to work and entertainment venues and other locations
21 is very experience involves entering the pedestrian
22 heavy crowding synonymous with Manhattan, which is, I
23 think, was discussed earlier. It's really important
24 that we create more space for pedestrians and
25 cyclists. As you know, traffic is down dramatically,

2 although, as the NYPD said, lots of speed being.

3 But, with the traffic down dramatically--

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time's up.

5 GALE BREWER: I think we can achieve by
6 closing some streets to motor vehicles. I will be
7 very quick. I just want to summarize. So, their
8 locations have been vicious plans. There are
9 actually 135 cities around the country. We need that
10 data. And I think that every effort should be made
11 to garner this base of support. I just want to say,
12 as co-chair of East Midtown rezoning and now a member
13 of the governing group that planning East Midtown
14 open space, we have open space that we are planning.
15 It worked with the bids. They had ideas about how to
16 have access and they had ideas about how to do
17 loading and reloading. And that's what happened and
18 that's why it worked. So, I am supportive. I
19 support the legislation. It's a really important
20 need and it begins a conversation about recovery and
21 future needs. And I know you all have a copy of my
22 testimony. Thank you very much.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, borough
24 president. Now, we're going into the public. And
25 the clock will be in two minutes. And now, I will

2 let the counsel for this committee to call the names
3 of the members of the public who will be testifying.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: Before we move on, do
5 any Council members have questions for the borough
6 president? Okay. Next, we'll be calling Mary Beth
7 Kelly.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Mary, when you
9 being to speak, your clock will start.

10 MARY BETH KELLY: Okay. Can you hear me?
11 Am I speaking?

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes. We do.

13 MARY BETH KELLY: Thank you for this
14 opportunity to testify on open streets. My name is
15 Mary Beth Kelly and I am founding member of Families
16 for Safe Streets. I always knew that if ever there
17 was a major health crisis of New York City where I
18 find my husband. Like so many physicians, despite
19 the grave risks to themselves, he would be on the
20 front lines treating patients. Well, that's where
21 he'd be if he had not been killed in 2006 by a
22 reckless driver while he was riding his bicycle. As
23 a physician, he felt honored by the opportunity to
24 care for his fellow New Yorkers. I am happiest when
25 I'm serving, he once told me. And I had no doubt.

2 That's who he was as an Internist. As a person, he
3 lived his integrity. So why, I ask, is our city
4 administration not doing the same when it comes to
5 its citizens? Why is he being so stingy, not
6 allocating space for physical and mental health when
7 giving space is what is required of us? Opening
8 streets for printer strains and cycling reduces
9 crashes, saves lives, and preserves our precious
10 hospital beds for COVID-19 patients during this
11 crisis. A huge opportunity presents itself now and
12 begs for creative innovation with our largest real
13 estate assets, our streets. And, please, Mr. Mayor,
14 stop making open streets about policing. In 1976,
15 when the city was on the verge of bankruptcy, I have
16 volunteered on a van called the skate mobile. It
17 brought skates to kids. Every day of that summer,
18 communities all over this city, using only orange
19 cones, blocked off the neighborhood streets from cars
20 so kids with little else could skate. We had no
21 police presence. Only a local firefighter with a big
22 red wrench who generously would unscrew--

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time's up.

24 MARY BETH KELLY: Can I finish? The
25 ultimate sacrifice is now being asked of us, but

2 mostly our healthcare workers, grocers, deliveries
3 cyclists, postal workers, and transit operators. And
4 so I implore our city government to serve them, to
5 serve us all visibly where it matters. Give us
6 faith. Give us open streets to keep the necessary
7 social distance. Space to safely travel to the bus
8 or subway. Space that gives us clean air to breathe,
9 gives our children room to safely ride a bike,
10 seniors peace of mind to venture outside and parents
11 a little relief from being full on wall keeping the
12 keys inside. Let's hear the bird song of hope. As
13 the weather warms, staying home will be so much
14 harder for everyone, but especially those with the
15 least amount of living space and without air
16 conditioning. The streets belong to all of us, not
17 just vehicles that most New Yorkers don't even own.
18 Stop making us squeeze down narrow sidewalks,
19 clinging to the edges to stay alive. Pass Intro
20 1933. Open streets. Seize this opportunity and feel
21 the deep joy my husband knew that is inherent in
22 serving, of truly taking care of one another. Give
23 us what is of greatest value right now. The very
24 thing we need most. Give us space. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Thank
3 you.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Do any
5 Council members have questions for this panelist?
6 Seeing none, I will move on to the next. We would
7 like to now call Dahlia Goldenberg.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Dahlia, when you
9 being to speak, your clock will start.

10 DAHLIA GOLDENBERG: Can you come here?
11 Okay. Hi. My name is Dahlia Goldenberg and I'm a
12 member of Families for Safe Streets. And I'm here
13 today with Sammy, two years old, my kid to urge the
14 city Council-- You want to say hi?

15 UNIDENTIFIED: Hi.

16 DAHLIA GOLDENBERG: And the Mayor--

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Hi.

18 DAHLIA GOLDENBERG: to open up the
19 street of New York City for people like us who really
20 need them. Several years ago, my husband got hit by
21 a reckless driver while crossing ministries and our
22 neighborhood. His me was badly damaged and he
23 narrowly-- you know, he narrowly could have died,
24 but he survived and fully recovered. But, ever since
25 then, I have been more anxious about crossing the

2 street because I know just how easy it is to get hit
3 for real. And so I am overly vigilant about looking
4 back over my shoulder anytime I am crossing the
5 street and the image of my child getting hit by a car
6 flashes on my mind all the time. So let me give you
7 a snap shot of what it's like to be a mom with a kid
8 like that in New York City right now. He's very
9 active and it's painful to know that he is less
10 opportunities to run freely, to climb on things, or
11 to learn how to ride his little balance bike. Our
12 apartment is tiny and for the sanity of our family, I
13 take him out once a day. And it's really hard to get
14 them nowhere facemask, so he needs to be at least six
15 feet, if not more, from other people. If he is
16 walking down the sidewalk with me and he is
17 inspecting the trees or the rocks or if he is riding
18 his balance bike you just learned to ride two days
19 ago, I had to keep an eye out for anyone walking
20 towards us or if anyone is coming up behind us and
21 then I have to sort of assess whether it looks like
22 they are going to get into the street to give us
23 space or not. And, if it looks like they are not,
24 then I had to pick him up, wrangle him off of his
25 bike that you so excited about, just getting used to

2 it. I scooped him up in my arms, grab the bike, run
3 out into the street in between two cars to make extra
4 space on the sidewalk for some money to walk five.
5 Especially if they are not wearing a mask.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

7 DAHLIA GOLDBERG: Just a little more. I'm
8 in a [inaudible 02:19:35] neighborhood right now.
9 I'm very privileged to be in a neighborhood with
10 generally wide sidewalks, otherwise, we wouldn't be
11 doing this at all. And when I am out with him in the
12 stroller, is people don't set aside for us, I have to
13 carefully manipulate the stroller off the sidewalk,
14 and between two cars, look for cars, go up and then
15 find another place to carefully get it back up under
16 the curve if I want to maintain six feet. And having
17 more safe space so that I don't panic about him
18 getting too close to someone or getting hit by a car
19 would make a world of distance. And I also had a
20 friend is an undocumented immigrant living with four
21 small children and her husband in a tiny one-bedroom
22 apartment and they're not leaving their apartment at
23 all. And there in the neighborhood--

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Dahlia.

2 DAHLIA GOLDBERG: worse than ours. Thank
3 you.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you.

5 LEGAL COUNSEL: Do any Council members
6 have questions for Dahlia? Okay. Seeing none, we
7 will next call on Nikia Whittington.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Nikia, when you
9 being to speak, your clock will start.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Go ahead. You may
11 begin, Nikia Whittington. Go ahead. We can see
12 them. Ms. Whittington? Go ahead.

13 NIKIA WHITTINGTON: Good afternoon,
14 everyone. Good afternoon.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Good afternoon.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon.

17 NIKIA WHITTINGTON: My name is Nikia
18 Whittington and I am here as a new member of Families
19 for Safe Streets. I want to give my testimony for my
20 son, Shavon [inaudible 02:21:19] Junior and I'm going
21 to begin now. Next month Hallmark my son's two-year
22 anniversary since I buried my son. He was seven
23 years old. His name is Shavon [inaudible 02:21:36]
24 Junior. He was killed by an MTA bus driver on
25 Webster Avenue in the Bronx. His 11-year-old

2 brother, DeShawn, had to watch him die. All I wanted
3 to do was lift up the blanket in the morgue, but they
4 said not to because his body was badly crushed. He
5 kissed his beautiful face. I know where living in a
6 modest time of the pandemic, but the traffic violence
7 is a silent pandemic. Just a few months ago, DeShawn
8 was hit by a van as he was crossing the street with
9 his uncle and he had the lights to cross. He
10 fractured his me and his arrest, but thankfully he
11 will recover. I am here today, but I wanted to speak
12 out to talk about Shavon and to urge you to pass this
13 bill to save the lives and to help prevent others
14 from suffering from both pandemics as we do. Shavon
15 was a special boy. One day I was out of a job and--
16 I'm sorry, guys. One day I was out of a job and
17 nearly out of food. Shavon took his books outside on
18 the trolley and sold them. He made little drawings
19 and he--

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [interposing] Time's up.

