

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 1  
CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE

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March 14, 2024  
Start: 10:25 a.m.  
Recess: 5:26 p.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Selvena Brooks-Powers, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joann Ariola  
Chris Banks  
Amanda Farías  
Farrah N. Louis  
Mercedes Narcisse  
Carlina Rivera

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Kamillah Hanks  
Lynn C. Schulman  
Shekar Krishnan  
Lincoln Restler  
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.

A P P E A R A N C E S

Rich Davey, President of New York City Transit  
at Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Jai Patel, Deputy Chief Financial Officer at  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Shanifah Rieara, Chief Customer Officer and  
Senior Advisor for Policy and Communications at  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

John McCarthy, Chief of Policy and External  
Relations at Metropolitan Transportation  
Authority

Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner at Department of  
Transportation

Margaret Forgione, First Deputy Commissioner at  
Department of Transportation

Paul Ochoa, Executive Deputy Commissioner at  
Department of Transportation

Eric Beaton, Deputy Commissioner of  
Transportation Planning and Management at  
Department of Transportation

Rick Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner for  
Intergovernmental and Community Affairs at  
Department of Transportation

David Do, Commissioner at Taxi and Limousine  
Commission

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

Edward Wilton, Deputy Commissioner for Finance  
at Taxi and Limousine Commission

Thomas Foley, Commissioner at New York City  
Department of Design and Construction

Magalie Austin, Executive Deputy Commissioner at  
New York City Department of Design and  
Construction

Rachel Laiserin, Deputy Commissioner and Chief  
Financial Officer at New York City Department of  
Design and Construction

Jean Ryan, President of Disabled in Action of  
Metropolitan New York

Michael Ring, Board Member of Disabled in Action  
of Metropolitan New York

Kathleen Collins, Corresponding Secretary at  
Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York

Tashia Lerebours, Center for Independence of the  
Disabled

Emerita Torres, Vice President of Policy  
Research and Advocacy at Community Service  
Society

Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of Permanent  
Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA

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

Leroy Morrison, President of New York City  
Commuter Van Association

Amanda Berman, Deputy Director of Regional  
Programs at Center for Justice Innovation

Christopher Schuyler, Managing Attorney with the  
Disability Justice Program at New York Lawyers  
for the Public Interest

Brit Byrd, Senior Planner at Brooklyn Borough  
President

Eric McClure, Executive Director of StreetsPac

Natasha Elder, New York City Regional Director  
for Equity and Resiliency Projects at New York  
Public Interest Research Group

Elizabeth Adams, Deputy Executive Director,  
Public Affairs at Transportation Alternatives

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Check one, two, check  
3 one, two. This is a prerecorded sound test for the  
4 Committee on Transportation. Today's date is March  
5 14, 2024. It's being recorded by Michael Leonardo in  
6 the City Council Chambers.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and  
8 welcome to today's New York City Council hearing for  
9 the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

10 At this time, we ask that you silence all  
11 cell phones and electronic devices to minimize  
12 disruptions throughout the hearing.

13 If you have testimony you wish to submit  
14 for the record, you may do so via email at  
15 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Once again, that is  
16 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).

17 At any time throughout the hearing,  
18 please do not approach the dais.

19 We thank you for your cooperation.

20 Chair, we are ready to begin.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [GAVEL] Good  
22 morning and welcome to the Committee on  
23 Transportation and Infrastructure's hearing on the  
24 Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget and the Preliminary  
25 Mayor's Management Report for the Departments of

2 Transportation, Design and Construction, the Taxi and  
3 Limousine Commission, and the Metropolitan  
4 Transportation Authority, all of which we will hear  
5 from today. My name is Selvena Brooks-Powers, and I  
6 am the Chair of this Committee.

7           Each of these agencies play an essential  
8 role in the lives of New Yorkers. As we've said  
9 countless times, Mayor David Dinkins often referred  
10 to New York as a gorgeous mosaic of race and  
11 religious faith, of national origin, and of sexual  
12 orientation. He was right about the people of this  
13 city and, as I've said, again a number of times, this  
14 description could also apply to our transportation  
15 network. We are a multimodal city and New Yorkers  
16 benefit when they have good options to get where they  
17 need to go. I look forward to speaking with each of  
18 these agencies about their roles in moving New York  
19 City forward. I note that today marks the inaugural  
20 budget hearing in our Committee for DDC, the City's  
21 Chief Capital Agency. The methods, means, and  
22 materials we use in construction are so crucial, not  
23 only to our transportation network, but to the  
24 sustainability and long-term health of our city  
25 across all sectors. This year, we added the

2 Department of Design and Construction to this  
3 Committee's portfolio, and I look forward to better  
4 understanding how this year's budget can position DDC  
5 to succeed. But first up today is the MTA, whose 2024  
6 operating budget is 19.29 billion dollars. We will  
7 discuss a range of issues including the  
8 implementation of congestion pricing, the agency's  
9 existing and upcoming capital plans, and the State's  
10 recent announcement regarding the additional  
11 deployment of state law enforcement in our subways. I  
12 want to note here how important it is to secure the  
13 safety of our riders and our transit workers, but we  
14 must ensure we're approaching this issue  
15 thoughtfully. In our questioning, we'll seek to  
16 understand how precisely these new measures, for  
17 example, random searching of bags, protect riders and  
18 workers. We note, too, the crucial importance of  
19 sustaining higher ridership in our efforts to improve  
20 safety throughout the system.

21 We'll then hear from the Department of  
22 Transportation on its Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget,  
23 which totals 1.4 billion dollars, a decrease of 2.1  
24 million dollars since adoption. The agency's capital  
25 budget for the department totals 11.4 billion dollars

2 committed between Fiscal Year '24 and '28. The Fiscal  
3 2025 Preliminary Budget includes no new needs for  
4 Fiscal 2025, a decrease of 39,000 dollars in other  
5 adjustments and 29.7 million dollars in PEGs. As  
6 always, I hope to discuss with DOT how the City can  
7 more equitably invest across historically underserved  
8 communities like the ones I represent. I'll also ask  
9 DOT about its recently issued Streets Plan update in  
10 which it was clear that the agency is once again  
11 failing to meet the legal mandates the Council  
12 established several years ago. I look forward to  
13 better understanding how this year's budget can  
14 ensure DOT can meet legal requirements and more  
15 effectively serve communities citywide.

16 Then we will hear from the Taxi and  
17 Limousine Commission on its Fiscal 2025 Preliminary  
18 Budget, which totals 59.5 million dollars, a decrease  
19 of 835,000 dollars since adoption. The new plan  
20 includes funding for a budgeted headcount increase of  
21 54 new inspectors. The Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget  
22 includes 5.4 million dollars in new needs for Fiscal  
23 2025, no other adjustments, and 353,000 dollars in  
24 PEGs. Over the last decade, this industry has  
25 experienced tremendous change, particularly since the



2 introduction of app-based for-hire vehicles in the  
3 city. The Council remains committed to removing  
4 barriers that prevent drivers from earning a living  
5 while they provide essential services to New Yorkers,  
6 and we look forward to discussing how this budget  
7 further empowers drivers to succeed.

8           Finally, we will hear from the Department  
9 of Design and Construction on their 2025 Preliminary  
10 Budget, which totals 172.8 million dollars, an  
11 increase of 15.4 million dollars since adoption. The  
12 Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget includes no new needs  
13 for Fiscal 2025, 650,000 dollars in other  
14 adjustments, and 2 million dollars in PEGs. We'll ask  
15 DDC about major projects the agency is leading, from  
16 borough-based jails to libraries like the one near  
17 completion in Far Rockaway, but I also hope to  
18 discuss how DDC is accomplishing its projects, for  
19 example, how the agency is innovating to advance  
20 projects more quickly and efficiently and how DDC is  
21 seeking to maximize utilizations of M/WBEs.

22           Before we begin with testimony, I would  
23 like to thank the Council Staff for their work, our  
24 amazing Finance Team, including Chima Obichere, a  
25 member of District 31 of course, Jack Storey, and

2 Michael Sherman, our wonderful Committee Staff, Mark  
3 Chen, Connor Mealey, Kevin Kotowski, and John Basile  
4 and, of course, my terrific staff, Jack Siegenthaler,  
5 my Policy and Budget Director; Kierra Powell, my  
6 Communications Director; and Renee Taylor, my Chief-  
7 of-Staff.

8 I would also like to acknowledge my  
9 fellow Council Members who are present here today. We  
10 are joined by Council Members Louis, Hanks, Rivera,  
11 and Schulman.

12 I will now ask the Committee Counsel to  
13 go over some procedural items and swear in the  
14 representatives from the MTA.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: Good morning.  
16 I'm Connor Mealey, Counsel to the Transportation and  
17 Infrastructure Committee of the New York City  
18 Council. I would ask that you all raise your right  
19 hand.

20 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
21 whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your  
22 testimony before this Committee and to respond  
23 honestly to Council Member questions?

24 For those wishing to testify in person,  
25 please see the Sergeant-at-Arms at the back of the

2 room and fill out a testimony slip. Even if you have  
3 registered online, please still fill out a testimony  
4 slip with the Sergeants.

5 We would ask that as you begin your  
6 testimony, you would identify yourself by your name  
7 and title for the record.

8 Thank you very much. You may begin.

9 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Great. Thank you very  
10 much. Good morning, and I want to thank Members for  
11 having us here today, especially the Chair. We  
12 appreciate the continued partnership that we have  
13 with you and the Committee to make public  
14 transportation in New York City the best it can be.  
15 For the record, my name is Rich Davey. I'm the  
16 President of New York City Transit. I'm joined by a  
17 dream team of folks from MTA. To my right is Jay  
18 Patel, the Deputy Chief Financial Officer, to my left  
19 Shanifa Riera, who's our Chief Customer Service  
20 Officer, also a Policy Advisor to all of us, and John  
21 McCarthy, who is our Chief of Policy and External  
22 Relations. We're here, obviously, to testify and to  
23 take your questions over these next couple of hours.

24 We're glad to be with you to share an  
25 update. Obviously, Chair, you mentioned a number of

2 topics but, principally speaking, we're here at least  
3 to talk about our financial position which is much  
4 stronger I'm pleased to report than when I was before  
5 you a year ago. You remember, we had been looking at  
6 an estimated 2.8-billion-dollar deficit that was on  
7 track to grow to almost 3 billion by 2026. Today,  
8 that number is zero and zero over at least the next  
9 five years. Thanks to Governor Hochul and the State  
10 Legislature who really set the bar nationally on what  
11 it means to prioritize mass transit, and what I mean  
12 nationally, I'm literally giving testimony later  
13 today to a number of folks in Massachusetts who are  
14 looking at what we did in New York. Folks are seeing  
15 around the country and looking at what we've done  
16 collectively to improve and save our transit system  
17 so we should all be proud of that. The financial  
18 lifeline that was provided in the 2023 budget has  
19 allowed us to not only keep service running, but  
20 we've expanded it significantly while continuing to  
21 invest in our network. Let me rattle off a few  
22 accomplishments that we've made over the last year.  
23 Our top priority for riders is frequent, reliable and  
24 safe service, and we've made huge strides on those  
25 fronts. Subway service last year was the best it had

2 been in a decade. Obviously, we have more work to do,  
3 but the numbers were clear, a best in a decade, and  
4 we're setting even higher performance goals in 2024  
5 for our Faster, Cleaner, Safer planning initiative.  
6 Frequencies have improved on eight subway lines, the  
7 C, G, J, M, N, R, 1, and 6 and improving frequencies  
8 by about 20 to 25 percent typically on nights,  
9 weekends, and midday, and there's more to come this  
10 summer. Stations themselves are starting to feel and  
11 look more welcoming. Our facilities team has embraced  
12 our Re-NEW-ation program. We have completed 68  
13 stations since we launched the program in 2022, and  
14 we'll have 110 done by the end of the year. The  
15 subway stations are benefiting from deep cleans,  
16 brighter lighting, fresh paint and overall aesthetic  
17 improvements that this program delivers. By the way,  
18 we're also improving employee facilities, back-of-  
19 house, which our customers and folks do not see. For  
20 the past year, our station agents have been  
21 performing their roles out of the booth for the first  
22 time, delivering better service and support by  
23 meeting our customers where they are and, not to be  
24 forgotten, we've opened 117 bathrooms in 60 stations,  
25 restoring an amenity which riders had been lacking

2 since the COVID pandemic. These bathrooms just aren't  
3 reopened. They've been deep-cleaned, refreshed,  
4 upgraded, and a new cleaning cadence is in place to  
5 make sure that they continue to be in good condition.  
6 We're on pace to reopen the restrooms at the total of  
7 66 stations by the middle of this year with final  
8 restrooms reopening at the 61st Street in Woodside  
9 once the capital project is completed.

10 On buses, we're budgeting to continue  
11 increased service as we did by implementing our bus  
12 network redesigns. The latest draft of the Queen's  
13 plan invests almost 30 million dollars to create more  
14 frequent and direct service throughout our most bus-  
15 reliant borough. The plan has been enriched by public  
16 feedback, and I'm pleased to say that we will be back  
17 out in the field with 17 pop-up events between now  
18 and May to continue to get public feedback. As I've  
19 often said, we never get these redesigns 100 percent  
20 right, which it's critical to work with you and your  
21 teams and constituents and our customers to make it  
22 even better. I am also excited about activating ACE,  
23 our Automated Camera Enforcement, on 500 buses on 14  
24 existing routes in May with plans to add another 30  
25 routes over the next three years. The new enforcement

2 powers will enable buses to ticket cars out of bus  
3 lanes that are slowing down service and double-parked  
4 cars or cars that are blocking bus stops and, an  
5 added bonus for safer streets, the cameras will also  
6 be able to enforce bike lane violations as well, cars  
7 parked in bike lanes. We have seen camera enforcement  
8 speeds combined with bus lanes to increase service by  
9 25 percent. This is time saved for over two million  
10 New Yorkers who use our bus network every day. We  
11 also know the single most powerful tool to speed up  
12 buses are dedicated bus lanes and busways. Our buses,  
13 as I mentioned, carry over 2 million daily customers,  
14 and yet they tend to be, in many respects, the  
15 slowest in the nation, sometimes crawling at 6 miles  
16 an hour. Bus lanes and bus work, we've seen major  
17 improvements, 40 percent during some peak hours on  
18 some of these major corridors. Bus lanes are also a  
19 win for safety. When we pair with camera enforcement,  
20 we have actually seen a 20 percent reduction in  
21 collisions on routes once bus lanes are implemented.  
22 We're also encouraged by the DOT's recent actions on  
23 Second Avenue to speed up the M15, our highest  
24 ridership bus route in the city. We look forward to  
25 working with the DOT to continue to implement bus

2 priority, not only lanes but transit signal  
3 prioritization. Those clocks that aren't working  
4 right now and some bus stops, etc., so we look  
5 forward to partnering with our friends at the DOT.

6 Customer satisfaction with our  
7 paratransit service, our Access-A-Ride, has risen  
8 dramatically. We always have work to do, but our  
9 customers are telling us that service has improved,  
10 and our on-time performance is so strong we've  
11 actually tightened the window for how we determine a  
12 pickup is on time, from 30 minutes, the federal  
13 standard, now down to 20 minutes. We worked hard with  
14 our third-party providers to improve their service  
15 and performance. We've made booking easier and faster  
16 with an app, and we have expanded and we'll continue  
17 to look to expand our on-demand E-Hail program to  
18 thousands of New Yorkers. Customers have noticed. In  
19 January, we reached 79 percent customer satisfaction,  
20 the highest in our history.

21 On subway and bus affordability, equity  
22 is also an important issue for us at the MTA. We've  
23 been working with the City to expand eligibility to  
24 move New Yorkers for its Fair Fares program, which  
25 provides, as you all know, a half price MetroCard to



2 low-income New Yorkers and New Yorkers who are  
3 struggling economically. The Human Resources  
4 Administration is partnering with us to boost  
5 enrollment, but we are proud to support that  
6 enrollment at every opportunity. I have instituted,  
7 since I became President, a Transit Talk which gets  
8 me out to stations about twice a month across the  
9 five boroughs. Fair Fares representatives have joined  
10 us from the city in those events, and we've  
11 successfully also had two of our customer service  
12 centers, Jackson Heights and Roosevelt Avenue and  
13 Coney Island Stillwell with joint enrollment  
14 activities as well. The more we can get the word out  
15 to New Yorkers that this is a program available to  
16 them, we believe this is good news and will get more  
17 folks onto our system.