21 NIKIA WHITTINGTON: He got 70 dollars
22 and is said, now, mom. Now we can get something me,
23 mommy. If he was here and now, he would be telling
24 me, don't worry, mommy. Everything is going to be
25 okay. Our last Mother's Day together he wrote me a

2 poem and I wanted to share it with you guys.

3 Sometimes we get discouraged because I am so small
4 and always leaves my fingerprints on the furniture
5 and walls, but every day I'm growing and I'll gone
6 someday. And all these tiny handprints will surely
7 fade away. So here's a little handprint just so you
8 can recall exactly how my fingers look when I was
9 very small. By Shavon Batia Junior. For Shavon, for
10 all of the parents who have buried their kids because
11 of traffic violence, and the COVID epidemic, pass
12 Intro 1933 and make it safer to walk our streets.
13 This bill will make sure we don't spread the virus.
14 It will prevent the crashes and will keep us safe.

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: First of all, our
16 prayer and [inaudible 02:24:36] as a father to two
17 daughters, seven and 13, I know that, you know-- I
18 can express all we're solidarity by you are the one
19 that has the emptiness in your heart. And I know
20 that as a person of faith, that's the only way of how
21 we can wake up and go to sleep. You know, if
22 something like that happens to any parent. So I know
23 that your son now is fighting for you and for all of
24 us. I just have a question, especially as persons of
25 color that we are, which is my [inaudible 02:25:09]

2 and I know it is important to have, you know, that
3 our voices here in this conversation. How critical
4 is this bill especially in underserved communities
5 such as in the Bronx, Northern Manhattan, in any
6 borough?

7 NIKIA WHITTINGTON: So, once again, I
8 would love to thank you guys for giving me the
9 opportunity to share my testimony about my son who
10 was very dear to my heart and I would also like to
11 think you guys for the NYPD and the DOT for keeping
12 us safe in this pandemic.

13 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you.

14 LEGAL COUNSEL: Do any other Council
15 members have questions or comments for this panelist?
16 Okay. Seeing none, we will now call Raul Rivera.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All right. Raul, your
18 clock will start when you begin to speak.

19 RAUL RIVERA: Good afternoon. Due to the
20 short time of testimony, I am going to read a partial
21 of my written testimony. Amy Cohen, Families for
22 Safe Streets will submit the written-- my written
23 testimony. My name is Raul Rivera. I am a TOC
24 driver. I'm a TOC driver advocate, native New
25 Yorker. I am a crash survivor and I am also Families

2 for Safe Streets member. Even with the COVID
3 epidemic, I have not stopped working. Every day I
4 transport front line and essential workers to and
5 from their destination. I am testifying today
6 because I fully support the bill to open streets for
7 pedestrians and cyclists because it will keep all of
8 us safe. It is crazy out there on the streets. I
9 see more and more drivers speeding recklessly in the
10 Bronx and have seen people stop traffic on the
11 southbound lane of the [inaudible 02:27:15] Boulevard
12 just so two cars can drag race down the street.
13 Please. I call upon all of you, the Mayor, and the
14 entire city Council to tackle this speeding crisis
15 now before more people are killed or seriously
16 injured. This bill is a step in the right direction.
17 It will make others streets less likely to turn into
18 speedways. It will let our essential workers walk to
19 and from work when they can without contaminating
20 their neighbors. As a professional driver, I urge
21 you to pass this bill. Thank you for your time. I
22 kept that under two minutes.

23 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

24 RAUL RIVERA: Thank you.

25

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council members have
3 questions for this panelist? If so, you remember to
4 use your raise hand function on Zoom.

5 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. Let's follow
6 with the plan. So, if any Council members-- I don't
7 have any questions. I know Raul. Thank you for the
8 work that you are doing not only on pedestrian
9 issues, but also a voice for our drivers. Elliott, I
10 would say, unless Council members raise their hand,
11 then you discontinue calling the names.

12 LEGAL COUNSEL: Okay. Next, we will
13 hear from Marco Connor.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Marco, your time will
15 begin when you start speaking.

16 MARCO CONNOR: Okay. Can you hear me?

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: We do.

18 MARCO CONNOR: Good afternoon, then.
19 My name is Marco Connor [inaudible 02:28:45]. I am
20 deputy director at Transportation Alternatives and,
21 on behalf of the entire TA family, I want to express
22 my sympathies for the losses of at DOT and NYPD and
23 the challenges that our city workers and frontline
24 workers are facing. We strongly support Intro 1933.
25 This bill is absolutely critical to slow the spread

2 of the coronavirus and to facilitate our city's
3 healthy and safe economic recovery. We just heard
4 from families who have lost loved ones to traffic
5 violence and I want to stress that open streets save
6 lives. When parts of Times Square and Hells Square
7 were closed off, DOT's own studies showed a 40
8 percent reduction in pedestrian death and injuries
9 and 63 percent reduction for motor vehicle occupants.
10 And I want to stress, also, that this legislation
11 still gives driver unencumbered access to 99 percent
12 of our city's streets. COVID-19 has revealed
13 numerous existing inequities in our city and our
14 streets and public space are no different. Many New
15 York City neighborhoods lack open space. Not
16 everyone has Central or Prospect Park in their
17 backyards. And our limited street space belongs to
18 New Yorkers. It belongs to people, yet, despite the
19 fact that most New Yorkers do not own a car, more
20 than 75 percent of our city's street are dedicated to
21 moving or parking cars with pedestrians or cyclists
22 pushed to the margins of the street. And we pay for
23 these inequities with lives and limbs lost in traffic
24 crashes and with increased risk of death from COVID-
25 19 because of pollution from cars. And, first and

2 foremost, during this crisis, open streets are a
3 public health measure and we need them to effectively
4 fight this pandemic. We simply do not have enough
5 street space to be safe.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

7 MARCO CONNOR: And as the economy
8 slowly reopens, we will see an explosion of people
9 who want to walk or bike and we need to be able to do
10 so safely. And open outdoor space to maintain
11 physical and mental health is a real need. Adequate
12 social distancing is a real life-saving need and this
13 legislation will start to address these needs in an
14 equitable manner without-- with the urgency that
15 this moment demands. And it's something that the
16 Mayor must not ignore. So thank you and we strongly
17 support this legislation and urge its quick passage
18 and signage.

19 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Do any
20 Council members have questions for this panelist?
21 Okay. Seeing none, we will next call on Dr. Nicholas
22 Gavin.

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Dr. Nicholas, your time
24 will start when you begin speaking.

2 DR. NICHOLAS GAVIN: Thank you, Mr.
3 Chairman. My name is Dr. Nicholas Gavin. I'm an
4 emergency physician working in Washington Heights and
5 Inwood and assistant professor of emergency medicine
6 at Columbia University. Today, I'm speaking for
7 myself. Part of what I love about being in New York
8 City and serving its people is the density. It's
9 what makes great cities what they are, but our
10 density--- usually one of our greatest strengths--
11 has made dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic
12 significantly more challenging than it might be in
13 places where people are more spread out. From my
14 vantage point in the emergency department, it's
15 become clear that our efforts to stay apart have been
16 effective to slow the spread of the virus. It's also
17 clear we're not yet out of the woods. I would know.
18 As an emergency room doctor, I've witnessed,
19 firsthand, the devastation this pandemic has caused
20 when left unchecked. I've also seen how effective we
21 can flatten the curve when armed with a plan. As the
22 weather gets warmer and the days get longer, the urge
23 and need to spend time outdoors is going to be even
24 stronger. Although public health experts warn
25 against this temptation, it's unreasonable to expect

2 eight and a half million New Yorkers to stay inside
3 all summer long. Creating outlet for getting
4 outdoors, for exercise and fresh air is critical to
5 people's health. This is particularly important, as
6 you have suggested over and over again, in low income
7 neighborhoods where families are often living in
8 smaller quarters with multiple household members. We
9 cannot rely on parks alone. There was already
10 disparity there, particularly for working class and
11 immigrant families in New York City. I have seen
12 that social distancing is a privilege. In working
13 class and immigrant communities, COVID-19 has run
14 rampant. Access to open, safe spaces in these parts
15 of our city should be a top priority. I thank
16 Council Speaker Johnson and Council member Carlina
17 Rivera who announced this legislation.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

19 DR. NICHOLAS GAVIN: From a public
20 health perspective, this is a no brainer. I call
21 upon the Mayor to support this legislation. Mr.
22 Mayor, when you've looked to the future, you've been
23 the greatest version of yourself as a leader. Think
24 of UPK and the ferries. You looked down the field

2 and you seized the opportunity. Open our streets,
3 please. Thank you.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: Do any Council members
5 have questions for this panelist?

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: We don't. And I say
7 again, let's just continue calling the name unless
8 Council members raise their hands and just continue
9 calling the names.

10 LEGAL COUNSEL: Next, we will call on
11 John Orcut.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: John, your time will
13 begin when you start speaking.

14 JOHN ORCUT: Thank you. Thank you to the
15 Council for introducing open streets legislation like
16 New York supports Intro 1933. And thanks,
17 especially, to Speaker Johnson, Council member
18 Rivera, and Chair Rodriguez for their leadership in
19 view of the Mayor's intransience on this issue. You
20 know, the Speaker was absolutely right in calling
21 out, you know, the issue of car-free parks. We do do
22 that with the sawhorse in the street 365 days a year
23 now for both Central and Prospect Park. DOT itself
24 has a great program called Weekend Walks which allows
25 neighborhoods to identify temporary pedestrian

2 streets. And the way it works is, basically, PD
3 drops off some sawhorses on the corner, say, on a
4 Friday night and civic partners put those sawhorses
5 out Saturday morning and you have a great weekend of
6 streets for people. And those are more crowded than
7 we want today, but I think the model works. And we
8 should trust New York and I know it's not the way
9 city government has rolled in the past, but these are
10 new times and it's a chance to make progress and try
11 new things, so let's do that. I don't need to repeat
12 the case for open streets, which you all understand.
13 You've introduced this legislation because you're
14 leaders on the issue. But, instead, I want to sound
15 the alarm on the city's unwillingness to act on open
16 streets now will really put us behind the eight ball
17 when we start any kind of gradual reopening of our
18 streets. You know, the most epic gridlock we've seen
19 in New York City's history were the weeks after 9/11
20 and the days after hurricane Sandy. It only takes,
21 you know, loss of a few pieces of transportation
22 infrastructure to really throw our system out of
23 balance and to put a few more people in cars just
24 doesn't work in the city, even if it's a small
25 percentage.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

3 JOHN ORCUT: So, we need a plan that has,
4 not only open streets, but pop up sidewalks, pop up
5 bike lanes. More bus ways. You know, no abandoning
6 congestion pricing. There's more and more. Single
7 occupancy vehicle restrictions. There's a wrinkle
8 there because of social distancing. Roxanne Swartz
9 has a good idea about that in the Daily News op-ed
10 today. So, again, we support you completely. Thank
11 you for your leadership. Let's insist on that plan
12 because the good news is we may be starting to look
13 at the curve going down and we need to act now, not
14 after the 2019 levels of traffic come back and
15 certainly not 2019 plus. That's going to make it
16 almost impossible to fix our streets.

17 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Okay. Next,
18 we'll hear from Greg Mahalovich.

19 GREG MAHALOVICH: I'm up.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Greg, your time will
21 begin when you begin your testimony.

22 GREG MAHALOVICH: Okay. Thank you,
23 Speaker Johnson, Chair Rodriguez, and the members of
24 Council Committee on Transportation. My name is Greg
25 Mahalovich, community advocacy direction for the

2 American Heart Association. So, AHA is, obviously,
3 concerned about the public health crisis facing New
4 York City. Our, you know, top priority is making
5 sure people maintain their health and wellbeing today
6 and going forward and we continue our mission
7 critical work because we know that people with
8 cardiovascular diseases are more likely to be
9 seriously impacted by this virus. So, one way to
10 maintain that cardiovascular health is, you know, the
11 30 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity
12 each five days a week. So we, obviously, know that
13 that contributes. But staying active provides
14 benefits beyond the physical. It helps manage stress
15 and long-term activation of your body's stress
16 response system that puts you at additional health
17 trouble: anxiety, headaches, depression. You know,
18 all these things that we know. So, even spending
19 non-active time outdoors helps lower your stress and
20 results in better health outcomes. So while these
21 social distancing guidelines are in place, New
22 Yorkers need to be able to walk, run, and bike and
23 roll in a way that keeps them appropriately distant
24 from each other to maintain their physical and mental
25 health now and going forward. And with the

2 population density of our city, I think creating this
3 temporary space is a reasonable way to make sure that
4 people can safely move around outside. We support
5 Intro 1933. We think Speaker Johnson, Council member
6 Rivera, and Chair Rodriguez for their leadership on
7 the issue. And, additionally, while we understand
8 that there are really to have budget decisions to be
9 made as a result of this crisis, New York City should
10 do what it can to avoid taking away funding from our
11 active living transportation, often when we need it
12 the most. The Brooklyn Greenway Initiative reported
13 that Sunday, April 4th, their sensor along the
14 Greenway near the Brooklyn Navy Yard had 4000
15 bicycles, which is the most since they started
16 tracking it. None of all our greenways are well-
17 maintained. There are gaps in poorly maintained
18 sessions and why we absolutely need to prioritize
19 helping New Yorkers through this crisis and
20 supporting and protecting our first responders and
21 essential workers. We can't abandon our--

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

23 GREG MAHALOVICH: [inaudible 2:39:29]

24 infrastructure. Thank you for everything you have
25 done and everything you will do to protect the lives

2 of New Yorkers and AHA remains your partner and
3 ensuring the health and well-being of our city.
4 Thank you.

5 LEGAL COUNSEL: okay. Next we will hear
6 from John Sanchez.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: John, your time well-
8 being can when you start your testimony.

9 JOHN SANCHEZ: Good morning, Chairman
10 Rodriguez and members of the committee. My name is
11 John Sanchez and I am the district manager of Bronx
12 community board six. I fully support Intro 1933.
13 Requires DOT to provide a plan for open and shared
14 streets using the same criteria that is used for
15 street closures approved by the city's SAPO office.
16 District manager, I reviewed several dozen street
17 activity permits yearly and assist organizations with
18 play street applications. This is one of the few
19 areas where community boards have significant power
20 and one we are uniquely familiar with. The
21 guidelines for police streets and street activities
22 require that safety be considered. The guidelines
23 for plays streets require that the street does not
24 have high traffic, is not on a bus route, is not
25 adjacent to a hospital, and does not have commercial

2 establishments that would be curtailed or adversely
3 affected. This legislation requires that DOT uses
4 those same factors. Also, this is important to
5 protect resident safety. Despite traffic being
6 nearly 80 percent decreased since COVID has happened,
7 we've seen an uptick in speeding. On a normal day,
8 the Bronx would see 14 million miles driven by
9 vehicles. This Monday, we saw 2.9 million miles
10 driven. The removal of one traffic lane will not
11 harm many drivers because drivers just aren't driving
12 right now. More importantly, this is the time where
13 everyone needs to have shared sacrifice. In
14 community board six, we have lost access to nearly
15 nine acres of the available 29 acres of parkland in
16 our community board due to the closure of
17 playgrounds, which is about 30 percent of our total
18 parkland. Intro 1933 requires that drivers share 75
19 miles, which is one percent of the 6300 miles in New
20 York City. Taking it a step further, 800 blocks is
21 .6 percent of the 120,000 blocks in our entire city.
22 This is a sacrifice that drivers can take and all New
23 Yorkers paid to maintain our roads, not just drivers.
24 Pedestrians and cyclists have just as much of a right
25 to it as drivers. In closing, our community board is

2 ready and willing to assist DOT to make this
3 initiative go through successfully. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: John, I have a
5 question.

6 JOHN SANCHEZ: Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Since you are the
8 district manager, as I've said before, you know,
9 representing like mainly a Latino and black area--

10 JOHN SANCHEZ: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: how critical-- and
12 as you know, this has been important for me my whole
13 life, but aside from-- I always encourage my friends
14 in the cyclist community. I mean their voices and I
15 need for them also to understand that even buying an
16 expensive bike or getting memberships of the city
17 bike and others, it's a privilege. It's not
18 something that many of the constituent say that we
19 have in community board six that you are the district
20 manager or the poorest neighborhoods where we are
21 dying by hundreds every day in this epidemic. And
22 that things didn't happen overnight. Also we are
23 being more affected because our people never have
24 access, you know, the same as all the middle-class
25 and upper-class community when it came to getting to

2 bike and they can have also space, safe streets, for
3 them to [inaudible 2:43:07] and poverty. When we
4 work in an area that is the poorest one in the whole
5 nation, how important is this? Putting aside the
6 other areas where we already know that there is a lot
7 of bike lane where our middle and upper class, they
8 already-- this is part of their lives for decades
9 already. How critical, how much support should the
10 constituent say in the community board six that you
11 represent is when you can on my essay we should plan,
12 but also connect it with access for people to be able
13 to have access to get a bike.

14 JOHN SANCHEZ: 100 percent. Especially
15 when you consider that most of the essential workers,
16 the ebike delivery, the bike delivery people, they
17 utilize bikes. And especially in the Bronx community
18 board six, it's dangerous to ride a bike and make
19 deliveries. And we need the access and we had a
20 pilot program to have bikes in the district and
21 people were mainly using them to ride to the train
22 station because, and our district, we are about a 25
23 minute walk to the train. So, it's critical in our
24 area and, when bike lanes are used and when bike

2 pilot programs have been, they are very popular in
3 our district and we want to expand them.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. And
5 those communities should be the top priority when
6 we-- if we work on this plan, that's what I call,
7 you know, forget about my friends on the upper West
8 side, the upper East side or the middle-class
9 community in Brooklyn and Queens. Be a leader
10 fighting to provide to the underserved community when
11 we already have in the middle-class and upper-class
12 community. Thank you, John.