18 Our partners at the railroad have also  
19 made progress in affordability too. Last summer, they  
20 added a peak option, meaning that traveling within  
21 New York City will only cost 7 dollars in addition to  
22 the existing off-peak 5-dollar ticket. At the same  
23 time, the Long Island Railroad introduced the Far  
24 Rockaway ticket, bringing the same benefits as  
25 CityTicket to customers at the Far Rockaway station

2 traveling to and from the rest of the city. Notably,  
3 we are making progress on subway crime after a  
4 difficult January, thanks to the NYPD resources  
5 provided by Mayor Adams and the recent resources  
6 added by Governor Hochul. There are now an additional  
7 1,000 police officers patrolling our subway system  
8 daily, and it's having an impact. Where crime was up  
9 46 percent at the end of January compared to last  
10 year, that number has been pushed down to 18 percent  
11 because February crime was down significantly from  
12 2023. We also know the increase in deployment of NYPD  
13 cops is giving riders a peace of mind. We hear it in  
14 every survey, and I mean every survey. I am obsessed  
15 with getting customer feedback. We get it once a  
16 month, and the number one issues that we hear from  
17 our customers are, in order, seeing folks with  
18 emotional issues, folks with mental health crises,  
19 homelessness, and crime. Make no mistake, though, we  
20 have a recidivism issue in our subway system, and the  
21 data bears out on that too. 38 individuals arrested  
22 for assaulting transit workers last year, transit  
23 workers, had a total of 1,126 additional crimes on  
24 their records that I can talk about. Addressing the  
25 issue of repeat offenders preying on our customers

2 and our workers will go a long way to improving  
3 subway safety. We've also taken steps to make our  
4 platforms safer. We are currently piloting platform  
5 barriers at three stations, 191st on the 1, Morgan  
6 Ave. on the L, and Clark Street on the 2 and the 3,  
7 with 5th Ave. on the 7 coming soon. This low-cost  
8 creative solution will improve customer safety while  
9 they wait for their train on the platform. Working  
10 with Governor Holcomb, we've also made substantial  
11 progress in addressing a core concern of customers  
12 and all of New Yorkers, those individuals in our  
13 subway system with the most acute mental health  
14 needs. As I mentioned, the top issue for our subway  
15 customers in our monthly surveys. For the past  
16 several months, we've quietly piloted two Subway Code  
17 Response Outreach, or SCOUT teams, pairing Department  
18 of Mental Health and Mental Hygiene Clinicians with  
19 MTA PD to great success. We've helped dozens of New  
20 Yorkers in need get the mental healthcare and  
21 supportive housing they need. The Governor has now  
22 tasked us with increasing this pilot to 10 teams,  
23 which will be coming online later this year.

24 Customers will be glad to see that we're  
25 equipping subway cars and stations with better

2 lighting and more security cameras. More than 1,100  
3 cameras are now on our trains, which are helping NYPD  
4 identify perpetrators and solve crimes and all the  
5 new R211s, I have to say, Madam Chair, the R211s are  
6 on the A line, also come with cameras built them as  
7 well. Speaking of the R211, we proudly debuted the  
8 open gangway R211T on the C line last month. These  
9 new trains are a bold step forward for New York City  
10 and the first of their kind in the United States.  
11 We've heard rave reviews from our customers so far  
12 during their first month in service. We've also  
13 shifted into high gear on our R211 deployment on the  
14 A line. After a brief pause to address a gearbox  
15 issue, we now have 12 new R211 trains running on the  
16 A line, replacing the 50-year-old R46s. For riders in  
17 Staten Island, we're currently testing the R211s out  
18 there and hope to enter the first train into service  
19 in the coming weeks, if not months.

20 Improvements in performance, safety and  
21 cleanliness have helped tremendously in bringing  
22 riders back. Paid ridership on subway is roughly 70  
23 percent of pre-COVID levels, it's about 75 percent on  
24 the railroads, but these numbers don't consider  
25 customers who ride without paying the fair, and we

2 know there are many. Indeed, if you include non-  
3 paying riders, we're were actually closer to 82, in  
4 some instances 85 percent of pre-COVID subway and bus  
5 ridership. Fare and toll evasion represent a very  
6 large threat to our fiscal health going forward.

7 We're implementing some recommendations from the Blue  
8 Ribbon Panel to make enforcement more equitable,  
9 which I fully support. We're piloting more accessible  
10 wide aisle gates at four subway stations, including  
11 an entire fare array at Sutphin Archer JFK Airport.

12 We've continued our deployment of unarmed guards at  
13 emergency gates, a program that continues to pay for  
14 themselves and more, and we're adding more Eagle team  
15 members, civil fare enforcement members have been

16 hired, and we've changed how they're deployed. We now  
17 have them on a bus hub model that is strategic and  
18 enforcing fare payment where it has lagged. More  
19 personnel also brings the added benefit of more eyes  
20 and ears in the system to report issues to the

21 station team and the NYPD, and our customers feel  
22 safer as a result. We're also pushing for a refreshed  
23 approach to fare-evasion fines in this year's budget.

24 This new proposal would replace the standard 100-  
25 dollar fine with a new ladder approach where first

2 time offenders would be warned before fines issued.

3 Critically, this new model would make fare

4 enforcement more equitable. We want New Yorkers to

5 pay their fare, not a fine and, by enrolling those

6 who are eligible in Fare Fares or our reduced fare

7 program automatically and returning half of that 100

8 fine to the customers in the form of a 50-dollar

9 credit to an OMNY Card to use in our system. This is

10 an equitable, responsible approach to fair

11 enforcement, and we hope your peers in Albany include

12 this in the final budget. Fair compliance is critical

13 to preserving our balanced budget and into the

14 future. In the same respect, in 2023 we committed to

15 400 million dollars in operating efficiencies this

16 year as part of our overall effort to deliver fiscal

17 sustainability. Thanks to some incredible work across

18 the MTA, we've actually exceeded that goal and

19 already on track to reach 500 million dollars in

20 efficiencies by 2025 without cutting headcount and

21 without cutting service, and we're doing it while

22 providing significantly more commuter rail service

23 and subway service and obviously operating a major

24 new terminal at Grand Central Madison and

25 implementing our new bus network redesigns. But

2 here's the kicker. Even with all that service that  
3 we've added on subway, bus and commuter rail that  
4 I've described, all of which is accounted for in our  
5 five-year financial plan going forward, in real  
6 inflation-adjusted dollars, the MTA budget has  
7 actually gone down by three percent since 2019. Chair  
8 Lieber says it all the time, but I can't reinforce it  
9 enough, that this is a new MTA. We're making good on  
10 our commitment to change the way we do business.  
11 We're growing ridership, improving and increasing  
12 service, reducing our costs, pursuing and pushing  
13 transit equity. These are our top priorities.

14           Even our approach to expanding the  
15 transit system reflects this intense focus on cost  
16 containment. Where we can, we look for ways to expand  
17 the system, not by building new tunnels or systems  
18 from scratch, but by getting more out of our existing  
19 infrastructure. But I can tell you, cost  
20 consciousness alone will not fund the transit system  
21 New Yorkers want and New Yorkers deserve. So I ask  
22 you, do you like those new R211s? How about our  
23 efforts to convert all of our 6,000 buses to zero  
24 emission by 2040? New signal systems that allow us to  
25 run more frequent and reliable service, like we do in

2 the 7 line? The fare gates of the future? Honoring  
3 our commitment to make almost every subway station  
4 ADA compliant? Funding for these projects relies, to  
5 a significant extent, on revenue generated from the  
6 forthcoming congestion pricing. MTA is doing what is  
7 necessary to prepare for the implementation,  
8 including increasing service and installing tolling  
9 infrastructure. We did a 4,000-page, four-year-long  
10 environmental process, including 30-plus hearings and  
11 outreach events which earned federal approval,  
12 putting us in a position to turn on the system in a  
13 few months once we resolve the pro-traffic lawsuits  
14 brought by our neighbors in New Jersey and a few  
15 other litigants. The MTA has been very clear that if  
16 there are any delays to congestion pricing, we will  
17 have to push back schedules and important projects.  
18 For example, more than 20 ADA stations are at risk  
19 across the boroughs. Five stations in the Bronx from  
20 Mott Haven to Kingsbridge to Wakefield, Briarwood in  
21 Jamaica and Queens, Southern Brooklyn stations such  
22 as Bensonhurst and Coney Island, as well as Nostrand  
23 Ave. at the intersection of Crown Heights in Bed-  
24 Stuy, plus major complexes like 42nd Street at Bryant  
25 Park and Lexington Ave. and 59th Street. The modern



2 signal systems that were promised on six subway  
3 lines, on hold right now for a million and a half A  
4 and C and B, D, F, M riders, all the way out to Far  
5 Rockaway and up to the Bronx and Eastern Queens.  
6 That's more than the ridership in the next five  
7 largest subway systems in the country combined. I  
8 could keep going on and on with the impacts to the  
9 critical state of good repair and resiliency work  
10 that would ensure reliability of our service, new  
11 rolling stock for all of our agencies, our zero-  
12 emissions bus program and even the Second Avenue  
13 Subway Phase Two last month, we put out a full list  
14 of what's at stake so folks can get a better  
15 understanding, but we do not want to see that happen.

16           Before I conclude, I also want to salute  
17 our workforce at New York City Transit. For those who  
18 don't know, next Monday, March 18th is Transit Worker  
19 Appreciation Day across the United States. Every day,  
20 47,000-person workforce at New York City Transit  
21 steps up to keep our city moving. They are the force  
22 that powers the lifeblood of our city, and we are  
23 extraordinarily grateful for the work they do.  
24 However, in recent weeks, our city has seen several  
25 unacceptable attacks on workers who are just doing

2 their job in serving New York. This is  
3 unconscionable. No one should go to work fearing for  
4 their safety. We are doing everything in our power at  
5 MTA to keep our frontline workers safe, and our  
6 partners at NYPD are also doing a hell of a job  
7 quickly identifying and arresting perpetrators, but  
8 we also need a criminal justice system that  
9 recognizes the severity of assaulting transit workers  
10 who, again, are just doing their job. We will  
11 continue to be relentless in pursuing measures to  
12 keep our people safe and to ensure that those who  
13 dare prey on hard-working employees from subway  
14 conductors and bus operators to cleaners and station  
15 agents, that those folks face justice. My ask of this  
16 Body and anyone listening today is that next time  
17 you're in our system, thank a transit worker for  
18 their hard work, celebrate them as we come up to  
19 Transit Worker Appreciation Day, and recognize them  
20 for their immense contributions in keeping the city  
21 moving. We made huge strides in recent years, but  
22 there are new and bigger issues facing our agency.  
23 With your support, we will keep tackling them and  
24 seek to make improvements. I've learned in 20 years

2 in this business, the job is never done. We look  
3 forward to working with you. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so  
5 much. Again, thank you for the partnership of the MTA  
6 and always keeping the lines of communication open.  
7 Whether we agree on issues or not, it's always good  
8 to know we have someone at the table that is willing  
9 to partner so thank you for that, and my thoughts and  
10 prayers remain with the train conductor that was  
11 unfortunately met with violence while just doing his  
12 job, which was moving New Yorkers to their  
13 destination, and so we just want to make sure that we  
14 convey that message as well.

15 I'm just going to ask you questions, and  
16 then I'm going to pause my questions and allow some  
17 of my Colleagues to ask theirs but, before we get  
18 started, I would like to acknowledge that we have  
19 also been joined by Council Members Krishnan,  
20 Restler, and Ariola.

21 Let's start with the new Capital Plan.  
22 The 2019 to 2024 Capital Plan is coming to a close,  
23 and the new 2025 to 2029 plan will be released later  
24 this year. Can you give the Committee a preview of  
25

2 how the MTA is establishing its priorities for the  
3 new Capital Plan?

4 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure. A broad brush.  
5 It's a couple things. One is really focusing on the  
6 state of good repair of all of our systems, right, so  
7 ensuring that we're investing in the core of our  
8 system. I always say it's the unsexy work of what we  
9 do. It's the stuff that we don't see. It's track,  
10 signal, power, rolling stock obviously we see, our  
11 back shops, for example. Some are old literally  
12 trolley barns that have been converted into bus  
13 depots, for example. All of that work needs to be  
14 done, and so that'll be a big part of what you see. I  
15 think, expansion, Second Avenue Subway, IBX,  
16 obviously those are important projects. They tend to  
17 get the high-profile reports and the media tends to  
18 report on those, but the vast majority of our work is  
19 going to be to continue to invest in the core of our  
20 system. I think for some, saying the summer of hell  
21 is a triggering moment. We do not want to return to  
22 that, and the way you return to that is by not  
23 investing in the core of our system. That said, we're  
24 also investing in things like ADA accessibility,  
25 right? We have a commitment, which Chair Lieber has

2 made clear that we are going to meet is to look to  
3 make 95 percent of our subway stations accessible by  
4 2055 and to see if we could even accelerate that.  
5 We're proud that we've done more in this last Capital  
6 Plan and the three previous I think combined. We have  
7 a lot of work to do on rolling stock. While we're  
8 doing great strides on the R211s, we're still running  
9 trains that are applying for the AARP cards, if you  
10 will, and we need to get those out of service.  
11 There's a lot of work that needs to be done, but the  
12 principal focus of our Capital Plan will be investing  
13 in the core of the system. I don't know if, John, you  
14 might want to say something else, please.

15 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

16 MCCARTHY: Yeah, Chair. I would just point, recently  
17 we released our 20-year needs assessment, which is a  
18 deep dive into what is needed to keep the system in a  
19 state of good repair and how to modernize it. It's  
20 probably the most thorough that's ever been done at  
21 the MTA, and we'll make sure to share this with  
22 Committee and the staff too, but what this is  
23 basically is a roadmap of what needs to get done as  
24 Rich said, and so in the coming months, we'll cull  
25 from this with our funding partners and others to see

2 what needs to be done in the immediate future, which  
3 would build the five-year capital program.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
5 that. How will congestion pricing support the  
6 Authority's major projects over the new planned  
7 period?

8 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Right now we're focused  
9 on the current plan to support that so about a  
10 billion dollars raised will allow us to use about 15  
11 billion dollars in bonding capacity to invest in the  
12 things that I mentioned in my testimony, right, so  
13 we've had to defer, for example, modernizing our  
14 signal system on the A, C, B, D, F, and M, which is  
15 critical. It might not sound like a lot, but a modern  
16 signal system allows us to run shorter headways,  
17 i.e., more service, like we can do on the 7 and the L  
18 lines, for example, where we can safely run, at rush  
19 hour on the 7 we're running service every two and a  
20 half, three minutes. We can't do that on some of  
21 these other lines because the signal system is  
22 antiquated. As I mentioned before, we've had to defer  
23 to some extent our zero-emission bus program. We have  
24 a huge commitment to convert our buses which are  
25 hybrid, but in the past have been diesel, in

2 neighborhoods, environmental justice community  
3 neighborhoods that we need to be converting those  
4 depots to allow for electric or hydrogen, as the case  
5 may be, but to purchase 6,000 buses over the next 15  
6 years. We've had to defer some of that,  
7 unfortunately, as well. Those are the kinds of  
8 programs or projects that congestion pricing will  
9 support in this current Capital Plan.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How much of  
11 the plan will be dedicated to new projects and how  
12 much is dedicated to the state of good repair and  
13 maintenance?

14 PRESIDENT DAVEY: I don't think we've made  
15 that determination yet, but, look, I think on  
16 average, it's about an 80/20 split. I've seen that as  
17 a general matter, but we haven't made that  
18 determination but, as I said, the core, the vast  
19 majority of the focus for our upcoming plan I know  
20 will be state of good repair, investing in the core  
21 of our system. That said, IBX and, Second Avenue  
22 Subway are important expansion projects, but there's  
23 a lot of other work we need to do to continue to keep  
24 our service reliable.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: As you  
3 mentioned, the IBX, how will the Governor's Executive  
4 Budget proposals for implementation studies related  
5 to IBX and Second Avenue Subway be used to perform  
6 capital planning and funding?

7 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, obviously those  
8 were certainly in the early stages of IBX, for  
9 example. I think we're probably inning one of a nine  
10 inning game to understand exactly how this is going  
11 to proceed for sure. I think we've certainly had some  
12 preliminary studies which have identified  
13 alternatives that are favorable like light rail  
14 versus bus, for example, but there's work to be done,  
15 right? Even in these kinds of projects that you might  
16 be using existing right-of-way, for example, to  
17 leverage right-of-way, there's still environmental  
18 studies that have to occur, obviously community input  
19 as well.

20 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
21 MCCARTHY: Yeah, and I would just add, Chair, that in  
22 the Executive Budget particularly with Second Avenue  
23 Subway going west, it allows us to look at the  
24 project that we're putting forward now on Second  
25 Avenue Subway going up to 125th Street and not



2 preclude work that would allow us to advance it to  
3 the west, which allows for possible savings in future  
4 construction of that project.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: As we think  
6 about cost shifts also, in recent years, there have  
7 been a number of cost shifts increasing New York  
8 City's liability to the MTA, and I just want to  
9 emphasize increased the City's liability, because I  
10 think other parts of the State sometimes do not  
11 acknowledge the contributions of New York City. These  
12 costs include 60 million in additional payroll  
13 mobility tax payments on behalf of the City as well  
14 as 613.6 million in payments related to power  
15 transit. Does the MTA believe that there will be a  
16 need for additional cost shifts in the future?

17 PRESIDENT DAVEY: At this point, we're  
18 projecting a five-year budget with zero budget  
19 deficits so certainly no, not in the next five years.  
20 I won't get into the sort of the back and forth  
21 between the City and State, but I think what it  
22 reflects is a commitment, which we appreciate, the  
23 City's commitment to understanding how important  
24 public transit is to the City's economic health and,  
25 as those takes and puts have occurred over time

2 again, we appreciate the partnership, but at this  
3 point, no, we're projecting a five-year budget that  
4 does not have deficits attached to it.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: In the event  
6 of a surplus, would the MTA support reducing the  
7 City's liabilities?