13 JOHN SANCHEZ: Thank you.

14 LEGAL COUNSEL: Next, we will hear from
15 Dale Corvino.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Dale, your time will
17 start when you begin speaking.

18 DALE CORVINO: Hello, everyone. Thank
19 you, Chair. Thank you, Speaker. Thank you, Council
20 member Rivera. I am Dale Corvino. I live in Hells
21 Kitchen. I am the co-chair of CB four's
22 Transportation Planning Committee. On April 15th, I
23 chaired a publicly announced regularly scheduled
24 meeting of our committee with this item on the
25 agenda. The meeting was virtual, as such as we are

2 today. Everyone who wished to address the meeting
3 was recognized in an orderly manner and the entire
4 meaning was recorded. The support for open streets,
5 both from committee members and the public in
6 attendance was unanimous. That is 100 percent. We
7 later received the following minority opinions. Some
8 of our neighbors had legitimate concerns about
9 emergency vehicles, access of rides, and deliveries.
10 And the plan we envision, which mirrors the plan that
11 you will vote on, vehicles are nowhere restricted and
12 dispatchers can easily optimize travel routes in
13 advance. One individual thought that the measure was
14 unnecessary since there are fewer pedestrians on our
15 sidewalks. While this is true, it's also true that
16 narrow sidewalks are too often in obstructed by
17 construction should ends, garbage, wrist cycling,
18 tree pits, meters, and other equipments that make
19 keeping the recommended six foot distance while
20 passing and possible without stepping into the
21 streets. In addition to the essential workers that
22 we gathered to applaud every night at 7 p.m., our
23 district houses special workers. National Guard
24 people and healthcare personnel who are crossing town
25 via side streets in groups. Another objection that

2 we met was the involvement of the NYPD. As other
3 cities have demonstrated-- and I saw cherry picking
4 of data from Oakland, which is population around half
5 1 million-- police presence is not required for--

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

7 DALE CORVINO: open streets to occur.

8 We envision a community led approach. While of
9 course the implementation would be coordinated with
10 the PD, the police department does not lead the city.
11 The police department has their hands full with other
12 matters. There were concerns that through traffic
13 diverted to the major cross town streets would create
14 a burden. Our analysts report that traffic loads are
15 down between 50 and 60 percent. So, traffic burdens
16 are not as serious concern at this time. Our letter
17 to Speaker Johnson supporting the open street plans
18 with the recommended cross streets is submitted as
19 testimony. We expect that letter to be ratified at
20 the full board meeting of CB four in May and we also
21 support our neighboring CB five's call to fully
22 pedestrianize Broadway. Thank you very much.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

24 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we
25 will be hearing from Samira Behrooz.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Samira, your time will
3 start when you being speaking.

4 SAMIRA BEHROOZ: Good afternoon, Chair
5 Rodriguez and committee members. My name is Samira
6 Behrooz. I'm the director of programs for the Design
7 Trust for Public Space. I'm here today to express
8 our organizations support of Intro 1933 in regard to
9 creating temporary space for pedestrians and cyclists
10 on our city's streets. Since 1995, the Design Trust
11 has worked to unlock the potential of New York City's
12 shared spaces throughout all five boroughs. We
13 connect city agencies and community collaborators to
14 advance change for the equity of all New Yorkers and
15 to evolve our public space is with [inaudible
16 2:48:38], equity, and mobility in mind. Mobility is
17 not just about forms of transportation, however, it
18 is also about how people move through the city and
19 how public spaces, including streets and sidewalks,
20 act as connective tissue throughout our vast
21 metropolis. Now, more than ever before, we can all
22 recognize how valuable our limited public space is
23 and how difficult it is to provide equitable and safe
24 access to it during this pandemic. Opening the
25 streets for pedestrians and cyclists would allow more

2 space for people to travel for essential services,
3 take refuge from isolation anxiety, and get the
4 mental and physical health benefits of going
5 outdoors, while still maintaining a safe physical
6 distancing to prevent the spread of the virus. We
7 stand with Speaker Johnson and Council member Rivera
8 for their leadership on this issue and urge the
9 transportation committee to support this bill and to
10 send her it's roll out in those communities most in
11 need in order to best address the vast health and
12 social disparities exacerbated by the COVID-19
13 pandemic. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

15 LEGAL COUNSEL: Next, we will hear from
16 Lisa Orman.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Lisa, your time will be
18 again when you start your testimony.

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Lisa?

20 LISA ORMAN: Hello.

21 [Inaudible 02:50:14]

22 LISA ORMAN: Hi.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: How are you doing?

24 LISA ORMAN: Hi. Hi. I submitted my
25 testimony on minority.

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

3 LISA ORMAN: I sent it to you, Elliott.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

5 LISA ORMAN: I echo what everyone else
6 said. This is doable.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

8 LISA ORMAN: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

10 LEGAL COUNSEL: Okay. Next, we will
11 hear from Patrick McClellan.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Patrick, your time will
13 begin when you start your testimony.

14 PATRICK MCCLELLAN: Thank you very
15 much. My name is Patrick McClellan. I am the state
16 policy director for New York League of Conservation
17 Voters. I want to thank Speaker Johnson, Chair
18 Rodriguez, and Council member Rivera for the
19 opportunity to testify in support of this bill. When
20 New Yorkers leave their homes to get fresh air, which
21 medical professionals recommend for both physical and
22 mental health, they deserve to be able to do so as
23 safely as possible. But as others have pointed out,
24 many of our city's sidewalks are too narrow to
25 accommodate pedestrian traffic while still allowing

2 for proper social distancing. In addition, many New
3 Yorkers are biking more often during this crisis,
4 either for exercise or, for many essential workers,
5 in order to avoid our public transit system that is
6 nonguaranteed reliable service or safe distance from
7 other passengers due to the really horrific toll that
8 this virus has taken on the MTAs workforce. Intro
9 1933 addresses these issues directly and similar
10 programs have already been enacted in other major
11 cities around the world and have shown promise in
12 addressing issues of increased pedestrian and cyclist
13 traffic without increasing conflict with automobiles.
14 And, of course, our city did not have enough open
15 space or green space even before this pandemic. For
16 the most famously walkable city in America, our
17 streets are too often not designed with pedestrians
18 in mind. And, when too much street space is given
19 over to cars and when people choose to drive or take
20 for higher vehicles because they don't feel safe
21 using other modes of transportation, emissions of
22 greenhouse gases and particulate matter pollution go
23 up. It's bad for New York's rolling climate change
24 and it is bad for a wide variety of public health
25 outcomes, including respiratory illness. Tragically,

2 you know, now that New Yorkers are exposed to the
3 highest levels of air pollution disproportionate in
4 communities of color are particularly vulnerable to
5 COVID-19. So, Intro 1933 is a temporary solution for
6 a temporary crisis and NYLCD wholeheartedly endorses
7 it. But I hope that this legislation's successful
8 implementation will build momentum for full and
9 partial pedestrianization of more streets, more
10 pedestrian plaza of, and safer biking infrastructure,
11 all of which can be built at--

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

13 PATRICK MCCLELLAN: at low cost during
14 the city's budget crisis and made more permanent at a
15 future date when the city's finances have recovered.
16 You know, whether residents are biking or walking the
17 grocery store or exercising outdoors, they deserve
18 our support to keep themselves safe and healthy and
19 that will remain true even after this pandemic ends.
20 Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

22 LEGAL COUNSEL: Next, we well call on
23 Eric McClure.

24

25

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Anne, Eric,
3 when you start to speak I will start running the
4 clock.

5 ERIC MCCLURE: Great. Thank you.
6 Thank you, Speaker Johnson, Mr. Chair, Council
7 member Rivera, the other members. It's nice to see
8 you all. Streets PAC emphatically supports Intro
9 1933. Finding enough space on a New York City
10 sidewalk, which was merely an inconvenience less than
11 two months ago is now nearer to being a matter of
12 life and death. Like many, we believe it is ideal
13 that New Yorkers stay home as much as possible in
14 order to stop the spread, but essential workers have
15 to get to jobs, people need to be able to buy
16 groceries, and further physical and mental well-
17 being, many folks need to be able to go for a walk or
18 a run or just clear their hands, especially as
19 temperatures rise. It's nearly impossible to do
20 under current conditions. Well-publicized maps
21 circulated in the past few days show that many of our
22 neighborhoods are nearly devoid of sidewalks wide
23 enough for maintaining six feet of separation. At
24 the same time, with motor vehicle traffic having
25 fallen by about 75 percent across the city, vast

2 swaths of empty streets crisscross our communities.
3 We can address that in balance by extending sidewalks
4 into curbside lanes on wider avenues by allowing
5 people to open their streets block parties style to
6 gain some breathing room and by, perhaps,
7 pedestrianize thing traffic light quarters like
8 Broadway and Manhattan. Mexico City, Berlin, Bogota,
9 Montréal, Vancouver, Milan, Paris, Auckland, Denver,
10 Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Louisville, and most
11 notably in the US, as we have discussed, Oakland,
12 among many other cities, have all opened or are in
13 the process of opening streets toe walking and
14 biking. And they are largely doing it with little or
15 no police enforcement. We closed streets all the
16 time for utility work or tree pruning or block
17 parties with a few cones and a sign or two. Further,
18 there is just no factual basis to believe that giving
19 people some extra space will cause a rush of unsafe
20 clustering. Those who would ignore social distancing
21 guidelines are going to do so on a narrow sidewalk or
22 in the middle of the great lawn. For the 99 percent
23 plus of New Yorkers terrified of catching
24 coronavirus, we are going to self-enforce
25 proactively. While we know that NYC DOT has been

2 stretched and strained by COVID-19, we firmly believe
3 that they should lead the effort to open--

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

5 ERIC MCCLURE: since many organizations
6 stand ready to assist them, including numerous bids.
7 And they, like we, believe much of this can be
8 accomplished with minimal enforcement. Let's also
9 make sure that we prioritize opening streets in those
10 neighborhoods that have the least current access to
11 the green space. Any communities where the parks are
12 being most heavily used. Lastly, the effort to open
13 New York City's streets to people now will help guide
14 us as we began the effort to shape a post-COVID
15 future. One that tilts the balance back towards
16 people powered uses. That's a topic for another day,
17 but we look forward to having that discussion with
18 you all in the Council. Thank you very much.