8 PRESIDENT DAVEY: If we were able to get a  
9 surplus, I think we'd probably look at a few things.  
10 Would we look at adding service, for example? Could  
11 we invest in the fare programs we discussed? I think  
12 there's probably a lot of opportunities. I will tell  
13 you this, Chair, I think folks know I've been here  
14 now two years, and I see employees once a month for  
15 breakfast to see what's going on, how they're doing,  
16 and I had a woman who had been at the Authority for  
17 33 years, I saw her last year and I said, you've been  
18 here 33 years, how many budget crises have you been  
19 through? She said 33. To say that there's a  
20 possibility of a surplus, I think people would say we  
21 were dreaming a year or two ago, but we would work  
22 collaboratively with this Body, the Mayor and his  
23 team, obviously the Governor and her team to think  
24 about the best way to invest that. Some might say pay  
25 down debt. Some might say accelerate an ADA station

2 or two. There's probably lots of worthy things to  
3 think about.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: In summation,  
5 there'd probably be no foresight in us reducing the  
6 City's liabilities.

7 PRESIDENT DAVEY: What I'm saying is there  
8 would be a lot of tugs of priorities, no doubt.  
9 Perhaps people sitting even behind me who might say  
10 how we should spend that, and I think that would be  
11 an open conversation that we would have.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'd also like  
13 to acknowledge we've been joined by Council Member  
14 Narcisse.

15 Going to shift now to subway safety. The  
16 Governor recently announced the deployment of 750  
17 members of the New York National Guard and 250  
18 personnel from the state police and MTA to patrol  
19 subways and conduct bag checks. Can you talk about  
20 how the decision was made to install additional state  
21 law enforcement in the subways?

22 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure. So maybe just  
23 taking a quick step back. That was one of a five-  
24 point plan that the Governor announced, and I know  
25 that has gotten the most attention, but I think it's

2 worth talking a little bit about that and then the  
3 other four pieces that the Governor announced. She  
4 did allow for additional state resources, as you  
5 said, which we can talk about in a moment in terms of  
6 people. We're also concerned about the recidivism,  
7 which I mentioned in my testimony, and the Governor  
8 is very much focused on looking at individuals who  
9 are convicted of assaults within our system,  
10 potentially banning those folks from our system, that  
11 they have forfeited their ability to use our system  
12 if they're assaulting customers or employees, that's  
13 another. Cameras have been a big part of the  
14 Governor's strategy to improve safety in our system  
15 and so, not only as I mentioned, are we putting  
16 cameras in our subway cars, so if there's misbehavior  
17 or worse we can catch those perpetrators, we're also  
18 putting now cameras in the conductor cab so, as you  
19 mentioned, Chair, that conductor who was brutally  
20 assaulted a couple weeks ago, I won't get into  
21 details, we're working closely with NYPD, but having  
22 a camera at that location where the conductor was  
23 located certainly would have helped the  
24 investigation, and so we're installing cameras there  
25 as well. The Governor is bringing together the

2 district attorneys to talk about prosecuting or  
3 otherwise how they're handling cases against our  
4 employees and customers. The one I mentioned in  
5 particular is the SCOUT team, really focusing in on  
6 those New Yorkers who have acute mental health issues  
7 and getting them the services that they need so that  
8 was the five-point plan. Now, as it relates to  
9 National Guard and state police in the system, I  
10 think the Governor was looking for ways to support  
11 the tremendous work that NYPD is doing and does every  
12 day in our system and augmenting that with these  
13 individuals for bag checks but also to continue to be  
14 eyes and ears in our system. Working cooperatively,  
15 obviously with those two entities to deploy them in  
16 appropriate ways, but I think that is the overall  
17 thinking that it was part of an overall package to  
18 improve to improve safety in our subway. Shanifah.

19 CHIEF CUSTOMER SERVICE OFFICER RIERA: I

20 just, again, would want to reiterate one of the  
21 points that President Davey mentioned. Again, we are  
22 constantly engaging with our customers and riders,  
23 whether it's through surveys or even being users of  
24 the systems ourselves, and we are constantly hearing  
25 of the need and asked to have uniform presence so, as

2 President Davey said, this is just one of many  
3 components that we're looking to address customer  
4 safety concerns.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Have the  
6 deployed National Guard and state police been trained  
7 in mental health services, and, if so, what kind of  
8 training have they received?

9 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Not that I'm aware of,  
10 but if they see someone in distress, the goal is, and  
11 our station agents by the way and our station staff  
12 also haven't been trained, but what folks know is if  
13 they do see someone who is exhibiting either distress  
14 on themselves that they're to call the SCOUT team and  
15 have the trained clinician come and look at and  
16 otherwise evaluate what that person's behavior is to  
17 see if they qualify so I think the point is having  
18 trained clinicians has been tremendously valuable  
19 that we've done over the last several months, and I  
20 think that's why the Governor has asked us to expand  
21 that program, John.

22 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
23 MCCARTHY: Yeah, Chair, and the officers that are  
24 assigned to those SCOUT teams that go around with the  
25 trained clinicians, they are trained separately for

2 those situations so those officers who are assigned  
3 and will be in those situations do receive a special  
4 training.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So they do  
6 receive training if they're assigned...

7 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
8 MCCARTHY: Assigned to the SCOUT teams and now the  
9 Governor has...

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But only if  
11 they're on SCOUT but, if they're not on SCOUT...

12 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
13 MCCARTHY: If they're on SCOUT, they have a whole host  
14 of regular training that NYPD does for their officers  
15 and the MTA PD that does for their officers that  
16 deals with interactions with the public, but they are  
17 not trained the way a clinician obviously is trained.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Are those who  
19 are labeled as SCOUT, are they at every one of the  
20 stations that you're having law enforcement at?

21 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
22 MCCARTHY: No. That's a very specialized team and it's  
23 growing. We are the law enforcement, whether it's  
24 state police, MTA police, NYPD, they all have varying  
25 degrees of training, but Guard and state police will

2 not be having those interactions. They will not be  
3 doing that work.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Just going  
5 back to the other point you made, President Davey, in  
6 terms of the five-point plan, do we have any evidence  
7 historically that banning people from the subway  
8 would improve safety? How does the MTA expect such a  
9 provision could be enforced?

10 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure. I don't think we  
11 have much evidence because I'm not sure it's been  
12 used nearly as enough as we would like to say the  
13 least. How would it be used? It would simply be, we  
14 would alert our stations teams to folks. The stations  
15 team actually have a good sense of who maybe hangs  
16 out in their station, who may have issues that need  
17 to be addressed either by law enforcement or by  
18 mental health. They know better than probably all of  
19 us in this room. But the bottom line is, if they're  
20 banned and they're coming into the system, you don't  
21 have to wait for them to commit a crime, right? They  
22 are trespassing and, as a result, they can be ejected  
23 from the station. I feel strongly about this. I think  
24 that there are folks who, we have one individual  
25 assaulted four transit workers last year and was



2 probably on his way to assault a fifth because he had  
3 a metal rod in his hand as he was going into a  
4 station. I think that individual certainly needs a  
5 lot of help and I hope he's getting it but, at the  
6 same time, I think he's probably forfeited his  
7 ability to ride our system for a period of time  
8 because he has shown a proclivity to attack people.  
9 As I said, I feel strongly about that. Obviously,  
10 there's law enforcement and laws that need to be  
11 addressed in that regard but, to me, it's common  
12 sense.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: You mentioned  
14 in your opening statement that you have received  
15 feedback from customers that they want to see more  
16 police officers in the subway. Can you elaborate on  
17 this feedback?

18 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure. I would encourage  
19 you all to look at our website and go to our KPI  
20 section, our key performance indicators. We do a  
21 monthly survey. We do a deep dive every six months of  
22 our customers, we get about 100,000 responses, but  
23 every month we get several thousand responses from  
24 bus, subway, paratransit customers, usually about 600  
25 to 1,000, what we call a pulse check to see basically

2 what's on their mind, and what is consistently on our  
3 subway customers' mind is, we asked him the question  
4 what are your concerns or what can we do to make you  
5 ride more, and the answer is address folks who are  
6 emotionally disturbed, homelessness, and crime. Those  
7 are the top three issues consistently since we've  
8 been asking these questions, I think was June of  
9 2022, and then what we further ask folks is, do you  
10 believe that there is enough police, it's sort of a  
11 Goldilocks, too hot, too cold, or just right, and  
12 what we consistently see and have seen over the last  
13 few months is customers saying that they want to see  
14 more police again. That had improved probably six,  
15 eight months ago when there was a surge last year. As  
16 that surge changed and as crime, particularly in  
17 January, went up and it was certainly covered by the  
18 media, I think what we saw as customers saying, we  
19 want to see more police back in our system so that's  
20 the data. Again, happy to share with you, but it is  
21 publicly available. We share it once a month at our  
22 Transit Committee. Shanifah's team is the one that  
23 actually conducts the surveys on our behalf, which we  
24 appreciate.

2 CHIEF CUSTOMER SERVICE OFFICER RIERA:

3 Yeah, and the survey, again is, one insight of how  
4 we're getting feedback from our customers. We have  
5 contact centers and call centers and, of course, our  
6 shy riders who use social media to give us feedback  
7 so there is a constant loop of customer engagement  
8 and feedback in addition to the surveys.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
10 that. I'm curious in terms of out of the subway  
11 stations, how many of them have the deployment of  
12 these additional law enforcement agents, and out of  
13 those selected stations, one, how are the stations  
14 selected and, two, are those stations where you  
15 actually see the crime happening, are you looking at  
16 data to determine what stations or are you just  
17 throwing them at the stations?

18 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, obviously we're  
19 still working through that. This was announced less  
20 than a week ago or about a week ago, but that's  
21 typically how we work with NYPD, for example, on  
22 deployment of resources, prioritizing cameras, for  
23 example, prioritizing gate guards, obviously  
24 prioritizing here as well. It's typically a few  
25 things. The volume, so the size of the station and

2 the number of ridership. As Shanifah mentioned,  
3 customer complaints, customers are our best eyes and  
4 ears, to see if there are issues. To your point,  
5 crime that's occurring as well, fare evasion as well.  
6 I think all those things are how we determine how  
7 resources are deployed, including the most recent...

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm sorry, but  
9 the deployment is not based on fare evasion, the  
10 deployment is based on the crime, correct?

11 PRESIDENT DAVEY: It's based on all the  
12 above is what I just said so it's all of those  
13 characteristics, customer feedback, crime, volume of  
14 customers, the size of the particular station. You  
15 need more bodies, for example, to cover a large  
16 station even though crime might be high or low so  
17 it's all of the above is what we use to deploy all of  
18 the resources that we have. John?

19 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

20 MCCARTHY: Yeah, and the relationship we have with the  
21 NYPD, it's a great relationship where we are sharing  
22 information like never before, and one of the things  
23 we share is a lot of the information that comes into  
24 Shanifah's team from the customers about quality-of-  
25 life issues. We're now able to get that over to the

2 NYPD so that becomes a part of their deployment so it  
3 isn't even just crime numbers. It's really about what  
4 issues our customers, our workers are facing and that  
5 if that free flow of information, and one other thing  
6 I would add, Chair, two years ago when the Governor  
7 announced with the Mayor, the Cops, Camera, and Care  
8 initiative, one of the important measures in adding  
9 MTA police to certain stations, it frees up NYPD  
10 officers to do other work so that's where you're  
11 seeing the added officers. It makes others available  
12 to do other work throughout the system.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Does the MTA  
14 Police and National Guard intend to follow reporting  
15 requirements set out in the Council's How Many Stop  
16 Act and, if not, are the demographics of the stops  
17 and bag checks being tracked in any form, and will  
18 that data be made public?

19 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
20 MCCARTHY: Yes, the MTA PD has guidelines similar to  
21 the NYPD, and any Guard or state police will not be  
22 doing that work. Any bag check, according to those  
23 rules, will be done by the MTA PD. The role of the  
24 additional uniforms is really to serve the purpose of  
25 allowing these officers to focus, the MTA PD and the

2 NYPD focus, on these other items like the weapons  
3 checks and the like so, yes, we'll follow the same  
4 rules, but that will be done by the MTA PD. It won't  
5 be done by the Guard or state police.

6 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL: So  
7 the guards won't be the one that are checking the  
8 bags? They're just standing to be the eyes while the  
9 MTA police is the ones that's doing the function of  
10 checking the bags.

11 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
12 MCCARTHY: Correct, and they have very strict  
13 criteria...

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And is that  
15 information made public in terms of what those stops  
16 look like?

17 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
18 MCCARTHY: I'll check on that, but I believe so.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, can you  
20 get back to us while we're here.

21 I also want to acknowledge that we've  
22 been joined by Majority Leader Farías.

23 I'm going to pause. I am going to come  
24 back to this piece, but I want to pause to allow  
25 opportunity for my Colleagues to ask questions. We

2 are going to start with Council Member Louis followed  
3 by Council Member Hanks.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Chair,  
5 and good morning, President Davey. Thank you for  
6 being here today.

7 In your testimony, you mentioned  
8 endeavors for a faster, cleaner, and safer service.  
9 In Flatbush, not only is the 2 and 5 line not safe  
10 due to crime, but we also have major capital  
11 deficiencies that fall on deaf ears when we call to  
12 make requests for repairs for broken steps for over a  
13 year now and flooding that causes safety concerns for  
14 some of our constituents so I'll start with this. The  
15 B41 bus has been inconsistent with service, and it  
16 has residents concerned about the Brooklyn bus  
17 network redesign and how that could further leave  
18 travelers stranded so we wanted to know how is the  
19 MTA taking this into consideration to ensure  
20 frequency isn't reduced for our older adults and  
21 residents with disabilities who rely on the bus to  
22 travel to important destinations like medical  
23 appointments and travel for older adults that go to  
24 senior centers and shopping across central Brooklyn.  
25 The second question is the constant delays at the

2 Brooklyn College Flatbush Avenue terminal that causes  
3 a major impact on economic and social viability of  
4 Flatbush and travelers, which frequently we hear  
5 about complaints, the trains are held in between  
6 stations causing commuters to be late. We wanted to  
7 know does the MTA have any plans to resolve the  
8 chronic issues between Brooklyn College, Newkirk  
9 Avenue going towards Church Avenue, and this has been  
10 going since I've been elected into this seat for the  
11 last four years. It's been the same issue. Last but  
12 not least, we have communicated with the MTA on  
13 safety issues on Flatbush and Glenwood with  
14 pedestrians and buses colliding causing fatalities  
15 due to confusing signal patterns and multiple buses  
16 being back-to-back on the blocks of Flatbush and  
17 Glenwood with multiple deaths that occurred recently  
18 and publicly for everyone to see so we wanted to know  
19 how is the MTA taking this into consideration, the  
20 concerns to resolve these issues as the bus network  
21 redesign has no notes about this bus stop. This is at  
22 the B6, which is between Flatbush and Glenwood, and  
23 is the NTA considering the conflicts with the  
24 redesign and the intersections in Council District  
25 45, and the Chair has been to the District to see



2 these corridors which are bustling intersections but  
3 we have the highest fatalities due to buses colliding  
4 with pedestrians, that happens quite often and, just  
5 a quick highlight, if you can provide on the pilot  
6 program for the free bus route on the B60, the new  
7 bus route, we wanted to know if that will be  
8 increased to other areas like the Canarsie Flatlands  
9 and Mill Basin area. Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT DAVEY: I want to compliment you  
11 on getting those questions in three minutes. Let me  
12 take a few at a time and I should start by saying I'm  
13 happy to come out to your District and take a look at  
14 these specific places with you so we can arrange that  
15 for sure.

16 So maybe just take a quick step back. On  
17 the Brooklyn Bus Redesign, that is next in line, as  
18 you know, or maybe behind Queens. Queens is where  
19 Brooklyn is following although we are out with public  
20 comment right now. I would say in the Bronx and  
21 Queens, the bus redesign that we put out as a draft  
22 is never the final that we implement so we want your  
23 feedback, we want your constituents' feedback.  
24 They're going to know the bus routes, certainly  
25 better than me, and we want to get that feedback from

2 folks. Whether it's inappropriately eliminating a bus  
3 stop, for example, near a senior center, that has  
4 come up from time to time, we obviously don't want to  
5 do that.

6           Relative to the B41, I would say I think  
7 on Flatbush Avenue in particular, I was out there, I  
8 don't know, 18 months ago, I love bus lanes as a  
9 general matter. I know that might be unpopular for  
10 some folks. I happen to like bus lanes, and we have a  
11 bus lane proposal out on Flatbush Avenue. As I  
12 mentioned earlier, when it comes to pedestrian  
13 safety, I know you were talking I think about the B6  
14 but, as it relates to pedestrian safety, what we've  
15 seen is for areas where there are bus lanes, it is  
16 just safer. It's safer when colliding with cars and  
17 also having challenges with pedestrians as well. I  
18 think the bus redesign does take that into account. I  
19 think part of what we're trying to do is look at  
20 where we have bus stops and can we reduce, for  
21 example, right-hand or left-hand turns, can we ensure  
22 that the buses are going straight by nature. That is  
23 just a safer route as opposed to needing to take a  
24 left or a right. I think all those things. We're also  
25 looking at pedestrian warning systems. We have this

2 in some of our buses now, but warning pedestrians if  
3 the bus is turning, for example and then lastly, I  
4 would tell you just from a safety perspective, I  
5 think this is a twofer for us. We've been  
6 investigating being able to fully enclose our bus  
7 operators in a full cockpit to prevent them from  
8 being assaulted. At the same time, what that's going  
9 to allow us to do is install e-mirrors, literally,  
10 cameras that substitute for mirrors, and they are  
11 much, much clearer, particularly in inclement weather  
12 and, to your point, we are looking at ways to make  
13 our operations safer, and then, finally, you  
14 mentioned the issues of the 2 and the 5, happy to  
15 have a conversation. I have my line managers in next  
16 week so we can see how we can improve those terminal  
17 operations but, as I said, and I make this blanket  
18 offer to all of you and your Colleagues to the extent  
19 I know I think Council Member Narcisse invited me out  
20 last year and we had a good walk around. Happy to  
21 come out to your Districts and see these issues for  
22 myself.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: We'll take the  
24 offer and, if you want to do a joint effort between  
25

2 myself and Council Member Narcisse about the B41,  
3 we'll take it.