19 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we
20 will hear from Philip Leff.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Philip,
22 your clock will start when you begin your testimony.

23 PHILIP LEFF: Thank you. My name is Philip
24 Leff and I am chair of Transportation Alternatives
25 North Brooklyn committee. Our neighborhood has some

2 of the highest rates of air pollution in the city and
3 some of the least amount of open space. Long before
4 COVID-19, our rate of hospitalization and respiratory
5 diseases was twice the city average and we have
6 historically born the burden of highways and waste
7 transfer stations that bring poison exhaust through
8 our streets. We are more than an exit ramp, though.
9 Our streets are our homes. Our communities is also
10 in need of open space. Last summer, few parks were
11 overwhelmed on hot days. Playgrounds were teeming.
12 The line to get into the McCarran Park pool stretched
13 for more than a block. Now the latter two options
14 have been taken away. It is unrealistic to expect
15 people to stay inside for a whole summer and, in the
16 case of stifling apartments without air-conditioning,
17 it can prove deadly. Opening streets to people will
18 provide the space to get outside, stay safe, while
19 staying close to home. There may be more fewer cars
20 on the road, but those who are driving now are
21 driving more recklessly. DOT and NYPD have the data
22 to prove it. On April 6th, on my corner, I witnessed
23 two crashes on one day. One of which required an
24 ambulance on one of the busy days ever for 911. Why
25 are we adding to the burden of our emergency

2 services? Opening streets to people gives the signal
3 to drivers that they need to slow down, stop using
4 neighborhood streets as their personal Speedway.
5 Lastly, there is still a need for people to get to
6 work, more so as restrictions are lifted. People may
7 be wary of taking public transit. But if even a
8 small number of people switch from transit to
9 driving, and decrease in congestion, pollution, and
10 crashes will make our city unlovable and send more
11 people to our overburdened hospitals. Cities around
12 the world understand this and are taking action to
13 make cycling and walking safer in a post lockdown
14 world. I think the city Council for continuing
15 forward thinking action with Intro 1993. I look
16 forward to its swift approval, expedient
17 implementation for open streets. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

19 LEGAL COUNSEL: Our next panelists will
20 be Wendy Brower.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Anne, Wendy, your clock
22 will start when you begin your testimony.

23 WENDY BROWER: Hi. I'm a designer and
24 a 30 year resident of the lower East side. In 1993,
25 I took part and a team rethinking mobility and

2 Manhattan. Our 17 year plan reduced the societal
3 cost of mobility by 50 percent by year 2010. Our
4 plan opened a lane of parking on every street. Fast
5 forward to today. There is evidence showing that
6 particulate matter from cars exacerbates COVID-19
7 deaths so that societal cost is rising. Distancing
8 is a powerful preventative, yet too many heavily
9 impacted neighborhoods don't have wide enough
10 sidewalks as sidewalkwidth.nyc shows. It's time to
11 create distancing space by removing stored vehicles
12 and reduce and enforce speed limits. Open streets
13 will have a profound benefit on our health and well-
14 being. Open streets is something that we can live
15 with. Thank you very much to everybody involved
16 here.

17 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next
18 panelists will be Graham Weinstein.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Graham, your clock
20 will start when you began your testimony.

21 GRAHAM WEINSTEIN: Okay. Thank you for the
22 opportunity to speak. Can you hear me okay? Can you
23 hear me?

24 LEGAL COUNSEL: Yes.

2 GRAHAM WEINSTEIN: Great. My name is
3 Graham. I am the cofounder and president of Out
4 Cycling, which is an LGBT cycling network of over
5 1000 members. Most all live with in the five
6 boroughs of New York City. On behalf of myself and
7 our members, we could not support this idea and this
8 bill more strongly. I'm not going to make the case
9 for open streets again. I think that is being made
10 very, very well today on this call. I will say, is a
11 community group, we stand ready to do anything we can
12 to help implement a safe program for everyone.
13 Including the idea of creating a volunteer street
14 marshaling program similar to what all large running
15 and cycling events use as they use the city's
16 streets. Additional eyes and ears on the street to
17 support programs and support something safely.
18 Something like that would be beneficial. I want to
19 say a big thank you to all the Council members who
20 are working on this and figuring this out. You have
21 our full support. And, with that, I think I will
22 share my time. Thank you.

23 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next
24 panelists will be Charles Todd.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Charles, your clock
3 will start when you began your testimony.

4 CHARLES TODD: Hi. My name is Charles
5 Todd and I am a resident of Hells Kitchen. During
6 normal times, the sidewalks in my neighborhood are
7 already absurdly cramped. There are many spots where
8 a combination of a stoop and a tree bed or a trash
9 pile will make pedestrian traffic, literally, single
10 file. We are thankful for Corey Johnson's [inaudible
11 03:01:00] work and to remove outdated and unused pay
12 phones to free up some space, but the sidewalks are
13 made to narrow. So, while walking with a stroller in
14 Hells Kitchen is a challenge in normal times, keeping
15 social distance while ours sidewalks are closed
16 during the pandemic is impossible. On every side
17 street, we are still allocating two cars of traffic
18 to the free storage of personal vehicles for the
19 minority of residents that own a car. If we aren't
20 going to change our street parking system during this
21 pandemic, then we must close the streets themselves.
22 With traffic down considerably and the remaining cars
23 speeding at record rates, it's time to allocate our
24 street space more equitably for all New Yorkers.
25 Cities around the world are closing down miles of

2 streets to allow citizens to exercise and run
3 essential errands without violating social distance
4 rules. We aren't asking to have a block party.
5 We're asking to be able to walk to the grocery stores
6 safely. New York should be leading on this issue,
7 not falling behind. New York is not different from
8 Oakland when it comes to the ability to close streets
9 for the safety for all. We do not need the police to
10 help us do this. We can do it ourselves. The only
11 difference is the vision and the leadership from the
12 top. If our mayor is being driven 12 miles to
13 exercise in a park in a different borough, how can he
14 understand what the rest of us are going through?
15 Open the streets now. Thank you, Council.

16 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next
17 panelist will be Steve Schofield.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Steve, your clock
19 will start when you begin your testimony.

20 STEVE SCHOFIELD: Thank you. I am Steve
21 Schofield I am a resident of Astoria, a long time
22 cyclist, street safety advocate, retired general
23 superintendent of the New York City Transit, first of
24 all. Thank you for letting me speak. And we have
25 all seen the maps about how our sidewalks are too

2 narrow all over to accommodate any kind of social
3 distancing. I also want to implore the City Council
4 and DOT, as part of this proposal, to consider
5 opening the [inaudible 03:03:06] the Queensboro
6 Bridge to pedestrians. Even before this, the
7 northbound roadway, nine to 11 feet wide was already
8 dangerously overcrowded. Even now, with only
9 essential workers traveling, it is still crowded.
10 You cannot socially distance. At some point, when
11 the city starts to open up again, it is going to get
12 even more crowded. It's a lifeline for essential
13 workers, for hospital workers who live in Queens and
14 go to hospitals in the East side of Manhattan. And
15 for delivery workers. A lot of people that ride and
16 walk over the bridge or delivery workers. There is
17 no way they could social distance. And, yes. We
18 have the support of City Councilman and community
19 boards on both sides of the bridge. Nearly 3000
20 people signed a petition. And business is in support
21 of this and, yes. I know. I get it. DOT has a
22 construction project on the upper level of the bridge
23 that they say precludes this, but this really needs
24 to be reconsidered in light of the situation. This

2 is, not only a matter of keeping distance. This is a
3 safety issue. Thank you.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next
5 panelist will be Samir Levingia.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Samir, your clock
7 will start when you begin your testimony.

8 SAMIR LEVINGIA: All right. Can you hear
9 me?

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes. We do.

11 LEGAL COUNSEL: Yes.

12 SAMIR LEVINGIA: Perfect. Thank you for
13 having all of us here for some public comment. I
14 just want to start by saying I strongly support the
15 Intro and I agree with almost what everyone else has
16 said so far. I've been watching the Mayors
17 coronavirus speeches and one of the things he is said
18 is that we need to have faith in New Yorkers. I,
19 personally, I agree with him and I think we need to
20 have faith that New Yorkers will do the right thing
21 and they will socially distance when we open up the
22 street space. I don't know why people think that the
23 majority of New Yorkers want to get sick, but
24 everyone is doing the best they can to stay inside
25 and we need that space to just avoid cabin fever. I

2 don't know many car owners in the city. There just
3 aren't that many of them, but the ones I do know have
4 told me that they started taking joy rides in the
5 city just because that is the only way they can get
6 outside, but still socially distance themselves. I
7 went outside and I measured the sidewalk right next
8 to me and, as other people assigned, between all of
9 the blockages such as the trash in the sidewalk
10 trees, they are just almost like two feet and width
11 and that is just not possible to socially distance
12 on. It's almost impossible to walk on in the first
13 place. I live near the Hudson River Greenway and
14 it's an amazing linear park and the problem is there
15 are just so many people walking and running out there
16 right now. It would be a huge benefit to have some
17 of that street space adjacent to it or like in the
18 nearby area opened up so people can run on the
19 streets safely. The Mayor and his administration
20 have had months to act and all we've seen is the few
21 blocks that were opened up a couple weeks ago for not
22 really about long. I just wanted to say thank you to
23 the Council for forcing this issue. Even though I
24 wish they didn't have to do so in the first place.
25 Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

3 LEGAL COUNSEL: Our next panelist will
4 be Janet Liff.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Janet, your clock
6 will start when you begin your testimony.

7 JANET LIFF: Thank you. Hello, Council
8 members. Thank you for giving me a chance to speak I
9 am a director of neighborhood empowerment project at
10 Open Plans and we believe that our streets are
11 definitely more than just conduits for traffic and
12 they are where life happens. I am here to testify in
13 support of the bill that will ensure that during this
14 crisis and beyond we use it to transform our streets
15 now and in the future. Everyone here has really
16 touched on a lot of the essential points, so just a
17 few things. You know, we have two time frames. We
18 have now and then we have in the not so distance
19 future, which would be six to 18 months of, you know,
20 an ongoing social distancing. In the immediate
21 future, obviously, you know, the priority is safe
22 routes for our essential workers to get to and from
23 work and stay sane and safe. So that's, as of right
24 now, a high priority in creating sane and safe space
25 for pedestrians. Then a couple things that people

2 have mentioned that there are models. Then there are
3 models everywhere and these models, as has been
4 mentioned by several people, leverage volunteers
5 intensively in Bogota. They do a lot of civic action
6 and we know that we have activists and volunteer
7 groups and business improvement districts that are
8 willing to actually manage the streets. A few
9 examples. Another one that hasn't been mentioned.
10 There are cones on construction sites that work very
11 well and I will say, as someone who is walking every
12 night for hours, that this is already happening
13 organically and I see people cycling, walking, and
14 cars in the middle of the street and people are
15 learning to navigate. What we want is really just a
16 logical next step. I want to reinforce what John
17 said. We have to be prepared for the future and to
18 encourage people to reemerge and start our economy--

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

20 JANET LIFF: and for people to feel safe
21 on a sidewalk. So, you know, we have to provide
22 space, otherwise, you know, we are dead from the get-
23 go. And just a final point is that 75 miles is
24 great, but we need to recognize that that is kind of
25 a start because we will need a laying on virtually

2 every Avenue and East West connections in order to
3 restart our city. Thank you.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we
5 will hear from Jim Burke.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Jim, your clock
7 will start when you begin your testimony.

8 JIM BURKE: Hi. My name is Jim Burke.
9 I'm calling you from Jackson Heights, walking
10 distance from Elmhurst Hospital. Many of my
11 neighbors have already died and we are still talking
12 about giving us more space. This is ridiculous. On
13 our sidewalk, you cannot walk down and physically
14 distance from anybody. There are no protected bike
15 lanes anywhere in our neighborhood. We have one park
16 and it is about a mile down the way. I can't believe
17 we are still discussing this. We cannot bike safely.
18 We can't take our subways or buses safely. Our buses
19 and our subways are among the most crowded in the
20 entire city and, even though it shouldn't be now
21 because less people are using them, you have to wait
22 40 minutes to an hour to take the train. I don't
23 understand how this can be up for debate and I am so
24 grateful to Carlina Rivera and to Corey Johnson and
25 Ydanis for bringing this up. We need help. We need

2 space. Our neighbors walking on the sidewalk. You
3 see the tear in your eyes as you are coming close to
4 them. And what you do? One of you has to step in
5 the street and, by stepping in the street, you are
6 putting yourself in danger because, although there is
7 very little traffic, you don't know when that car is
8 going to come flying down. And, by opening our
9 streets, you are going to direct some of the traffic
10 and condensate so that there will be less speeding.
11 Right? There will be more room to physically
12 distance. There will be an alleviation of the crowds
13 taking our buses and subways. I mean, it's a no-
14 brainer that I can't believe that my partners from
15 Bogota-- I mean, from Colombia and Bogota instituted
16 this week so go. This is New York City. What are we
17 waiting for? It's very, very upsetting that we can't
18 get this done and we should do it tomorrow and I'm
19 very grateful to all of you considering this. But
20 please--

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

22 JIM BURKE: get it done. Thank you.

23 LEGAL COUNSEL: Next panelist will be
24 Cecil Brooks.

25

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Cecil, your clock
3 will be again when you begin your testimony.

4 CECIL BROOKS: Hello. Can you hear me
5 all right?

6 LEGAL COUNSEL: Yes.

7 CECIL BROOKS: Okay. I'm [inaudible
8 03:11:43]. So, hello. Thank you to committee Chair
9 Rodriguez, Speaker Johnson, sponsor Rivera, and all
10 of the people in government offering leadership. My
11 name is Cecil Brooks Junior, lifelong South Bronx
12 resident. I am also a city employee working as a
13 legislator and the Bronx chair of Transportation
14 Alternatives. Outside of that, I am a community
15 board one resident in the Bronx, so I have a direct
16 stake in how this land is managed, particularly from
17 the equities standpoint in the cultural stem weight,
18 because I am part of the often forgotten central
19 American Hondureno Afro indigenous Latin X community
20 and we have a direct stake in how shortsighted policy
21 has impacted the livelihoods and the conditions that
22 we are experiencing every day. Most importantly, I
23 have the same boss as every Council member here,
24 though voters and taxpayer dollars. Something for
25 accountability must be sad when we cannot fulfill our

2 duties because of a budget that is falling victim to
3 political immunity. New York City definitely has a
4 unique history and had handles crises before, which
5 is why we should be able to figure out how to reroute
6 one percent of our roads. Otherwise, every mile is
7 not considered an important asset in the lives of
8 communities like mine that have long been forgotten.
9 Intro 1933 for open streets was a priority before
10 COVID-19 decades ago when poison is urban planning
11 displaced people like us into substandard housing and
12 then destroyed that housing for concessions to
13 suburban commuters. One percent of our roads should
14 not make you lose the right to call this city the
15 most innovative in the country. One percent of our
16 roads should not force us to choose between going to
17 a grocery store, visiting sick relatives, or going
18 out to maintain physical activity. One percent--

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

20 CECIL BROOKS: of our roads should not
21 make you think that you cannot do your job as a
22 public servant and it is something that I have faith
23 that we see the value in. Thank you very much.

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Thank
25 you, Cecil. And one thing that, as I mentioned to

2 John from community board six, the district manager,
3 as I also would like to follow up with you because,
4 after DOT [inaudible 03:14:09] they were able to
5 bring the city bike weeks ago around the New York
6 private [inaudible 03:14:17]. I also ask both DOT
7 and [inaudible 03:14:21] to do the same thing. Not
8 to wait for the summer to also bring city bike now as
9 last week around Bronx Lebanon and Lincoln Hospital.
10 So, I'm more than happy, again. Please send me your
11 email as yrodriguez@council.nyc.gov. I want to
12 follow up with you to see how we work together
13 because I can say that Commissioner Trottenberg, she
14 was completely open. I say we don't have to wait for
15 the expansion of city bike, you know, as the timing
16 for the summer. Now, because the urgency in
17 following with this plan we already have the city
18 bike around 168 and Fort Washington, but I also want
19 to do the same thing right now around Lincoln
20 Hospital and the Bronx Lebanon. So I want to follow
21 up with you.

22 CECIL BROOKS: [speaking foreign
23 language]

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [speaking foreign
25 language]

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next
3 panelist will be Billy Freeland.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Billy, your clock
5 will start when you begin your testimony.