4 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Happy to.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: I just wanted to  
6 quickly highlight the collisions happened on the B6  
7 route that collides with the B44, which has a bus  
8 lane.

9 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Got it.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: That is the  
11 problem, and we actually rejected the B44 route. This  
12 is when I was a staffer. There was another Council  
13 Member there at the time because we knew this would  
14 happen and now, four years later, we have a lot of  
15 fatalities. The same issue happens at Flatbush Avenue  
16 and Avenue H, which the Chair came out for a walk-  
17 through on that, and we still haven't heard back from  
18 MTA on that so it would be great to have  
19 conversations about the warning signals that you  
20 mentioned and a walk...

21 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, let's do that. I  
22 don't know, apologize if someone hasn't been getting  
23 back to you, but the answer is I'll come out and  
24 let's look at it together. Okay.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you.

2 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Thank you.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Chair.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Thank you, Chair.

5 Good morning. How are you? My name is Kamillah Hanks.

6 I am the Council Member of the 49th District, which  
7 is the North Shore of Staten Island, and I'm excited  
8 about the R211s launch on Staten Island so I'm  
9 definitely looking forward to that. I had to google  
10 it, but I'm looking forward to it.

11 PRESIDENT DAVEY: The good news is we  
12 didn't buy used trains. These are new, which Staten  
13 Island has been waiting for way too long so.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Longer than I've  
15 been alive.

16 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Indeed.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: And I'm 52.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: You don't look it.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Thank you, Council  
20 Member.

21 My question really revolves around the  
22 congestion pricing, and I wanted to read out some  
23 stats for you that have come about our research so  
24 there are four zip codes on Staten Island that have  
25 been designated by the City as environmental justice

2 areas. That's 10301, -02, -03, and -10, all of these  
3 in my District. Those demographics of those four zip  
4 codes are over 50 percent black and Hispanic with an  
5 average household income of 62,000. Contrary, there  
6 are 12 zip codes in the Central Business District,  
7 when you're talking about congestion pricing, that  
8 are not in environmental justice areas and they are  
9 less than 20 percent black and Hispanic, and the  
10 average household income is 300,000. Being an outer  
11 borough Council Member, maybe it speaks to some of my  
12 Colleagues who are in Queens who are also contending  
13 with what the impact, the environmental impact that  
14 congestion pricing is going to have on these outer  
15 boroughs. We have many teachers, firefighters, people  
16 who have no choice but to leave Staten Island to earn  
17 a living, and this congestion pricing, which you are  
18 proud to say will raise over a billion dollars and my  
19 question is at what cost to the Outer Boroughs, at  
20 what cost to vulnerable populations, and at what cost  
21 to people who are trying to earn a living who do not  
22 have a choice and do live in transportation deserts.  
23 Thank you.

24 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure. A couple of  
25 things. Number one, I think we all know that

2 congestion pricing is the law of the land, right? It  
3 was passed five years ago by the State Legislature  
4 signed by the Governor. We are the implementer of the  
5 law at MTA. Two is, I don't have those statistics you  
6 read in front of you, but I can tell you as a new New  
7 Yorker, I've lived in Hell's Kitchen for the last two  
8 years.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: These environmental  
10 impacts came from the MTA's report, not ours.

11 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Right, a report that  
12 ultimately substantiated that congestion pricing  
13 should go forward. That said, my neighbors in Hell's  
14 Kitchen tell me that they've been pushing hard for  
15 the last number of decades to get something like  
16 congestion pricing because it is a diverse community,  
17 very different incomes and households, but traffic  
18 choked around the Lincoln Tunnel, for example and, as  
19 mentioned, for me at least as New York City Transit  
20 President, it's an opportunity to invest in transit.  
21 I'm not sure, certainly there are subway deserts in  
22 the city. We run service all over the place so to say  
23 that there are transit deserts, I might take issue  
24 with but happy to have a separate conversation on  
25 that. Most folks that travel into the Central

2 Business District, the vast majority, I think 90  
3 percent, are taking public transit. We hope we can  
4 move a few more of those folks out of their cars and  
5 into public transit to get into the Central Business  
6 District, but I would just say that it's in the eye  
7 of the beholder, right? There are some folks who are  
8 certainly not happy with congestion pricing. We've  
9 heard that, but it is the law of the State of New  
10 York. We went through an exhaustive process. The MTA  
11 board is still considering maybe tweaks to that and  
12 have heard as recently as two weeks ago from the  
13 public in that regard, but I am of the personal  
14 opinion that it should go forward and it should go  
15 forward as quickly as it can.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Next, we'll  
18 hear from Council Member Rivera followed by Council  
19 Member Schulman.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you. Good  
21 morning.

22 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Good morning.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: All right, we can  
24 start with congestion pricing. I have a few  
25 questions. I'll try to get them all in and then take



2 it from there. Thank you for your testimony. Thank  
3 you for your work. I'm very excited about some of the  
4 initiatives that you've mentioned. My District is  
5 entirely within Manhattan below 60th Street or the  
6 tolling zone for congestion pricing. My constituents  
7 will be uniquely impacted by the congestion bill,  
8 both for potential benefits and the cost. The  
9 congestion toll will be used for MTA's Capital Plan  
10 so can you provide any projects that will be  
11 supported by these funds that will improve the  
12 transportation network that's actually within the  
13 congestion zone, and I've also received concerns that  
14 our goals for reducing congestion, they won't be  
15 successful unless we redesign our streets to increase  
16 biking and pedestrian infrastructure. Street redesign  
17 is not in the purview of the MTA, like it is with  
18 DOT, and we'll hear from them later, and the funds  
19 raised will not be contributed to these projects, per  
20 se, the street redesign for cyclists and pedestrians.  
21 Do you have any plans to collaborate with DOT on  
22 these street redesigns? Is it possible to use  
23 congestion toll funds for these purposes?

24 PRESIDENT DAVEY: So to the first  
25 question, sure, there are lots of projects that we

2 will fund that will benefit folks within the  
3 congestion zone. As mentioned earlier, right now  
4 we're delayed on our signal projects for the A, C, B,  
5 D, F, and M, obviously, which serve folks within the  
6 Central Business District as an example and, other  
7 than the 7 and the L line, which have modern signal  
8 systems from across both of those lines, that's a  
9 major improvement we need to make across the entire  
10 system so it would benefit all four boroughs, not  
11 just folks living below 60th street, but that's  
12 critical. New rolling stock is another one, so new  
13 subway cars, right? I know you take the service and  
14 some of them are quite new and some of them really  
15 need to have a retirement party, and congestion  
16 pricing will allow us to fund those kinds of projects  
17 in the future as well. I think it's fair to say that  
18 congestion pricing will benefit folks across the five  
19 boroughs in terms of transit improvements but, for  
20 folks within the District, absolutely.

21 On the second question, we obviously  
22 collaborate with DOT all the time on whether it's bus  
23 lanes or improvements around cycling and walking. As  
24 to who pays for what, I can't speak to that, but  
25 certainly we would collaborate with the Commissioner

2 and his team as we do around improvements for bus and  
3 for street...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Just my last  
5 question.

6 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Somewhat related.  
8 The Second Avenue redesign, what input did MTA have  
9 this redesign, what goals does the MTA hope to  
10 achieve with the redesign, and just, you mentioned  
11 the L. You've announced subway barriers at the 3rd  
12 Avenue L station, not the ones we've seen, not the  
13 yellow ones and not the other ones. They're supposed  
14 to be the sort of state-of-the-art, more advanced,  
15 used in other countries barriers, so I'd like to know  
16 the status of that, and along the L too, the  
17 elevators, is there a timeline for a fully accessible  
18 L train? And just squeeze in one last question so she  
19 can't actually punish me for this. Thank you. You got  
20 those, right?

21 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Second Avenue  
23 redesign,, the L line being fully accessible with  
24 elevators, but the barriers at Third Avenue,  
25 specifically in terms of the timeline and, for

2 cleanliness, how do you determine which stations get  
3 cleaned? Is it complaint driven? Is it ridership? Is  
4 it both? Thank you.

5 PRESIDENT DAVEY: So let me unpack. I  
6 appreciate that, the round robin, a lot of questions.  
7 A couple of things on the Second Avenue, yes, we  
8 often talk to the DOT staff to staff, I talk to the  
9 Commissioner on a regular basis on major issues, but  
10 we were a part of those conversations. For me, the  
11 goal is to improve speed. Fundamentally, we talked a  
12 lot about what our subway customers are telling us in  
13 terms of why they aren't riding, what our bus  
14 customers are telling us is they want more reliable  
15 service with shorter wait times and, in part, that's  
16 about improving bus speed so my hope is that the M15  
17 will improve in its reliability as a result of that  
18 redesign. It's, as I said, one of the largest, if not  
19 the most frequently used bus service in the city, so  
20 that's important.

21 How we determine cleaning. We hired 800  
22 station cleaners last year. How many total we have  
23 on, I'll have to get back to you, but we clean every  
24 station every day so it's not as, even though if  
25 there are customer complaints, for example, of course

2 I'm on the service frequently and, if I see a spill  
3 or something that may have just occurred right after  
4 a cleaner was there, we get that information in, but  
5 I am proud to say that what we are hearing from our  
6 customers that they are seeing cleaner stations,  
7 brighter stations, a result of not only the great  
8 work our cleaning staff is doing, that we bought them  
9 new, I call them Zambonis, those new scrubbers. We  
10 bought 100 new ones last year. It's our job as  
11 management to give them the tools to get the job  
12 done, and and I don't think we had done a very good  
13 job of that in the last couple of years.

14 On the barriers that you mentioned, maybe  
15 I'm to blame for these or to be thanked, I don't  
16 know, it's probably 50/50, but we did receive vendor  
17 proposals last month for these new platform screen  
18 doors, right? Those are expensive, and they won't fit  
19 in every station for a bunch of reasons. I would say  
20 too, at least in my experience, you don't often see  
21 those retrofitted. They're part and parcel in Japan  
22 when they built those lines or Singapore or the one  
23 line in London, by the way. It's not standard issue  
24 here in the U.S. In fact, I don't think any system  
25 other than air trains to airports do. We said to the

2 staff like, look, why wait, are there other things we  
3 can do that are within our control that we can put  
4 out immediately to help our customers feel safer and  
5 to stand behind a barrier if they feel like they  
6 might be pushed or they might trip for that matter.  
7 We've seen folks drop a cell phone into the tracks  
8 because they're too close and climb down and get the  
9 cell phone. It's crazy. Please don't do that. We have  
10 staff that could do that for you. To me, it's an all  
11 the above kind of an approach so we're going to move  
12 forward with the platform screen doors, as you  
13 mentioned, but if there are other low-cost ways we  
14 can improve safety, we're going to try that too and,  
15 so far so good, and my hope is we'll roll out more, I  
16 think.

17 Oh, the ADA and the L, the latest. So I  
18 don't have an actual date into when the entire  
19 system, we can get that for you but, this year, 14th  
20 Street, 6th Avenue and 7th Avenue will be completed,  
21 as I said, by middle this year, and then there are  
22 three other stations that are already accessible. We  
23 can come back to you about what the plan would be for  
24 the next capital program but, suffice to say, our  
25 goal of getting 95 percent of the system accessible

2 by 2050 is our goal and Chair Lieber has challenged  
3 us to see if we can do better than that in terms of  
4 the date.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: All right. Thank  
6 you, Madam Chair, for the graciousness and the time  
7 and also look into the Essex Delancey, okay.

8 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Missed  
10 opportunity. Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Good morning.  
12 Mr. Davey. A few things. One is, I'm going to take  
13 you up on your offer. I'm Council Member Schulman. I  
14 represent Central Queens, Forest Hills, Kew Gardens,  
15 Richmond Hill. I would say it's a transit rich,  
16 somewhat rich area, but we do have issues, especially  
17 accessibility because the Chair came out to my  
18 District and saw one station, it's accessible and  
19 then the other one isn't, so it's difficult just to  
20 get on at the one station and then not be able to get  
21 around.

22 What I do want to talk to you about is  
23 the express buses. The express buses, what I've  
24 noticed, because I take them all the time, the QM11,  
25 I'm going to say that, and the QM18 and QM42, but

2 what I often see is that I'll go for a particular bus  
3 to get a bus and then on the app it says we don't  
4 have the personnel to cover the bus and we're doing  
5 the best we can so what is being done there to make  
6 sure that the buses run on a regular basis.

7 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, so employee  
8 availability has been a huge focus of ours. Twenty  
9 years ago, in the year 2000, the average transit  
10 employee worked 215 days. Two years ago, it was 188  
11 so over 20-year period, we've lost almost 20 days.  
12 Even if you take out COVID, which obviously was and  
13 excruciating time for all of us, just not acceptable.  
14 We've been working with our partners in labor, the  
15 ATU and the TWU ,to improve that. I think this year  
16 we're averaging about 198, 199 across New York City  
17 transit, which I'm happy about, but we still have to  
18 improve and so, when you see that, that means that  
19 there is absenteeism, folks calling in sick,  
20 whatever, the reasons may be. We've made a huge and  
21 concerted effort to hire bus operators as well so  
22 it's not just about getting folks to work, but it's  
23 also making sure we've got the appropriate number of  
24 bus operators. We're pretty much there in terms of  
25 the budget, but we do know we project forward



2 expected monthly attrition and, as a result, we're  
3 hiring up to that which is critical, but we just have  
4 to do a better job of working with our partners in  
5 labor and making sure that those employees feel safe,  
6 are coming to work, and are getting on those buses. I  
7 would also say too that I don't know if you use an  
8 app to, but I don't think our bus app is that great.  
9 We're actually quite...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: It isn't.

11 PRESIDENT DAVEY: No, it's not, and so we  
12 are...

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: It says the bus  
14 is coming until it's not.

15 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Well, or if there are  
16 detours, for example, which actually happen very  
17 frequently in our city...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Yes.

19 PRESIDENT DAVEY: And so you don't know  
20 the buses like two blocks away. This will be some  
21 news, but we are quietly piloting, now it's not so  
22 quiet because the press gallery is typing, a new app  
23 internal, we haven't launched it yet to see if we can  
24 make those improvements. One of the challenges with  
25 our buses is that the ping is every 30 seconds, not

2 every two or three seconds. You see the bus standing  
3 still when it moves two blocks. It's part of the  
4 challenge. I use buses frequently, too, and this has  
5 been my feedback so we're very much focused on that.  
6 It's employee availability, making sure we're hiring,  
7 and then improving the communication we're getting  
8 out to our customers. That's our strategy.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Chair, I just  
10 had a couple of questions. All right?? Thank you.

11 The other is that, it hasn't happened  
12 recently, but it used to happen very often. I use the  
13 OMNY Card and, when it doesn't work, they just say,  
14 just get on the bus, don't worry about it, and that's  
15 losing money for you guys and I want to pay. I just  
16 wanted to ask about that too.

17 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, no, that's  
18 incredibly frustrating. That's self-inflicted wound,  
19 right? As we talked about fare evasion before, there  
20 are folks who want to pay and our system is, we did a  
21 software upgrade in December for those validators,  
22 which we know helped and we're also getting better  
23 reporting now, so we're attempting to make sure that  
24 buses before they leave our depots, that those  
25 validators are working and, if they're not, then

2 we're getting better reports to ensure that they are,  
3 but I couldn't agree with you more, and that's what  
4 our bus drivers are told to do, not harass a  
5 customer, right, go ahead, but we've been pushing  
6 Cubic to give us better reporting as well so, again,  
7 I am with you on that and we're focused on it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: The last thing I  
9 want to just put in my two cents about expanding the  
10 express bus service, especially on the weekends  
11 because that would bring in a whole bunch of people  
12 to do shopping and everything else, especially in  
13 Queens to go into Manhattan so I wanted to put that  
14 out there because I think that would be a value.

15 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, we're looking at  
16 that. We're also looking at express buses relative to  
17 congestion pricing too so we know that there are some  
18 routes that we do have good ridership, particularly  
19 during the weeks and potentially in the weekend with  
20 congestion pricing, so I think express buses in  
21 particular is a place we're watching closely as  
22 ridership grows and should we be adding more service,  
23 but I appreciate that point.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: By the way, I do  
25 take the surveys, so I just want to mention that.

2 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Just so you know, like I  
3 know sometimes people feel like they go nowhere. We  
4 read them so this team knows I'm probably obsessed  
5 with it in an unhealthy way, but c'est la vie.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you very  
7 much. Thank you, Chair.

8 PRESIDENT DAVEY: You're welcome.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.  
10 Next, we'll hear from Council Member Restler.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so  
12 much, Madam Chair. It's good to see you. I will say  
13 that I miss Will Schwartz...

14 PRESIDENT DAVEY: We all do. Notice I had  
15 to bring 20 people with me...

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: We all miss  
17 Will.

18 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Because Will is no  
19 longer...

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Will is a good  
21 egg. Will Schwartz is a good egg. I just wanted that  
22 on the record.

23 On to the issues of the day. Just  
24 firstly, Speaker made a great announcement, Speaker  
25 made many great announcements in her State of the

2 City address yesterday, one of which was to bring  
3 some real accountability to the Streets Plan. I just  
4 wanted to see do you support her legislation to  
5 ensure that we actually get the bus lanes built that  
6 we've been promised?

7 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, I have to be  
8 honest, I haven't looked at her legislation, but do I  
9 support bus lanes? Yes...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And more  
11 accountability to get the bus lanes built that we all  
12 have been promised would be terrific, right?

13 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yes, certainly, we...

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'd love to just  
15 quote...

16 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure, if you don't mind,  
17 I think...

18 PRESIDENT DAVEY: I do mind. No, I'm  
19 kidding.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: If I can find it,  
21 he said, essentially, I love the Eric Adams of 2022  
22 when he was committed to building more bus lanes. He  
23 campaigned on it. We've seen just an extraordinary  
24 bait and switch from this Administration but, as we  
25 know, bus lanes require partnership between the DOT

2 and the MTA, so I'd just like to get some more  
3 information from New York City Transit on what's  
4 actually in the pipeline. Is anything happening? Are  
5 there any new bus lanes that are actually getting  
6 built in the City of New York? We all have the data  
7 in the PMMR. We see that bus lanes are going as slow  
8 as ever. We see that we are dramatically behind our  
9 goals of the 150 miles of new bus lanes that have to  
10 be built in New York City over the next couple of  
11 years, and it doesn't appear that the Administration  
12 is making any new announcements about bus lanes  
13 around the city, but you have more insight than  
14 perhaps what we have so could you advise us, how many  
15 current new bus lane projects are underway and are  
16 planned for implementation, either this Fiscal Year,  
17 over the next three months or for the Calendar Year  
18 in 2024.

19 PRESIDENT DAVEY: I can neither speak for  
20 the DOT or make commitments on their behalf?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: No, but they  
22 consult with you about the things that are in the  
23 works, and I'm just trying to understand is there  
24 anything behind the curtain?

2 PRESIDENT DAVEY: No, and, no, there's  
3 nothing behind the curtain. I will defer to them to  
4 answer, but I will say this, which is, from my  
5 perspective, I think New York City Transit's  
6 perspective, MTA, the more bus lanes, the better,  
7 right?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: But they have to  
9 talk to you about the projects that are planned  
10 because they need you to implement them. They need  
11 the drivers. They need all of it. So what are they  
12 talking to you about?

13 PRESIDENT DAVEY: And those conversations  
14 are generally staff to staff, so am I fully up-to-  
15 date on what's been happening over the last couple  
16 weeks? I'm not, but I just wanted to give you...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Can you speak  
18 broadly to the number of bike lanes, new bus lane  
19 projects that are in the works that you're  
20 anticipating for implementation because I just keep  
21 hearing from MTA leadership how incredibly frustrated  
22 you all are that the DOT and this Mayor, let's be  
23 real, it's the Mayor, because DOT would love to build  
24 these bus lanes, the Mayor has just decided he  
25 doesn't care about bus lanes anymore. Can you give us

2 any insight to new projects that are being planned or  
3 any progress that we can look forward to?

4 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Respectfully, Council  
5 Member, a lot to unpack there. Let me just say this,  
6 the Administration broadly for transit has been very  
7 good. Safety has been the dominant topic, and the  
8 Mayor and his team have been terrific in giving us  
9 the resources we need to combat that. I'm on the  
10 record as saying, for example, Fordham Road was a  
11 disappointment. I think...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I recall.

13 PRESIDENT DAVEY: And, we're going to  
14 watch that closely. Probably 150 bus lanes wouldn't  
15 even be enough in my view, but there are other  
16 constituencies that the Administration has to work  
17 with, I get that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Look...

19 PRESIDENT DAVEY: With that said..

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'm not asking  
21 you to indict the Mayor. I just am asking for this,  
22 for information on the projects that are coming. It  
23 doesn't sound like we're going to hear any of that  
24 today. Madam Chair, if I could ask one more question,  
25 if that'd be okay.



2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Last question.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Last question.

4 Despite my deep frustration that the bus Mayor has  
5 disappeared and gone home and that we have no bus  
6 projects to be shared today from the MTA, just want  
7 to ask you, we've got a six-week G Train shutdown  
8 that's coming this summer that I'm deeply concerned  
9 about. We know you have plans for shuttle buses, but  
10 shuttle buses aren't going to move through the  
11 traffic in our neighborhoods and provide any real  
12 help to folks. Is there a plan for an actual busway  
13 and for rapid bus transit to get people in and out of  
14 our community with a six-week G Train shutdown  
15 because, as you know, Greenpoint has no other  
16 transit. We live and die on the G Train.

17 PRESIDENT DAVEY: A couple things, Council  
18 Member. Number one is, obviously, shutting down  
19 service for that period of time is going to be  
20 inconvenient for our customers, if not worse. The  
21 alternative was, I think, 80 weekends of a shutdown.  
22 My perspective is you rip the band-aid off of these  
23 projects, get them done, and get out. As to your  
24 question on a plan, one thing that we're committed  
25 to, and it's been successful with our weekends, is we

2 committed and appointed a Weekend Service Czar that's  
3 very much focused on that. We're going to appoint a G  
4 Train Czar to be focused on the buses, to be working  
5 with the DOT, NYPD if we need to, our customer  
6 service staff, and I think what I have found often is  
7 in some of these projects, it's not coordinated,  
8 right, and it really requires an individual to sleep,  
9 eat, and breathe that particular project so you have  
10 my commitment there. We're still working with the  
11 City in terms of how that actual shuttle bus will  
12 work, but I can assure you we've heard you and some  
13 of your other Colleagues about your concerns. I'm  
14 concerned as well. I want to make sure that our  
15 customers are getting the best possible service that  
16 we can provide.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I appreciate it.  
18 We'd love to discuss further because shuttle buses in  
19 highly congested areas aren't going to be all that  
20 helpful. I just...

21 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Happy to have that  
22 conversation.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thanks so much.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

3 We're going to now move on to Council Member Ariola  
4 followed by Narcisse.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you, Chair.

6 I just want to clarify that there are areas that are  
7 transit deserts and they do exist and, if you spoke  
8 with our Chair and Majority Whip, Selvena Brooks-  
9 Powers and my Constituents, they could show you  
10 exactly where it is. That being said, thank you for  
11 the ADA upgrade on the J line on Jamaica Avenue and  
12 the A line on Rockway Boulevard for the elevators  
13 that are put in. I also want to say that Danny  
14 Randell and Luke DePalma are amazing partners in  
15 keeping us abreast of what's happened.

16 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Will Schwartz who, is  
17 that (INAUDIBLE)

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: At keeping us  
19 abreast of what's happening, the changes, and if  
20 there are any issues, they are addressed immediately.  
21 Thank you both very much for being as available as  
22 you are.

23 I'm happy to hear that you're running on  
24 a balanced operating budget but, in your entire  
25 budget and in your entire speech and your entire

2 commitment to have trains and buses be accessible, I  
3 didn't hear you say anything about the QueensLink and  
4 that, again, is very important to the people of the  
5 Rockaway Peninsula, which the Chair and I both  
6 represent. Why is it with surplus and balanced  
7 budgets, we don't hear anything about an EIS study  
8 for the QueensLink or any consideration of it.

9 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

10 MCCARTHY: Council Member, I'll jump in for that. The  
11 project you're discussing, it was studied in the 20-  
12 year needs, and this is very different from what we  
13 did before, which is there will be a host of  
14 different projects that are looked at by different  
15 teams. We went to one place and put them together and  
16 called it a comparative evaluation so that we're  
17 looking at it holistically, all the projects that are  
18 expansion projects together and scoring them and  
19 understanding what they bring as far as ridership,  
20 potential ridership, potential growth, and what  
21 existing capacity is already there so I will make  
22 sure that you get a copy of the comparative  
23 evaluation and the discussion of that project and its  
24 status. Then from here, this is where the decision-  
25 makers and our funding partners will make that

2 decision. To be clear, this is something we did look  
3 at and they'll be further discussion, but let's...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Do you have a  
5 timeline for when decisions will be.

6 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

7 MCCARTHY: The next step is, as you build out the  
8 capital program, there's statutory language state  
9 law. What we do is we'll put together a capital  
10 program, probably over this summer, because by next  
11 fall we will have to go to Albany with a capital  
12 program, which includes all our transit projects,  
13 Long Island Railroad, Metro North, bridge and  
14 tunnels, etc., laid out, and then what is the  
15 envelope that we're talking about as far as funding,  
16 and so that conversation will take place over the  
17 summer. What we're doing first is getting out there  
18 what our needs are so people understand exactly what  
19 we're talking about and how thorough we were. That  
20 was the mandate. It's do the work, do the research,  
21 find out what's needed, and then come back to us and  
22 let's figure out the funding for it, and that  
23 includes expansion projects.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Okay. And just, if  
25 I can, because that was a pretty lengthy answer.

2 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sorry.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: On the congestion  
4 pricing of course, I've been staunchly opposed to  
5 congestion pricing so I want to also clarify that the  
6 lawsuits that you refer to with litigants in New  
7 Jersey and other litigants, one of which I am,  
8 they're not pro traffic lawsuits. They're pro people  
9 lawsuits.

10 The last is we have buses that come into  
11 the Rockaway Peninsula. The 35 is on the Rockaway  
12 Peninsula. With the uptick in ridership on that  
13 particular bus because of the migrant base camp over  
14 in Floyd Bennett Field, it really has been very  
15 difficult for the riders to get a bus that's empty  
16 and for our schoolchildren to that go to school in  
17 Brooklyn to get a seat so we're asking for additional  
18 buses on that bus line, and also we need to address  
19 that people are not paying to get on the buses,  
20 they're not paying to ride, they're not getting a  
21 ticket. They're getting on in the back and there is  
22 no enforcement. I'd like to just know what you're  
23 doing about that. Thank you.

24 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure. So on enforcement,  
25 like I couldn't agree more. What we've done recently

2 is hire more Eagle team members and started to deploy  
3 them on buses so we'll take a look at those routes  
4 that in particular you're looking at but that is a  
5 major concern and, frankly, I teased it a little bit  
6 or mentioned it a little bit in my remarks, which is,  
7 if there's a potential setback, for our healthy  
8 fiscal outlook over the next five years is not  
9 addressing toll and fare evasion across MTA so it's  
10 something we're very focused on and, yeah, bus  
11 customers have to pay their fare. We do have  
12 enforcement out. Equity is also part of that, too. I  
13 mentioned at the beginning that really partnering  
14 with this Body and the Mayor and his team around Fair  
15 Fares is really important because there are New  
16 Yorkers who are struggling as well who don't wish  
17 themselves to beat the fair, but they're struggling  
18 to pay the 2.90 but, if we can offer them \$1.45, it  
19 certainly helps so there's a lot there.

20           Relative to bus routes, I would just say  
21 this. We keep a very close eye on ridership and so  
22 happy to have a conversation about particular routes,  
23 but we do keep a very close eye on average ridership  
24 patterns to see most of our buses now, about 70  
25 percent, have automated passenger counters now so we

2 know how many people are getting on and off a bus.  
3 Are there instances where there might be a crowded  
4 bus, of course, but, overall, throughout the system,  
5 we keep a close eye on it but happy to have a  
6 conversation about particular routes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Yeah, especially  
8 on the 35, and I think that's good that you're  
9 keeping a count because they don't want to lose buses  
10 because you think there's a lessened ridership, and  
11 that's because people are not paying for the toll, so  
12 thank you so much.

13 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: I want to say  
15 thank you, Rich, for coming to our 46 District.  
16 Before I start the question, I want to say every day  
17 is a special day for the transit workers because I  
18 know it's been tough, especially during COVID, they  
19 stepped up for us in New York City. Thank you for  
20 that and looking forward for zero emission by 2040  
21 because we need to do that. Thank you.

22 My question is when it come to the  
23 redesigning, how is the progress for Brooklyn bus  
24 redesigning going and is it on target?



2 PRESIDENT DAVEY: How's it going? I would  
3 say it's deliberate, and it is on target into 2025,  
4 and I say deliberate because, again, I've learned in  
5 this business a long time and certainly here in New  
6 York is public feedback and public process is so  
7 important. I think, MTA learned a lesson for COVID  
8 with some redesigns where I think there was an  
9 attempt to move things along quickly and that caught  
10 a lot of customers by surprise, constituents, elected  
11 officials, and so Brooklyn is a very deliberate  
12 process. I think we've got more iterations to go. As  
13 I mentioned earlier, our customers, our bus operators  
14 for that matter, know these routes, know the traffic  
15 patterns, know the bus stops better than we do. In  
16 the Bronx, for example, even after we went through a  
17 full public process and rolled out the bus redesign,  
18 we still made a few more changes. I think we brought  
19 back in the Bronx like 10 or 12 bus stops because we  
20 saw that where they were located, I think one was at  
21 a senior center, one was at a major house of worship.  
22 It just didn't make sense. You've got my commitment  
23 we're going to continue to listen and, even after we  
24 implement the changes, which will be likely in 2025,  
25 we're probably going to make more changes as well.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you for  
3 that. Since my Chair is looking at me for the timing,  
4 let's go on that. I'm looking forward for B76 on  
5 Avenue L, and we're excited for that, but I have  
6 complaints for Marine Park for B2, so I hope you're  
7 still looking into that and we are in transportation  
8 desert and L is still a problem, the train, when it  
9 come to weekends especially, I still have a lot of  
10 complaint for that and thank you for making them more  
11 accessible, the stations, so we appreciate that, and  
12 I have complaint on delay on B47, a lot of seniors  
13 complaining when they have to get access to get to  
14 their office. L is our lifeline to get out of because  
15 we live in transportation desert so please work on  
16 that. What else you have to answer me? Oh, B35, I was  
17 going to ask, I thank you Councilwoman Ariola already  
18 addressed that so I'm looking forward and I'm excited  
19 for the progress and for a better way and then you've  
20 been going my way, coming in front of our office for  
21 our seniors for the half fare, I appreciate that, so  
22 looking forward for a better transit.

23 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Three minutes was  
24 fleeting. You know where to find me so if we can do  
25 anything...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you.

3 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Please let me know.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you. I  
5 appreciate you.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

7 Next, we'll hear from Council Member Shekar Krishnan.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Good morning.

9 Thank you so much, Chair, for a great hearing today.

10 Thank you so much to all the MTA, to President Davey

11 for testifying. I just had two questions, following

12 up on, and I appreciate the MTA's work in particular

13 around express bus lanes, making sure to find ways to

14 get people using our buses and making our traffic

15 more efficient and increasing our ridership. In that

16 regard, an important piece of this too is, of course,

17 enforcement to make sure that when we create express

18 bus lanes or other bus lanes that buses are able to

19 use them and not cars blocking them. The reason why I

20 bring that up is I think you guys have done great

21 work in my District in Jackson Heights with the

22 Northern Boulevard bus lane, but there are two issues

23 in particular I wanted to just mention to you all.

24 One is I'm, of course, very supportive of the bus

25 lanes and always have been and appreciate your work.

2 What we're noticing now is that there are a number of  
3 cars that are using the bus lane to get around  
4 traffic, are parking in the bus lane or double  
5 parking in the bus lane. I think what could really  
6 help is camera enforcement for bus lanes, making sure  
7 they're dedicated only for bus lanes. Would you all  
8 be open to looking into that and seeing what would be  
9 possible to, because without the enforcement, it just  
10 doesn't work.

11 PRESIDENT DAVEY: You had me at hello. The  
12 answer is yes. So two things there. One is we are  
13 expanding our camera enforcement this May actually,  
14 and it's not only for bus lanes, but it's actually  
15 for buses that aren't in bus lanes where cars are  
16 double parked or cars are actually parked in our bus  
17 stops, which by the way is a pet peeve of mine  
18 because for our customers who are disabled, by the  
19 way, getting off a bus in the middle of traffic. It's  
20 totally unsafe so that's one. Two is, and NYPD has  
21 been incredibly helpful, we formed a traffic  
22 enforcement group with them back in December and they  
23 put resources behind. We've been very focused on  
24 Queens and Brooklyn in particular, a bit in the Bronx  
25 as well for bus enforcement where we have less

2 cameras, but the bottom line is yes, if you are not a  
3 bus, get out of my bus lane. I say that all the time  
4 and happy to support your concerns on Northern  
5 Boulevard.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Sure and, as  
7 you're rolling it out in May, if you can look at  
8 prioritizing Northern Boulevard because it connects  
9 so many communities.

10 PRESIDENT DAVEY: For sure.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: And the bus lane  
12 has been transformative for bus service in this part  
13 of Queens after a lot of discussion about the bus  
14 routes. It's been really transformative, but it's  
15 going to require that enforcement as soon as possible  
16 to ensure that progress continues.

17 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Right.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: My other  
19 question on the same note too was can you also take a  
20 look at express bus service? Now that we have that  
21 bus lane there on Northern Boulevard, having express  
22 buses too I think would help commuters and would be  
23 just a significant way to make sure that we continue  
24 to use our bus service and bus lane there that,  
25

2 again, is great, but with enforcement and with  
3 express bus service, I think it'd be very helpful.