6 BILLY FREELAND: Thank you, Chair
7 Rodriguez and, thank you, Speaker Johnson and Council
8 member Rivera. My name is Billy Freeland and I am a
9 member of community board eight which represents
10 Roosevelt Islands and the East side of Manhattan from
11 the 59th Street to 96th Street. I am speaking in my
12 individual capacity in support of Intro 1933. I
13 wanted to cover a couple quick points in my testimony
14 today. The first may be a bit of news to the
15 committee because it just happened recently. But on
16 Wednesday night this week, community board eight
17 passed the resolution 30 to 4 in favor calling on DOT
18 to open up Park Avenue to pedestrians and cyclists.
19 So, this is yet another community board that is now
20 calling on DOT to take action to make sure, for
21 public safety and public health reasons, we open up
22 our streets. But I mainly wanted to focus my
23 testimony today on the Queensboro Bridge and I really
24 took to heart what Chair Rodriguez was saying about
25 needing to focus on many communities and communities

2 of color in particular. And one thing that
3 desperately needs to be addressed is the congestion
4 on the Queensboro Bridge, bridge that many essential
5 workers, deliveries cyclists, hospital workers, in
6 addition to regular pedestrians and cyclists who just
7 need exercise and some fresh air, we rely on the
8 Queensboro Bridge. I'm right now is, Mr. Schofield
9 and others have pointed out, it is extremely
10 congested. It is a 10 foot wide space on the north
11 outer roadway. We ask pedestrians going both ways to
12 fit in a four foot wide space. We ask cyclists to
13 fit in a six foot wide space. This violates ADA
14 guidelines. This violates city street design
15 guidelines. And it violates good common sense
16 regarding social distancing. The community board, in
17 January, past a resolution 34 to 4 asking DOT to the
18 study proposal to ameliorate these problems. There
19 is an easy solution. Opening the South outer
20 roadway. The bridge, like I said, serves many
21 hospital workers. And, I apologize. I just need--

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

23 BILLY FREELAND: a few more seconds to
24 finish this up. But, you know, for example, the
25 busiest city bike station is 68th Street and first

2 Avenue near while Cornell Medical Center. Chair
3 Rodriguez, I just want to point out that DOT says
4 they are rehabilitating the bridge or they are
5 planning to rehabilitate the bridge. My
6 understanding is that those plans are likely on hold
7 given the pandemic. So, there is no reason that I
8 can see that we can't temporarily ask that the
9 southbound roadway be open to pedestrians to ensure
10 that social distancing is possible. I hope you will
11 ask DOT to consider this and any plan they propose
12 when implementing this bill. Thank you so much for
13 your work. I greatly patient.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: More than happy to
15 follow with you.

16 LEGAL COUNSEL: Our next panelist will
17 be Queen Lucy Woody.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And, Queen Lucy Woody,
19 your clock will start when you begin your testimony.

20 QUEEN LUCY WOODY: Ready?

21 LEGAL COUNSEL: Yes.

22 QUEEN LUCY WOODY: My name is Queen Lucy
23 Woody. I'm an activist for the homeless. Sidewalks
24 are narrow. There is a problem with parking, but I'm
25 against this bill because we're still not clear and

2 it's not enough time for people to heal. I'm from
3 the South Bronx at this present time and there is no
4 safe distancing here. We have drug dealers and
5 everything on the corners. The derelicts and the
6 homeless people have, basically, taken over the
7 trains. So how is there any safety as far as social
8 distancing? I'm against this bill. The city is not
9 ready. It's just my opinion. Just me and some other
10 people and communities. I'm from community board
11 nine. I moved to the Bronx and we don't oppose this.
12 Thank you for letting me share. I'm done.

13 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Council
14 member--

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes. Which area do
16 you live in the Bronx?

17 QUEEN LUCY WOODY: On Grand Concourse and
18 182nd.

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. So--

20 QUEEN LUCY WOODY: [inaudible 03:19:57]
21 Avenue.

22 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. Thank you.
23 First of all, thank you for bringing your voice and,
24 for me, as I say, I'm all about bringing the voices
25 of the black, Latino, and Asian--

2 QUEEN LUCY WOODY: Uh-hm.

3 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: to this
4 conversation because I know and I will continue
5 listening for other people, you know, who--

6 QUEEN LUCY WOODY: I am black and Latino.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. All I say is
8 about that I want to be sure that the voice says of
9 Caribbean, Latino, Asian are also here in this
10 conversation and for those who are not [inaudible
11 03:20:26] those who are not black, Asian, Latino,
12 Caribbean, leaves understand how fed up we are
13 because we need to be sure that our community-- as
14 you know where you live in the Bronx in Washington
15 Heights, in the other place where people are dying,
16 and I want to continue collaborating. One of the
17 causes of why coronavirus is killing our people and
18 speak our people do not have access to green areas,
19 to have safe streets for cycling or to ride their
20 bike with their children in the street. So, for me,
21 it is important again. Thank you for bringing your
22 experience. Describe mean the reality that we are
23 living in the Bronx because it's the same thing that
24 we have seen in underserved communities. So, thank
25 you.

2 QUEEN LUCY WOODY: You're welcome.

3 LEGAL COUNSEL: Our next panelist will
4 be Catherine Willis.

5 CATHERINE WILLIS: Okay. I'll go ahead.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Catherine, your time
7 will begin when the clock starts.

8 CATHERINE WILLIS: Thank you. Good
9 afternoon. My name is Catherine Willis and I want to
10 thank Council member Rivera and Speaker Johnson and
11 Chair Rodriguez. I am very much in support of this
12 legislation and I am a resident of Bed-Stuy in
13 Brooklyn and I think it is important, as so many
14 people have noted that we opened streets and we
15 really keep an eye towards equity because everyone's
16 experience, even though we are all in lockdown, is
17 very different. And I really just wanted to speak
18 from my own experience which is that, you know, my
19 roommate and I are fortunate. We are both still
20 healthy and employed and, you know, even though we
21 share a small apartment, we have adequate space to
22 work can even be a part from each other for our own
23 activities. But even on the street outside of where
24 we live on Nastran Avenue, though sidewalks are like
25 narrower than 13 feet wide. They are only 13 feet

2 wide if you count the curb, which no one should be
3 walking on the curb. And that, of course, doesn't
4 take into account everything people have mentioned in
5 terms of trash and tree pits, which I like the tree
6 pit, obviously, but social distancing isn't possible
7 even in a broad Street like ours. And we are all so
8 lucky to be living less than two miles away from
9 Prospect Park. So, when I need to go out and run or
10 get fresh air, I can do so, but that is certainly not
11 an option for most people in Brooklyn. Not to
12 mention, throughout New York City. So I think, you
13 know, even before this crisis, it was apparent that
14 we were giving far too much space to cars and trucks
15 and motor vehicles on our streets and we really need
16 to be prioritizing pedestrians and cyclists and
17 people who are most vulnerable during this crisis.
18 Thank you so much.

19 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next
20 panelist will be Nuala Odoerty Noranho.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Nuala, your time will
22 begin when you begin your testimony.

23 LEGAL COUNSEL: Nuala, are you there?
24 Okay. Seems like where having audio issues, so we

2 will move on and circle back if we are able to get
3 her on. Our next panelist will be David Warren.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: David, your clock will
5 start when you begin your testimony.

6 DAVID WARREN: Good afternoon, ladies
7 and gentlemen. My name is David Warren. I am
8 support of this legislation. Thank you, Councilman
9 Rivera for proposing this legislation. I was
10 speaking with Christine Gortae [sp?] who gave me some
11 bullet points. She's from [inaudible 03:24:56] and
12 she's a community activist and very well-respected.
13 In the bullet points he gave me was the sidewalk is
14 typically of 14 foot sidewalk on the side of the
15 building where the three-foot side curb with trees,
16 garbage, parking meters, and other furniture take up
17 a minimum of four feet. Assuming each person
18 occupies two feet, this leaves only five feet of a
19 walkway to cross each other. That is less than the
20 six feet. Most of the residential streets to not
21 have 14 feet sidewalks or rather eight feet or less,
22 taking up at least three feet. There are 3700
23 blocks with active construction sites where there the
24 pedestrian path are, prescribed by DOT, is three
25 feet. And on the 300 miles of sidewalks where there

2 is scaffolding, there is barely space for people to
3 cross each other in normal times. So, if we were to
4 keep that in perspective, now this is what I would
5 like to say. I would like to say that, hopefully, we
6 could be like Brussels with their priority zones. It
7 makes a lot of sense. I would hope that we would
8 be-- when we ease back, we could do this in a very
9 graceful way. I mean, most of the civilized world
10 has some form of opened streets. And it's a disgrace
11 that we do not. I would even like to propose a goal
12 proposal where we use back. We can have a side-- a
13 continuance bike protected bikes go from Brighton
14 Beach the Manhattan Bridge so this way essential
15 workers and their associates can get to Manhattan
16 without going on public transit and they would have
17 enough space. Thank you all very much and--

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

19 DAVID WARREN: thank you for this and I
20 hope you pass this bill unanimously.

21 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Nuala
22 Odoerty Noranho, do we have you now?

23 NULA ODARTY NORANHO: Thank you for
24 coming back to me.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Nuala, your time will
3 begin when you start your testimony.