4 PRESIDENT DAVEY: We certainly will.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Thank you very  
6 much. Thank you, Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,  
8 Council Member. Just have a couple more questions  
9 before we close this portion of today's prelim with  
10 MTA. I do want to ask a couple of questions  
11 pertaining to Access-A-Ride Ride. Last year, the  
12 State enacted budget increased the City's share of  
13 the Access-A-Ride program from 50 percent to 70  
14 percent. The Access-A-Ride program has a history of  
15 poor service though, as you've noted, on-time  
16 performance has improved in recent years. How is MTA  
17 ensuring further improvements to the Access-A-Ride  
18 service in this budget?

19 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure, and maybe we'll  
20 make some news here. Yesterday, we had 37,000  
21 paratransit customers, the highest ridership day in  
22 New York City transit history, not pre-COVID, post-  
23 COVID, this is the number of riders so we know how  
24 important it is to deliver a good service for our  
25 paratransit customers, and we are working hard,

2 Chair. You're right. We are rewriting that history,  
3 three, four years ago, customer satisfaction was in  
4 the 40 percentile, we were running poor service, not  
5 great service. Today, I'm proud to say, and I know I  
6 always say this and I know some of our most fervent  
7 advocates are behind me, I want to acknowledge them  
8 because they hold us accountable as well. This is not  
9 always the lived experience for every single one of  
10 our customers, but 79 percent on customer  
11 satisfaction in January and some of the best on-time  
12 performance we've seen. How are we improving? So  
13 we're focusing in on that. We're pushing our vendors  
14 who are providing the service. That's one. Now, you  
15 can book with an app so rather than calling that  
16 phone number, you can actually use an mobile app to  
17 book your ride. We're experimenting right now with E-  
18 Hail Phase Two. E-Hail Phase One, the pilot, went on  
19 for six years. I don't know how many pilots go on for  
20 six years; that one did. We're in the midst of a six-  
21 month pilot, which will be winding down soon to see  
22 how else we can improve E-Hail, which is on-demand  
23 service, not required by the federal government.  
24 Better service for our customers. We've gotten some  
25 good feedback as well. We're looking at new

2 technology so we have an antiquated routing system  
3 that routes our service around. We have RFPs out, I  
4 think, actually, the RFP, I think, went out this past  
5 week. And then lastly, as I mentioned in my  
6 testimony, we actually shrank the on-time performance  
7 window, I think, to be within 30 minutes. Not a great  
8 on-time requirement, even though that is the federal  
9 standard. We shrunk that down to 20 to challenge  
10 ourselves to do better. Again, we have work to do,  
11 but it is very much a focal point of ours. We had 4  
12 million subway customers, I think, yesterday, the  
13 first time we eclipsed 4 million this year, but our  
14 37,000 paratransit customers are just as important  
15 and are just as a big part of how I think about  
16 dedicating time and resources to improve our service.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The MTA  
18 recently offered more customers access to Access-A-  
19 Ride E-Hail service pilot though this also placed  
20 additional restrictions on the use of this service.  
21 Can you provide a status update on Phase Two of the  
22 E-Hail pilot?

23 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, so not yet. We  
24 said we would do a six-month review, which as I said,  
25 we're closing in on a couple of things. Number one,



2 we know customers are incredibly satisfied with the  
3 service, E-Hail, as a general matter, but you're  
4 right. What we did was put into place to expand the  
5 number. We went from 1,200 up to 3,600 folks who  
6 would be eligible to take the service, and it was a  
7 25/40. You could take 40 trips at a cost of 25 we  
8 would cover, or 25 trips and we would cover up to 40.  
9 I think one concern we've heard from our customers,  
10 which is we're looking at, is how far that gets you  
11 within a multi-borough borrow trip, for example so  
12 that's something we're looking at but, as you  
13 mentioned at the outset, we're also cognizant that 70  
14 percent of the dollars we're spending are the City's,  
15 and so we're trying to ensure that we're also good  
16 stewards of the dollars that you all provide but, at  
17 the same time, provide good service so I don't think  
18 we've hit the sweet spot yet and my expectation is  
19 later, this spring, if not summer, we would be  
20 talking publicly about what a Phase Three would look  
21 like.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I know you've  
23 been asked a couple of questions already about  
24 congestion pricing. I just had two really quick  
25 follow-up questions. A significant amount of the 2020

2 to 2024 Capital Plan is funded with resources  
3 collected from congestion pricing but, in all  
4 likelihood, congestion pricing will not be initiated  
5 until the very end of the plan period or outside of  
6 the plan period. Does MTA have sufficient funding  
7 available without resources of congestion pricing to  
8 fully finance the entirety of the current Capital  
9 Plan?

10 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sadly, no, and we've  
11 been pretty clear about that. If congestion pricing  
12 fails for whatever reason or reasons, litigants or  
13 otherwise, there are a whole host of things we won't  
14 be doing. As I mentioned, signal systems, other  
15 upgrades, ADA stations will be delayed maybe into the  
16 next Capital Plan. There are going to be a lot of  
17 things that are going to hit the cutting floor for  
18 sure but, no, there is no plan B. There is no plan B.  
19 The plan B is to not do things fundamentally.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Will the MTA  
21 continue to fund and complete projects in the current  
22 plan after the completion of the plan?

23 PRESIDENT DAVEY: We always do, right? I  
24 think it's a commitment question and then, for  
25 example, rolling stock takes usually years to come to

2 fruition, but the answer is yes, we can commit the  
3 dollars, but then the actual construction and ribbon  
4 cutting, if you will, can happen beyond the current  
5 Capital Plan.

6 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL: I  
7 think if I can add to that, right?

8 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure.

9 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL: The  
10 conversation, the envelope was 55 billion dollars for  
11 the 2024 Capital Plan, and the MTA always had said  
12 that they would commit the 15 billion for congestion  
13 pricing prior to committing the last 8 to 10 billion  
14 dollars that the MTA would do. At this point, we've  
15 actually started committing our own dollars to move  
16 projects along, and we're at the point where the last  
17 15 billion is necessary for us to continue the  
18 projects and, as you heard, President Davey say  
19 earlier is this is why we've put on hold certain  
20 projects, right, the CBTC, Second Avenue Subway could  
21 be in jeopardy because we're up to the limit of where  
22 we need dollars to start committing if we don't have  
23 the revenue sources.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And to that  
25 point, I just want clarity on that so are you saying

2 that MTA has already put up as much as it would like  
3 to put up and it would like to have the additional 15  
4 billion through congestion pricing or is MTA  
5 absolutely unable to put in that 15 billion if it had  
6 to?

7 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL: So  
8 we're absolutely unable to put 15 billion dollars if  
9 we don't have congestion pricing?

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How much of  
11 the 15 billion is MTA able to put up?

12 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL:  
13 Excuse me?

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How much of  
15 the 15 billion, if it came down to it, would the MTA  
16 be able to put up?

17 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL: The  
18 MTA, as part of the capital funding envelope, already  
19 has 8 billion dollars committed of our own money, and  
20 we've started to advance that piece of the dollars of  
21 the envelope to the capital program.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: That's in  
23 addition to the 15?

24 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL: The  
25 15 is in addition, yes, in addition, because 55

2 billion dollars as federal, there's state, there's  
3 city-committed...

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So I'm trying  
5 to understand that 15, that final 15, just based on  
6 how you responded, so with that 15, because the  
7 impression I got from your response was that the  
8 capital improvements that are needed up to that  
9 remaining 15 billion is accounted for but, with that  
10 15 billion, it seems almost like there is something  
11 the MTA could do to contribute towards that 15  
12 billion or is it absolute?

13 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL:  
14 It's an absolute necessary.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: That's what I  
16 wanted clarity on.

17 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL: To  
18 continue the program.

19 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Of the 55 billion, we're  
20 at the last 15 billion. That's congestion pricing.  
21 Everything else was filled up, as Jai said, by  
22 federal government, by our own dollars, by the state,  
23 by the city for that matter. The last 15 billion is  
24 all about congestion pricing. If congestion pricing  
25

2 doesn't happen, those projects do not happen in this  
3 Capital Plan and they never happen.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So also  
5 wanting to add on to Council Member Ariola's question  
6 in terms of QueensLink. Offline, I've had a number of  
7 conversations with different representatives of the  
8 MTA and just wanting to get on record that the MTA,  
9 that the Queensway, which is the Park aspect of the  
10 conversation with QueensLink, building that park will  
11 not prevent further scoping of the viability for  
12 QueensLink.

13 PRESIDENT DAVEY: I would have to get back  
14 to you. I don't know the extent of the work that the  
15 City has planned specifically there, but we are...

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I mean I've  
17 been told by the MTA and the Administration that the  
18 development of the Queensway would not get in the way  
19 of the right-of-way for the QueensLink.

20 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I just want  
22 confirmation.

23 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah (INAUDIBLE) that is  
24 the case. It's not precluding something being done in  
25 the future, but we, as I said previously in our 20-

2 year needs, we've started to look at this, and I  
3 think we've been meeting with you and your team and  
4 having discussions along with all these other  
5 projects that we're have to look at so we'll continue  
6 to do that as we put together a capital program.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What are the  
8 metrics the MTA is looking at with respect to  
9 QueensLink and projects like QueensLink when  
10 assessing viability for an EIS? I've also requested  
11 in the past to be able to contribute to an EIS, but  
12 was told not to and so I'd like to understand on the  
13 record what those metrics are as it pertains  
14 assessing in the viability of an EIS.

15 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure, and we'll walk you  
16 through it, but it's a pretty complex review, looking  
17 at a whole host of measures from the obvious, which  
18 is cost-effectiveness and ridership, but we also took  
19 a deep dive into equity. We want to make sure that  
20 we're growing in a fair way. We want to be concerned  
21 about geographic distribution so that we're not just  
22 growing or supporting expansion in one area and not  
23 others and then sustainability is...

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How you  
3 growing and expanding in Rockaway or Southeast  
4 Queens.

5 PRESIDENT DAVEY: For example, in  
6 Southeast Queens, by modernizing the signals on the  
7 QBL, it's going to allow us to run more service and,  
8 by more service, that's growth. That's like the new  
9 way...

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: You're talking  
11 about the Q and the..

12 PRESIDENT DAVEY: The QBL, which is the  
13 Queens Boulevard Line.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. Sorry.

15 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah but, again, that's  
16 going out to Jamaica, that's the feeder service where  
17 so many of our buses link into, so the point is, you  
18 don't want to just grow in one specific area of the  
19 city. That's part of this study. Resiliency is how is  
20 this making our system more resilient so that we can  
21 continue to run and run more and then capacity. where  
22 are we with capacity. When you look at something like  
23 QueensLink, you're going to want to see has there  
24 been growth since the Long Island Railroad shut that  
25



2 line down in the early '60s because there wasn't  
3 enough ridership. What is the changes? What's the...

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Oh, there's  
5 growth in Rockaway.

6 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, exactly. What is  
7 the potential growth.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Won't you come  
9 visit?

10 PRESIDENT DAVEY: So that's the host of  
11 areas that we looked at, and we're happy to go over  
12 it with you and your team.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And I'm glad  
14 you mentioned in terms of equity and how growth  
15 looks. I was talking to my staff just this week and  
16 looking at a map of the subway lines and, when you  
17 look on that map across the boroughs, when you look  
18 in Canarsie, Brooklyn, for example, in Council Member  
19 Narcisse's District, there's absolutely no subways.  
20 When you look in Southeast Queens, at the end of the  
21 E and J line and the F line and you go southeast,  
22 there is absolutely no subway line. When you look at  
23 the buses that we have, while we have a few express  
24 buses that come into Manhattan, they all go into  
25 Midtown, where a lot of our workforce comes downtown

2 so when we talk about equity and as we are now  
3 approaching congestion pricing and the implementation  
4 of the State-approved congestion pricing plan, we run  
5 the risk of deepening inequity and access in this  
6 city, and I have not seen from the MTA or anyone,  
7 quite honestly, on how we address that. The systems  
8 are what they are, the infrastructure in terms of our  
9 transit network are very deep, and we have to  
10 challenge one another to think innovatively on how we  
11 create greater access because to implement a toll,  
12 congestion pricing at the same time that we're not  
13 expanding services or even exploring how we create  
14 greater access is very dangerous and so when we look  
15 at the population shift, when we look at 200,000  
16 black New Yorkers leaving New York City and unable to  
17 afford to stay here, people rely on our amazing  
18 transportation system because it's the best in the  
19 country, right? I will say that any day of the week,  
20 but we have to make sure that it's meeting New  
21 Yorkers where they are and where they need to go.

22 CHIEF CUSTOMER SERVICE OFFICER RIERA:

23 Yeah, and I just want to echo and support what you  
24 said. Mass transit is the engine of equity and that  
25 is something that we talk about day-in and day-out

2 and, when you think about equity, it's around looking  
3 at the cost of the fare and not only the traditional  
4 buses and subways, looking at making sure that our  
5 folks have access to the railroads that have plowed  
6 through our communities and just getting the word  
7 out, too, of our different fare products and, as you  
8 said, where the subway systems are already built, and  
9 we're looking at expanding those stations, whether  
10 it's through the four new Metro North station and the  
11 IBX, but looking at buses too, buses, with the  
12 approach of the bus redesign, making sure our buses  
13 are meeting our customers need so happy to have a  
14 conversation with you and everyone else around how we  
15 can continue to make sure and ensure that mass  
16 transit remain equitable. I'm happy to have that  
17 because that is front and top of mind for me every  
18 day.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And to that  
20 point, going back into equity and access, with  
21 congestion price, what about affordability? Do you  
22 have long-term plans to allow, for example, free  
23 transfers through CityTicket between commuter rail  
24 and other modes of transportation?

2 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

3 MCCARTHY: You were a supporter of this and certainly  
4 the Governor pushed this through and the Mayor on the  
5 CityTicket changes, and that's sort of a...

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Just to be  
7 clear, I was not in support of getting rid of  
8 (INAUDIBLE) tickets. I just want to be clear on the  
9 difference of that.

10 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

11 MCCARTHY: But the good news is the CityTicket has  
12 added ridership opportunities, and we're seeing it  
13 with the numbers so I think there's more to be done  
14 in that area where we know that there's legislation  
15 at the State level on this right now that we're just  
16 getting this week, we're taking a look at that, but  
17 we're all about opportunities to get more people to  
18 use transit. Like Rich said, we had the busiest day  
19 of the year on the subways yesterday. That's very  
20 exciting. Think about four years ago, we were going  
21 the other way, shutting it down, four years ago to  
22 the day, so we're always open to those ideas. How can  
23 we get more people to use our network and different  
24 parts of our network, meaning more buses that go to  
25 the railroad stations, both in Metro North territory

2 and Long Island Railroad. Think about Southeast  
3 Queens. There are so many stations that were under-  
4 utilized, but today, like St. Albans has more trains  
5 than they ever had stopping there. That's good news.  
6 Fordham in the Bronx. We've doubled the number of  
7 trains that stop there. It used to be that trains  
8 going to Connecticut just didn't stop. Not anymore.  
9 And they're available at a lower price. More  
10 opportunities like that we're going to explore.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And then when  
12 we think about Fair Fares, I just wanted to talk  
13 about that program. It's such an important program  
14 for so many New Yorkers in need and, yesterday, in  
15 the Speaker's State of the City remarks, she once  
16 again called for the eligibility threshold to  
17 increase to 200 percent of the federal poverty level.  
18 At the HRA Preliminary Budget hearing, HRA talked  
19 about their partnership with the MTA for Fair Fares  
20 programming, and can you talk to us about how you  
21 work with HRA to promote the program and can you walk  
22 us through the MTA's efforts to increase Fair Fares  
23 uptake among eligible New Yorkers, and is outreach  
24 funded in the MTA budget?

2 CHIEF CUSTOMER SERVICE OFFICER RIERA: We  
3 are in constant communication with the Mayor's Office  
4 as well as DSS around Fair Fares. There is no  
5 shortage of conversation as well as the opportunity  
6 to promote the program. As President Davey said in  
7 his opening remarks, we are currently using two of  
8 our customer service centers, which we have about 16  
9 across the city, we have converted, in addition to,  
10 information around OMNY and other service  
11 information. We are doing enrollment days at those  
12 two centers a couple times a month, and the goal is  
13 at the end of the year to grow the number of customer  
14 service centers and partnering with the City agency  
15 to do more Fair Fares enrollment days. President  
16 Davey twice a month, it seems like every other week  
17 actually, does Transit Talks Day, going into the  
18 system with execs and other members of the transit  
19 team and engaging customers around concerns and  
20 feedback, and we have Fair Fares enrollment team  
21 there. It goes beyond giving out brochures and  
22 information and awareness about the program, but we  
23 have them with their iPads. We publicize and  
24 advertise well ahead of the event and encourage  
25 people to come with their information and we do on-

2 site enrollment. We are using our digital screens to  
3 bring awareness of the program and just, again,  
4 encouraging people to use our centers as well as the  
5 City agency's points to enroll into the program so we  
6 will continue to do our part to, again, bring  
7 awareness and grow enrollment, and we welcome the  
8 City Council's commitment and their investment in the  
9 Fair Fares program as well as raising the eligibility  
10 because as we, whether it's congestion pricing or  
11 fare hearings that we have, there are those that,  
12 whether they're students or those who are low-income  
13 but are working class that are close to the  
14 eligibility can stand to benefit from that so we  
15 welcome that partnership again.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I'm  
17 going to now turn over questions to Council Member  
18 Rivera followed by Louis followed by Krishnan.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you so much.  
20 We've talked about the bus quite a bit, which I  
21 appreciate. I take both the bus and the train every  
22 day. In the State-enacted budget, funding was  
23 included for a pilot program which offers one free  
24 bus route in every borough. Can you update the  
25 Committee on the pilot program? How did you choose

2 which bus routes to make free to passengers? What  
3 have you learned that could inform future decisions  
4 and how did you measure success?

5 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure, so we're still in  
6 the midst of that pilot right now across the five  
7 boroughs. How do we choose them? So we looked at a  
8 few things. The statute certainly outlined a few and  
9 we looked at a few others, but certainly it was  
10 demographic, it was income level, it was ensuring  
11 that, one thing we looked at was to ensure the bus  
12 line or the bus route didn't follow a subway line  
13 because we didn't want to cannibalize the subway to  
14 bus. We really wanted to see are new people taking  
15 more trips or if it's the same folks, for example, or  
16 folks just getting off the subway and taking bus.  
17 We're not moving the dial. So that's how we thought  
18 about the service and then not redundant bus service.  
19 As you know, some bus service we have is redundant.  
20 We have several routes running along the same line.  
21 Again, we didn't want everyone to leave a couple of  
22 routes and all plow on to the free route so that's  
23 how we selected it. I think we're relatively close,  
24 and we'll be able to provide information to the



2 Committee probably in the next month or so about how  
3 the pilot worked.

4 In measures of success, I think it'll be  
5 customer satisfaction. That's my north star. We  
6 always go back to that, are customers satisfied. Not  
7 surprising, people like free things so I expect we'll  
8 see customer satisfaction will be high. I have no  
9 doubt we're going to see that ridership was higher  
10 for sure, but I think understanding, again, are there  
11 folks using the system more, were we able to attract  
12 new folks to the system, or were we able to attract  
13 people out of their cars, for example, or were they  
14 previously walking, like understanding how behavior  
15 changed is going to be, I think, an important part of  
16 informing MTA and other stakeholders in the future  
17 about other pilots like this.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: And you'll be able  
19 to see what impact the free bus routes had on the  
20 subway stations I imagine that they connect to.

21 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yep, that's correct.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Have you seen an  
23 increase in subway ridership at stations along the  
24 route?

2 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Have we seen an increase  
3 in subway ridership? That, I do not know off the top  
4 of my head. We've been watching more ridership on the  
5 buses, and I know that we saw an increase in bus  
6 ridership. I haven't seen the latest data on that,  
7 but I know early on we saw increases but, all of  
8 that, to your point, Council Member, will be thought  
9 through. Did we see an increase in subway ridership  
10 as well? We certainly across the system we've seen an  
11 increase in subway ridership year-over-year but,  
12 whether that's related to the free buses, I don't  
13 know.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Okay. Thank you.  
15 Yesterday, you said you had a big day at the subway,  
16 right?

17 PRESIDENT DAVEY: 4.01 million.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: All right.

19 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Paid.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I was on the 6th  
21 at least twice, so glad to contribute.

22 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Thank you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: If I could just...

24 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Maybe it was 4.00002.  
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I have the  
3 receipts.

4 PRESIDENT DAVEY: And you are the 2 so  
5 thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I've got them all  
7 here in my OMNY collection, but...

8 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Thank you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: When you look at  
10 the metrics by the survey, does the survey and,  
11 forgive me for not knowing this, say explicitly by  
12 riders that they feel safer with more cops in the  
13 subway.

14 PRESIDENT DAVEY: So the answer is yes,  
15 and when we asked them a couple different questions.  
16 Do you feel safer this month versus last month?  
17 That's a question. We've seen that last couple of  
18 months actually decline. It will be interesting to  
19 see in February and March if that changes. We also  
20 asked the question, do you think it's the Goldilocks  
21 sort of question, are there too many cops, too few  
22 cops or is it just right, and the answer is, what  
23 we've seen over the last few months is folks are  
24 saying we want to see more cops in the system. That's  
25 consistent. It's a consistent question we've asked

2 the last two years and we track it on a month-to-  
3 month basis.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you. Thank  
5 you, Madam Chair, for the additional round.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Chair.  
7 As we get to the end of this, right, we didn't get to  
8 talk about bus speeds, so I wanted to know if you  
9 could share with us the current average bus speed of  
10 MTA buses and if you could provide information and  
11 breakdown on both the average for local and select  
12 buses and by borough.

13 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure, so I don't think I  
14 have that data in front of me, but the answer is we  
15 absolutely track it by borough, by select bus versus  
16 not. We also track customer satisfaction. I can tell  
17 you just at a high level it's intolerably slow. I  
18 think Manhattan might be slightly better than some of  
19 the other boroughs...

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you for the  
21 honesty.

22 PRESIDENT DAVEY: But the bottom line is  
23 it's the best of the worst. It is intolerably slow,  
24 which is why we have been, and Shanifah mentioned  
25 this, buses in particular are the engine of equity,

2 and I think in the past, perhaps, it hasn't been as  
3 much of a focus maybe for other administrations. It  
4 is a huge focus for us, not only in the bus  
5 redesigns, but also as your Colleague, Council Member  
6 Krishnan, asked earlier about thinking about the  
7 enforcement question and what we know about  
8 enforcement is it changes behavior, right, when a New  
9 Yorker gets a ticket from a bus, 80 percent of the  
10 time, they never get a second ticket.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Right.

12 PRESIDENT DAVEY: And 90 percent of the  
13 time they never get a third ticket because behavior  
14 changes, which is great news, but we also know  
15 traffic is increased. It's back in many respects to  
16 pre-COVID.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Right.

18 PRESIDENT DAVEY: And we also know, too,  
19 you all see it, ambulances, fire trucks, and I would  
20 not want to be a New Yorker in distress. Ambulances  
21 seem to get stuck in traffic all the time.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Right.

23 PRESIDENT DAVEY: That's intolerable as  
24 well so working on this sort of holistic approach

2 will speed up buses, no doubt, but also improve those  
3 emergency vehicles getting around the city.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: So we know the MTA  
5 loves surveys, right?

6 PRESIDENT DAVEY: I'm sorry. We love?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Surveys.

8 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Because that's the  
10 north star, right?

11 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yes, I am obsessed with  
12 that. I'm sorry.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: So I wanted to ask  
14 how are you utilizing the surveys to enhance  
15 performance time and both just making sure that the  
16 feedback is implemented to improve.

17 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, no, I appreciate  
18 that question. In a few ways, and I could talk about  
19 this, I don't know how much time I have, Chair, so a  
20 couple of things. Number one is I have my station  
21 management team in once a month, the entire 25 folks  
22 to talk about the customer surveys. This station is  
23 not clean, there are concerns about fare evasion  
24 here, there are concerns about homelessness there,  
25 what are we doing about it, who are we talking to,

2 the NYPD Cos, homeless outreach, etc., so we're  
3 putting into action very specifically what our  
4 customers are asking for within the station  
5 environment, which was also the impetus behind our  
6 Re-NEW-vation and our LED program, etc. Line  
7 managers, so we also have our line managers in who  
8 manage our subway lines. Now we're starting that next  
9 week to talk about, okay, what are we seeing, is  
10 there crowding on platforms, what's our terminal  
11 performance in terms of departures, how can we  
12 improve getting trains out? We very much use that  
13 data as well. Then lastly, on the bus side, what we  
14 did last year was we took the 29 under-performing  
15 routes. We have about 200-plus bus routes in the  
16 city. We focused on just the 29 worst. Customers were  
17 saying it was bad. Bus speeds were super slow, etc.,  
18 and we focused very much on those 29 routes.  
19 Everything from potholes need to be fixed to NYPD  
20 needs to be out doing traffic enforcement to maybe  
21 some of our bus operators need to be motivated to get  
22 out on time, etc. I'm thankful that 10 of those have  
23 graduated because we've made so much improvement and  
24 we've rotated them in. We look at what our customers  
25 are telling us all the time because, look, that's the

2 business we're ultimately in. Traditionally in this  
3 business, it's mean distance between failure and all  
4 these metrics that ultimately don't say are your  
5 customers satisfied, and that's what we're obsessed  
6 with.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you. It'd be  
8 good to get an update on the 29 and the (INAUDIBLE).

9 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure, absolutely.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Yes.

11 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

12 MCCARTHY: And I just want to add that are all our bus  
13 speed datas are on our Open Data portal, so we'll  
14 make sure you get that link, and there's so much more  
15 information we're throwing up there as well.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you. Thank  
17 you, Madam Chair.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Thank you,  
19 Chair. Thanks. Just a few more questions from my end,  
20 too, and you may have actually touched on these  
21 before but just wanted to make sure we had it clear  
22 for the record, too, on this information. So one is,  
23 what is the timeline on signaling upgrades?

24 PRESIDENT DAVEY: It's multi-year, right,  
25 and, as mentioned earlier, for the AAC, the B, D, F,



2 and M, that's delayed as a result of congestion  
3 pricing, but it's a multi-year process, right,  
4 because we're literally building the bike as we're  
5 riding it, i.e., we're installing the signal systems  
6 while we're still running service so that'll take  
7 time. The good news is we've made a lot of progress  
8 in the last couple of years to get that done, but we  
9 can get you an exact date, but it's definitely a  
10 multi-year process for sure.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Got it.

12 PRESIDENT DAVEY: And that's the reason  
13 because we're not we're not shutting down lines for  
14 months at a time.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: And what's the  
16 projected cost of upgrading the entire system?

17 PRESIDENT DAVEY: It's in the billions.  
18 I'll get you the exact number, but it's an expensive  
19 proposition but one that needs to happen. We have  
20 signal system here at City Hall. It was installed  
21 literally, 1952. It's a mini-miracle it's still  
22 running 70 years later, but that's what we're up  
23 against.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: What  
3 improvements in performance have you seen in the  
4 lines where CBTC has been implemented?

5 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Huge. The number 7 line  
6 in particular, which I take every day from Hell's  
7 Kitchen, has the highest customer satisfaction and  
8 the highest on-time performance. Because the CBTC  
9 system, the Communication Based Train Control is what  
10 CBTC stands for, is our most state-of-the-art signal  
11 system, and we're able to run service during rush  
12 hour every two to three minutes. The signal system  
13 allows you to run trains safely and more closely  
14 together. But customers are happier, the service is  
15 better, Mets fans are happier when, I still call it  
16 Shay, pours out after a game. That's what we want to  
17 replicate across the transit system.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: All right. I'm  
19 going to deviate from this for a second because I'm  
20 glad you mentioned the 7 train. I can't believe that  
21 I forgot this before. As a daily 7 train rider...

22 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Thank you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: I think that,  
24 yes, and I think overall, (INAUDIBLE) service has  
25 been much better with CBTC and things like that but,

2 right now, the work on the 7 train in Queens has  
3 dragged on for a while and I'm seeing it, all my  
4 constituents are seeing it. It's skipping stops as  
5 you do each side and then the delay sometimes, I'm  
6 late even here, getting for hearings or votes because  
7 get on, plan the trip and it'll take even longer. I  
8 know other Colleagues that use the 7 train too face  
9 the same dilemma so what, I understand the work and I  
10 know we followed up with the agency as well. There is  
11 work that needs to be done, but now it's dragging on  
12 and it's causing major delays on the train so what is  
13 the timeline to have the work done and how can we  
14 expedite it because it is becoming a big issue.

15 PRESIDENT DAVEY: A lot of that, of  
16 course, is ADA work, right, and it is on time and on  
17 schedule is as far as I know, I'll be corrected if  
18 not by someone behind me.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: He knows.

20 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Exactly. Yeah, so it's a  
21 seven-station project. We're doing some more work  
22 right now, 82nd and 111th. I look at the on-time  
23 performance twice a day, I get a report twice a day,  
24 so certainly there have been from time to time issues  
25 on the 7 but, overall, it's performing at 90 percent

2 or above in terms of on-time performance but,  
3 unfortunately, that is the trade-off when we're  
4 making these major capital improvements.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: When's the work  
6 going to be done, you think?

7 PRESIDENT DAVEY: I'll find out for you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Okay.

9 PRESIDENT DAVEY: I don't know, and this  
10 sticky didn't know either.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Sure. There's  
12 one other thing on that point too, and I'm glad you  
13 mentioned accessibility.

14 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: I think,  
16 absolutely right, those repairs need to be done. It's  
17 crucial. The subway system needs to be far more  
18 accessible than it is. 82nd Street in Jackson  
19 Heights, I know you're doing work there but, as I  
20 understand it, and please correct me if I'm wrong,  
21 there's no elevator there and my understanding, and  
22 other electeds' understanding too was the work that  
23 was being done would put in an elevator at 82nd  
24 Street. Right now, number of individuals with  
25 disabilities, parents with strollers, who I've helped

2 out, I was one of them myself just a couple years ago  
3 too, it's a real big issue and it's a very trafficked  
4 station so we're doing all this work but, at the end  
5 of it, we're not going to have an accessible subway  
6 station there and so would love to hear more about  
7 what can be done.

8 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure. It sounds like it  
9 fell out of this Capital Plan for funding reasons.  
10 The work that's being done there now is a state of  
11 good repair work around the station. What I'm told  
12 is, if we have identified funding in the future and  
13 next capital plan or beyond, the work that's being  
14 done should make it easier to put an elevator there.  
15 Certainly, we have a lot of work to do to make our  
16 system accessible. That's what happens when you run a  
17 system that opened in 1904, but this would I guess go  
18 back to the congestion pricing question, which I  
19 think you, I don't want to, I think you said you're  
20 supportive of, but I don't want to put words in your  
21 mouth.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Yes, I am.

23 PRESIDENT DAVEY: This is the reason why  
24 we need congestion pricing is to invest in these  
25 kinds of major upgrades but, obviously, we're in the

2 midst of, as John said, our 20-year needs plan is  
3 out. We'll be putting together I think our draft  
4 Capital Plan in the fall for public comment, etc.,  
5 and the board so welcome, for any projects, this  
6 Body's view about what we should be funding for the  
7 next five years.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: And if you can  
9 prioritize the elevator because we're doing the work  
10 on accessibility, but the main accessible component  
11 is missing from the construction work so I think for  
12 the next round, it's something I think that really  
13 needs, it's not great..

14 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: At all, and so  
16 it really needs to be prioritized, especially if  
17 we're shutting down (INAUDIBLE)

18 PRESIDENT DAVEY: It is always the  
19 balance, right? Obviously, you had concerns about  
20 some of the construction happening on 7. We heard it  
21 earlier from Council Member Restler on the G. There's  
22 always this trade-off between trying to get work done  
23 that's critically important and then the impacts it  
24 has to customers, but I definitely hear you. John.

2 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

3 MCCARTHY: And I would just add that we're in a race  
4 to get as much ADA done as possible. We've done more  
5 in the last four years than I think we did in the  
6 prior two capital programs, and part of that is like  
7 coming up with a criteria that's fair and sometimes  
8 doesn't feel fair because you're doing work at a  
9 station. In the case of 82nd Street, you're right  
10 next to 74th Street, where it's ADA and so that works  
11 its way into that equation. We don't want people to  
12 be more than two stations away, but noted, because I  
13 understand the point, you're doing work there anyway,  
14 but just so you see when we're coming up with these  
15 plans what we're dealing with.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Got it. My final  
17 two questions are, one more on the 7. Has there been  
18 any look at the line itself is so loud as it goes  
19 across any work and look at sound enforcement or  
20 finding ways to reduce it? You guys replaced lead  
21 paint that's peeling off and created major issues.  
22 Any look at sound control?

23 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Honestly, I'm not aware  
24 we have. Certainly, we can take a look at, which we  
25 do on a frequent basis, the wheel profile of our

2 trains, for example, right? That can create some  
3 additional noise, but making sure that we're truing  
4 our wheels on a regular basis, which we do. That's  
5 something we can look at, but let me let me go back  
6 and talk to the team to see. Obviously, trains are  
7 noisy in some respects, but we can look to see if  
8 there's something we can do.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Sure. Finally,  
10 going back to CBTC. Last question is, are there any  
11 barriers to implementation that prevent a full  
12 rollout of CBTC signals to the whole subway system.

13 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Are there any barriers  
14 to that? Not that I'm aware of. I think the question  
15 is, as we said, is the trade-off of time versus  
16 keeping service running. That would be our desire. We  
17 know our signal systems are antiquated and some are  
18 from the Eisenhower or first Roosevelt administration  
19 I think in some instances, that might be slight  
20 exaggeration, but, no, not that I'm aware of.

21 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
22 MCCARTHY: Good question. While you're implementing  
23 this, there's obviously impacts on the service that  
24 President Davey is implementing so that's always the  
25 trade-off, but, yeah, it's money and time



2 availability, look, the 7 train that you lived  
3 through, when we put, there was a lot of suffering,  
4 right, and then there's the ability to run that much  
5 more service, and we frequently use that as an  
6 example as we go out to these other lines now, and  
7 including the G train, but that's the short of it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Got it. Thank  
9 you and thank you, Chair. Sorry for my detour on the  
10 7 line.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: That was  
12 definitely a detour.

13 Next, we'll have Majority Leader Fariás.

14 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: Thank you, Chair.  
15 Just a couple of quick questions. In your testimony,  
16 you speak about frequencies being improved on eight  
17 subway lines including mine, the 6 train, which is  
18 great. We love to hear that, and I hope my  
19 constituents watching see the good work we're doing  
20 and increasing frequencies, but I just wanted to  
21 follow up on that a bit and ask how do these, either  
22 the frequencies improving on these lines or just  
23 generally, the wait times comparatively to last year  
24 can we talk about those comparisons and how they're  
25 improving?