4 NULA ODARTY NORANHO: Great. My name is
5 Nula Odarty Noranho. I'm a resident here of Jackson
6 Heights Queens and we were one of the place is where
7 the mayor did open up the street. He opened up a few
8 blocks of 34th Street. Unfortunately, he opened it
9 up as like an almost an armed encampment. There were
10 police officers on every corner. I don't know if you
11 guys have seen the videos, but sometimes four people
12 per intersection. Four officers per intersection.
13 And, in reality, it wasn't necessary. What we need
14 is space. We need space for the children to run, for
15 kids to ride bikes, for families to stroll, for
16 central workers to use their bikes safely to get to
17 work, for people to have space to walk to the
18 drugstore or the supermarket. Here, in Jackson
19 Heights, we have one of the fewest space is of park
20 space. The only park we have here is Travers Park
21 and almost half of Travers Park is closed because it
22 is considered a playground. So, that means there is
23 very little public space, leaving only sidewalks.
24 And, unfortunately, they are just too narrow,
25 especially on trash days. Luckily, we have lots of

2 great trees and trees surrounds, but it means that
3 you can't pass each other on the sidewalks. So, what
4 we really need is open space and the simplest thing
5 to do here in our neighborhood is to close 34th
6 Avenue from the BQE all the way to the Grand Central.
7 And this will leave the corridor right in the heart
8 of a dense neighborhood for people to go out and
9 enjoy some sunshine and fresh air after being cooped
10 up in an apartment first so, so long. What we are
11 asking for is simple. Just close down the avenue
12 where there are no businesses, right? It's an Avenue
13 that has a lot of churches and schools next to it.
14 An Avenue that has lots of green spaces next to it,
15 so it would be an enjoyable space. It's got a median
16 down the middle and the bike lane. There are no
17 glasses on the Avenue. And what that word to is give
18 all this free space for people once they start
19 scanning a little bit warmer, everyone is going to
20 want to explode out of their apartments. Here in
21 Jackson Heights, there is blocks--

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

23 NULA ODARTY NORANHO: of [inaudible
24 03:29:01] school. We need that space.

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we
3 will call on Melody Bryant.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: melody, your clock will
5 start when you begin your testimony.

6 MELODY BRYANT: Okay. I name is Melody
7 Bryant. I'm assuming you can hear me.

8 LEGAL COUNSEL: Yes.

9 MELODY BRYANT: Thank you so much for
10 hearing my testimony today. I would like to speak in
11 favor of this bill. I am a member of Family for Safe
12 Streets, a resident of Chelsea, and opened streets
13 are a matter of life and death to me because, as a
14 senior, I'm especially vulnerable to the coronavirus.
15 I abide by advisories to stay at home, but there are
16 times when I need to go out. Once every two weeks
17 for groceries and an hour a day for exercise. I
18 would like to practice safe social distancing, but in
19 my neighborhood doesn't permit it. The sidewalks on
20 my street are about eight feet wide, by the tree
21 Wells, about three, and if trash is on the street or
22 someone is walking their dog-- and we have a lot of
23 dogs here-- not even that. So, my choice is either
24 risking infection from other pedestrians or walking
25 into the street and risking getting hit by a car

2 because drivers are speeding now. In addition, my
3 neighborhood has a lot of street sheds. The other
4 day, three men, ironically discussing the virus,
5 walking close together and not wearing masks, came
6 towards me as I was on the sidewalk halfway through a
7 street shed. There was, literally, nowhere else for
8 me to go to avoid them. Thanks to, they brushed by
9 me. If I had been able to safely take the street to
10 begin with, I would never have been in this position.
11 As it is, I'm hoping that, within the next week, I
12 will not be another corona statistic. This is
13 especially infuriating knowing that 80 percent of our
14 street space is given over to cars who, for the most
15 part, aren't even using it. In my neighborhood, they
16 are all parked. The pandemic has changed everything
17 and we can't afford to wait on this. No one I know
18 wants a COVID-19 block party, least of all seniors.
19 We need to open up the streets to make social
20 distancing possible for all New Yorkers. Thank you.

21 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next
22 panelist will be Barbara Blair.

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Barbara, your time will
24 begin when--

25 JOHNATHAN HAWKINS: Just to--

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: you start your
3 testimony.

4 JOHNATHAN HAWKINS: Just to clarify to
5 the sergeant-at-arms, I'm obviously not Barbara
6 Blair. I am Jonathan Hawkins speaking on her behalf,
7 that is okay. Is that okay?

8 LEGAL COUNSEL: If that's fine with the
9 Chair, we can proceed. Could you repeat your name
10 for the record, please?

11 JONATHAN HAWKINS: Jonathan Hawkins with
12 the Garment District Alliance.

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: You may go now.
14 Thanks.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Jonathan, your time will
16 start when you begin your testimony.

17 JONATHAN HAWKINS: thank you. We just want
18 to support this bill, Intro 1933. Thank you to
19 Council member Rivera, the other sponsoring Council
20 members. I think the Council members and the other
21 speakers have already done a great job of covering
22 how important this is. The lack of space for people
23 on our street is a problem that we another
24 neighborhood groups have been trying to address for
25 years and, clearly, the need is even more critical

2 now. So, as you all work to continue to keep this
3 city safe, we ask that you consider some further
4 initiatives related to management of the streets, as
5 we continue to promote social distancing and
6 eventually being to allow nonessential businesses to
7 reopen. So we are--

8 LEGAL COUNSEL: It sounds like we might
9 have lost him.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [inaudible 3:32:34]
11 can you hear me?

12 LEGAL COUNSEL: It looks like he's
13 still--

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Can you-- Can you
15 hear me now?

16 JONATHAN HAWKINS: Sorry.

17 LEGAL COUNSEL: Yes.

18 JONATHAN HAWKINS: I don't know if that was
19 just me that got kicked out or everybody.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: I paused your time,
21 Jonathan, so continue.

22 JONATHAN HAWKINS: Okay. Thank you. So,
23 we are advocating for a few additional ideas. One is
24 to allow restaurants, once they can reopen, and to
25 better distance customers while remaining financially

2 viable by allowing temporary seating in parking
3 spaces in front of their establishment similar to the
4 DOT Street Seat program, but modified to allow
5 businesses to conduct transactions in the space.
6 Next, we would like to allow and require that street
7 vendors locate in an on street parking space phase
8 seeing the sidewalk rather than narrowing the
9 sidewalks space. We want to advocate for reforming
10 the scaffolding policies which constrict our
11 sidewalks with nearly 350 miles of scaffolding that
12 is unique could globally. Accelerate the removal of
13 unnecessary street furniture that takes up sidewalks
14 base such as phone booths, most of which don't even
15 work. And, finally, just prior to this crisis, the
16 Department of Sanitation had amounts to the Clean
17 Curbs pilot program to get garbage bags off
18 sidewalks. This program should be an even greater
19 priority now and we are ready ending her to partner
20 with the city on it. So, thank you all for your
21 consideration. I think that, with forward thinking
22 in a more proactive approach, we can not only recover
23 from this--

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

25

2 JONATHAN HAWKINS: but emerge with a city
3 that is more livable and vibrant than ever. Thank
4 you.

5 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you. Okay. At
6 this time, that is the end of the list that I have,
7 but if we have missed anyone inadvertently who would
8 like to testify, we will give you a moment to raise
9 your hand in Zoom. And, if not, the Chair can give
10 his concluding remarks.

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I want to, first of
12 all, thank you, Speaker Johnson, Councilmember
13 Carlina Rivera, some of my colleagues for
14 participating in the hearing, and the administration.
15 And thank you to the great team. Elliot, [inaudible
16 02:34:38], everyone who has been behind on the
17 technical part in the social media so to be sure that
18 New Yorkers can follow our hearing, as we have said
19 before. Yes, we are still dealing with the
20 coronavirus. Yes. We feel for everyone who are in
21 critical condition and someone who are dying and
22 [inaudible 03:35:00] told him a hearing, but as a
23 city, we have to move on. As a city, we need to
24 understand that we have to continue opening our
25 streets, especially in areas that need it the most.

2 Thank you to all the stakeholders, transportation
3 [inaudible 03:35:15], the street block and everyone
4 that they had lost, loved one in any crash, Families
5 for Safe Streets, and especially those who live in
6 underserved communities or those of you that are the
7 voices also with those individuals that have been
8 left behind. Don't forget. Look around when you
9 wore your bike on the Upper West Side and the Upper
10 East Side and any area and, as you will see, there is
11 not much diversity. There's a lot of individuals
12 from the underserved communities that they use their
13 bike to work. The delivery men and women who are
14 providing a great service to do things. But when it
15 comes to challenges that we have to bring diverse
16 city to make bicycle accessible, not everyone can buy
17 a couple of thousand dollar couple of hundred dollar
18 by. I think that we also have, to all those private
19 sectors, as I say, we will be discussing electrical
20 scooter, electrical bike. I am down to continuing
21 being a partner, continue expanding bikes on the
22 street. Those don't belong only to the New Yorkers
23 vehicles, but also them along to everyone. But,
24 please, my brothers and sisters who are not, you
25 know, black, Latino, and Asian, those of you who are

2 middle-class and upper-class, you know, let's do it
3 together. Let's be sure that you put your voice, you
4 use your leadership, you use the role that you can
5 play in your institution, especially in the private
6 advocate work together. Let's ride the bike to the
7 underserved communities and you will see that a lot
8 of the things that were discussed right now should
9 start there. In communities that we have left
10 behind. So, with that, thank you everyone. Thank
11 you to the transportation staff, the Council, and,
12 with that, this hearing is adjourned.

13 [gavel]

14 [background comments]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. 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 April 29, 2020