2 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure. Typically where  
3 we're adding service is midday, nights, and weekends,  
4 right, so the 6 has pretty good frequency during rush  
5 hour in particular, and I think what we're hearing  
6 from our customers in particular is the concerns of  
7 adding more service during those times, and so on  
8 average, we're adding two, three, sometimes four  
9 minutes or reducing so for a 10-, 12-minute wait  
10 time, that's pretty significant, right? That's what  
11 we're seeing. Truthfully, in particular for the R,  
12 we've had some challenges because we have work trains  
13 coming out of Coney Island for some of that direct  
14 track fixation work we're doing so that should clear  
15 up in the next couple of weeks but overall, we've  
16 been pretty pleased with what we've been able to  
17 offer midday, nights, and weekends. Weekends, in  
18 particular, where we've seen ridership come back  
19 relatively speaking even stronger than weekdays.

20 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: Okay, and so the  
21 improving frequencies by 20 to 25 percent, you're  
22 saying that's over the last year or what's the  
23 timeframe of comparing that?

24 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yes, over the last year.  
25 Once the budget was completed, we started these

2 rollouts last summer, and then what we do is our  
3 employees pick their work every quarter and so we  
4 made those adjustments as those "picks" came out.

5 MAJORITY LEADER FARIAS: Great. Just  
6 really quickly on capital projects, were any impacted  
7 or halted by PEGs or the Capital Plan at all?

8 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Were any halted by?

9 MAJORITY LEADER FARIAS: Halted,  
10 prevented, or if there's any PEGs or any adjustments  
11 in the budget. Are things going accordingly? For  
12 example, I have my ADA conversion happening right now  
13 in Parkchester.

14 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Anything that is in  
15 construction, no, but, because of the delay in  
16 congestion pricing, we have delayed projects that  
17 that we're unsure of whether or not we'll have the  
18 dollars, signaling system, ADA projects, a whole host  
19 of projects, unfortunately, but anything that's in  
20 construction now, no. That is continuing.

21 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
22 MCCARTHY: Including Penn Station access (INAUDIBLE)  
23 station.

24 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yes.

2 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: I was going to  
3 follow up on that. Thank you.

4 I wanted to ask about agency-to-agency  
5 reporting on real-time bus data. I know we track our  
6 buses in real time for the various apps that we have  
7 to inform riders when the buses are oncoming or when  
8 they're delayed, etc.

9 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Right.

10 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: I had a  
11 constituent have an incident where they could not  
12 find a way to report the exact time of when an  
13 incident occurred to the agency that they were  
14 calling 9-1-1, like they were on the phone with 9-1-1  
15 and 9-1-1 could not actually, they didn't have the  
16 real-time data of where the bus was going and so a  
17 consistent update needed to happen, and so I was just  
18 wondering and I'm looking into this actually  
19 legislatively as well, is there a way that we are  
20 communicating to emergency services or is there a way  
21 that we're keeping our real-time bus data overlapped  
22 with maybe 9-1-1, fire, EMS?

23 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure. We can certainly  
24 have that conversation in our rail control center.  
25 For example, from the subway side, we have a

2 dedicated police officer and a dedicated firefighter  
3 sitting there so if there's an issue on the subway,  
4 system we have that sort of real-time connection.

5 Obviously, those services have the ability to look at  
6 our publicly available data on an app, but, no, we  
7 can have that conversation to see if we can improve  
8 communication with 9-1-1 or others with our bus for  
9 sure.

10 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: Yeah, I'd love to  
11 talk about that a bit more offline as I'm like  
12 policy-wise trying to think about this because I do  
13 think we're already investing a ton of money to keep  
14 these applications going and best ways to serve our  
15 city so would love to take that conversation offline.

16 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Thank you.

17 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: Thank you so  
18 much. Thank you, Chair, for the questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,  
20 Majority Leader.

21 My absolute last question, and then we  
22 will be done...

23 PRESIDENT DAVEY: For today.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yes, for  
25 today. Thank you. It's about distribution of FHV

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2 surcharge receipts. The MTA '20 to '24 to '27 adopted  
3 financial plan includes FHV surcharge receipts of 375  
4 million dollars in 2024, 387 million dollars in 2025,  
5 that grows to 401.2 million dollars by 2027. Of that  
6 amount, 50 million is reserved for the Outer Borough  
7 Transportation Account items. Can you describe for  
8 the Committee how the Outer Borough Account came to  
9 exist, how it is utilized, and can you identify for  
10 the Committee some of the key projects funded in  
11 Calendar Year 2024, and can you also share some  
12 details on how those projects were selected?

13 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL: I  
14 can start with some of the things that I know. 2023  
15 was the first year that the Outer Borough Account  
16 reached about 49 million, and the Outer Borough  
17 Account was, through the legislation that created the  
18 surcharge for the 96th street, required that the  
19 first 300 million dollars would go to the Subway  
20 Action Plan, the next 50 million dollars would be  
21 dedicated to the Outer Borough Transportation  
22 Account, and then anything above 350 dollars would go  
23 back to the Transportation Fund Account to fund  
24 transit projects. The 50 million dollars, part of the  
25 legislation said how we would spend the money through

2 the actual state and the legislature. They actually  
3 sign off on projects, and so I think what we saw was  
4 that in 2024, there was 22 million dollars dedicated  
5 for rebates on two of the bridges for that funding.  
6 The remaining of the 50 million has not been decided  
7 of how it would be allocated to the outer boroughs.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So it has not  
9 been decided yet? Just to clarify, you're saying that  
10 the State Legislature, they are the ones that sign  
11 off on what the projects are based on the  
12 legislation.

13 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL:  
14 That is my understanding.

15 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
16 MCCARTHY: That's correct. It's similar to how the  
17 capital program works so it's the designees on that  
18 board would approve an expense.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Has the MTA  
20 put in anything for the remaining amount, any  
21 projects?

22 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
23 MCCARTHY: Not to date, but we would work with the  
24 State Legislature to come up with different projects  
25

2 beyond what was already in there for the Henry Hudson  
3 Bridge and the Cross Bay.

4 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL:

5 Cross Bay, yeah.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: It'd be great  
7 to see 3 to 10 million for EIS for QueensLink. It  
8 sounds like you got a little bit of change left over  
9 there.

10 In Calendar Years 2022 and 2023, actual  
11 receipts for the Outer Borough Transportation Account  
12 items, again, were 37.3 million dollars and 51.8  
13 million dollars respectively. To date, how many Outer  
14 Borough projects have been funded out of this  
15 account, and where are some of these projects  
16 located? I know you mentioned Cross Bay, so that's  
17 one, but what else?

18 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL:

19 It's just those 2 rebate programs so far. The first  
20 year, we only, as you stated, in 2022, there was only  
21 37 million. We didn't want to dedicate any funding,  
22 we were unsure if we were reaching 50 million, so you  
23 don't want to overcommit any funding so that was the  
24 first time we actually saw the account get any  
25 funding above the 300 million that's dedicated to the



2 Subway Action Plan and then, because we got the, I  
3 think you updated me, I said 49 million, 51 million  
4 in 2023, so we are starting to spend that 51 million  
5 for the rebates.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm in support  
7 of those programs, just for the record. Just wanting  
8 to understand how you are prioritizing the excess  
9 beyond that.

10 Thank you for coming out, for your  
11 patience with us today, and your thorough and  
12 thoughtful answers and looking forward to following  
13 up on some components. I think you have an  
14 outstanding answer for me as it pertains to the  
15 reporting with the stops.

16 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
17 MCCARTHY: Yeah, and the answer is yes, we will be  
18 reporting those out. We have not accumulated  
19 something yet, but those will be reported out.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

21 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
22 MCCARTHY: And one last thing. I just want to thank  
23 you, Chair. We've been sending over job openings and  
24 there are more and more. We have an open bus operator  
25 exam, and these are good-paying jobs, and we

2 appreciate that you and your team and other Council  
3 Members are putting the word out and people are  
4 applying for those jobs.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yes. Keep the  
6 flyers coming.

7 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
8 MCCARTHY: Which can keep the trains running.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yes.

10 CHIEF OF POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
11 MCCARTHY: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.  
13 We'll take five minutes before we start the next  
14 section.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Ladies and gentlemen,  
16 please find your seats. Once again, ladies and  
17 gentlemen, please find your seats so we can resume.

18 Quiet in the Chambers, please. Folks,  
19 please find your seats. Once again, please find your  
20 seats. We are ready to resume.

21 Thank you for your cooperation.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Good afternoon  
23 and welcome. We'll have Committee Counsel swear in  
24 the next agency.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: Good afternoon.  
3 If you could all raise your right hand. We can wait  
4 until the water's poured, that's fine.

5 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
6 whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your  
7 testimony before this Committee and to respond  
8 honestly to Council Member questions?

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I do.

10 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: I  
11 do.

12 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I do.

13 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: I do.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: I do.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: And if you  
16 could identify yourself and your titles for the  
17 record before you begin, and then you may begin your  
18 testimony.

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Rick  
20 Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner for  
21 Intergovernment.

22 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Paul  
23 Ochoa, Executive Deputy Commissioner.

24 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Ydanis Rodriguez,  
25 Commissioner of DOT.

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2 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE:

3 Margaret Forgione, First Deputy Commissioner.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Eric Beaton,  
5 Deputy Commissioner for Transportation Planning and  
6 Management.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: You can begin  
8 your testimony.

9 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Good morning,  
10 Chair Brooks-Powers and Members of the Committee on  
11 Transportation and Infrastructure. I am Ydanis  
12 Rodriguez, Commissioner of the New York City  
13 Department of Transportation. With me today are First  
14 Deputy Commissioner Margaret Forgione, Executive  
15 Deputy Commissioner Paul Ochoa, Deputy Commissioner  
16 of Transportation Planning and Management Eric  
17 Beaton, and Assistant Commissioner for  
18 Intergovernmental and Community Affairs Rick  
19 Rodriguez. Thank you for the opportunity to testify  
20 on behalf of Mayor Eric Adams on DOT's Fiscal Year  
21 2025 Preliminary Budget and Fiscal Years '24 to '33  
22 Capital Plan.

23 This budget builds on Mayor Adams' proven  
24 track record of responsible fiscal management while  
25 prioritizing the needs of working- and middle-class

2 New Yorkers and investing in public spaces. We  
3 appreciate the Mayor's continued investment in DOT  
4 during difficult financial times. This budget will  
5 allow DOT to continue our work to make New York City  
6 the safest city for pedestrians and cyclists in the  
7 whole country, re-imagine the use of public space,  
8 invest in working-class and middle-class communities  
9 and communities of color, make the city more  
10 accessible for all New Yorkers including people with  
11 disabilities, maintain our infrastructure, including  
12 nearly 800 bridges and tunnels, and continue to  
13 operate the Staten Island Ferry, while also being  
14 fiscally responsible with our spending.

15           Expense budget, DOT's 1.4 billion FY25  
16 Expense Budget includes the following: 117 million  
17 for bridge maintenance and inspection; 149 million  
18 for ferry operations and maintenance; 236 million for  
19 roadway maintenance; 302 million for other DOT  
20 operations and administration including sidewalk  
21 management and inspection; 458 million for traffic  
22 operations including signals, streetlights, automated  
23 enforcement, and parking; and 141 million for  
24 transportation planning and management including  
25 installation of street signs and roadway markings.

2 DOT's proposed 26 billion FY24 to FY33 Capital Plan  
3 includes the following: 12.4 billion for bridge  
4 reconstruction and rehabilitation; 4.9 billion for  
5 street reconstruction; 3.2 billion for resurfacing;  
6 3.2 billion for sidewalk and pedestrian ramp repair  
7 and reconstruction; 1.1 billion for streetlights,  
8 signals, and automated enforcement; 568 million for  
9 the Staten Island Ferry; and 674 million for the  
10 facilities and equipment needed to support DOT's  
11 operations.

12 Turning to Vision Zero, last month, the  
13 City marked the 10-year anniversary of Vision Zero.  
14 While pedestrian fatalities across the country  
15 reached the highest number since 1987, New York City  
16 had the lowest year of pedestrian fatalities since we  
17 started collecting data 113 years ago, other than  
18 2020's year of COVID. Through engineering, education,  
19 and enforcement, Vision Zero is working, but we have  
20 much more to do, and now I would like to ask a moment  
21 of silence on behalf of the little boy that we lost  
22 yesterday in the crash where the driver failed to  
23 yield.

24 Equity has long been a cornerstone of New  
25 York City DOT's implementation of Vision Zero and is

2 a top priority for this Administration led by Mayor  
3 Eric Adams. We are committed to ensuring our safety  
4 projects reach all New Yorkers, using data to  
5 prioritize interventions where they are most needed  
6 and can have the greatest benefit. This budget  
7 reflects this Administration's continued commitment  
8 to Vision Zero and the safety of all New Yorkers. The  
9 FY24 to FY33 10-Year Capital Plan invests nearly 4.2  
10 billion in Vision Zero, and our expense budget  
11 invests an average of about 260 million annually. We  
12 will continue our focus on improving intersections,  
13 following the Mayor's announcement that the City will  
14 make safety improvements at 2,000 intersections each  
15 year with design improvements like raised crosswalks,  
16 leading pedestrian intervals, and sidewalk  
17 extensions, as well as daylighting to improve  
18 visibility between pedestrians and drivers in 1,000  
19 intersections at those locations. On Queens  
20 Boulevard, we will continue to transform what was  
21 formerly known as The Boulevard of Death, El Bulevar  
22 de la Muerte. We are working with the Department of  
23 Design and Construction to transform existing medians  
24 into green pedestrian malls, raise the bike lane, and  
25 improve travel times for bus riders by moving bus

2 stops to the median, and the Department of  
3 Environmental Protection will also make major water  
4 and sewer upgrades. This project is supported by our  
5 recently awarded Safe Streets for All grant from U.S.  
6 DOT.

7           In Southeast Queens, starting this spring  
8 we will be partnering with DDC and DEP to bring  
9 flooding relief to residents of over a dozen streets  
10 across Hollis, Saint Albans, and Jamaica. The project  
11 will include new curbs, streets, sidewalks, and  
12 porous pavement to better manage stormwater events as  
13 well as raised crosswalks to enhance accessibility  
14 and safety. In Brooklyn, at the complex intersection  
15 of Flatbush Avenue, Utica Avenue, and Avenue S in  
16 Marine Park, we will add new and expanded concrete  
17 pedestrian space, shorten crossing distances, and add  
18 new crosswalks. In the Bronx, we will construct new  
19 medians and expand sidewalks near several schools and  
20 playgrounds in Hunts Point, which will add more than  
21 3,500 square feet of new pedestrian space.

22           Beyond our critical infrastructure  
23 projects, we are working with our partners in Albany  
24 to renew and expand our life-saving red light camera  
25 program, which will expire this year and is currently



2 limited to 150 intersections. We need your support,  
3 your partnership to move those numbers, expand those  
4 numbers to 1,700 intersections.

5 Turning to bikes. With over a half-  
6 million bike trips taken each day and Citi Bike  
7 reaching record ridership, cycling has never been  
8 more popular in New York City. To meet this demand,  
9 New York City has built more protected bike lanes  
10 than all other big U.S. cities combined. In 2023, we  
11 installed a record-breaking 31.9 new protected bike  
12 lane miles, in 2022 we also built 27 protected bike  
13 lanes. It means 220 protected bike lanes have been  
14 built in the last 10 years, and most of those have  
15 been built in the last two years, a large percentage  
16 have been built in the last two years. We met the  
17 Administration's commitment to harden 20 miles of  
18 bike lanes by the end of 2023 and are installing  
19 wider lanes (INAUDIBLE) New York City one of the  
20 first ones working towards widening the bike lanes,  
21 and we installed over 3,250 bike racks and  
22 distributed nearly 22,000 bike helmets and 9,000 bike  
23 lights. This year, we will undertake many critical  
24 bike projects including: Eastchester Road from Pelham  
25 Parkway to Hutchinson Greenway in the Bronx; Simonson

2 Avenue, Walker Street, Tranter Avenue, connecting to  
3 the bike path on the Bayonne Bridge in Staten Island;  
4 10th Avenue and 2nd Avenue in Manhattan; and the  
5 Washington Bridge. We are working to expand Citi Bike  
6 and incorporate previously underserved parts of the  
7 city while adding more capacity to the parts of the  
8 system with the highest demand. We currently have  
9 over 27,000 bikes and over 2,000 stations. Once this  
10 year's scheduled expansion is complete, more than  
11 half of New York City residents will live within a  
12 five-minute walk of a Citi Bike station, and it is a  
13 commitment of this Administration to connect all  
14 communities with Citi Bike and micromobility  
15 including our scooters program, and to promote the  
16 safe use of powered mobility devices and reduce fire  
17 risks, we recently launched a six-month e-bike  
18 charging pilot program to test different battery  
19 charging technologies on the street. We will also  
20 launch an e-bike buyback program to help delivery  
21 workers transition from dangerous, illegal, and  
22 uncertified powered mobility devices to UL-certified  
23 bikes and batteries. As you can see, those are some  
24 of the locations where we are doing the electric  
25 bike. Chairman, some of the from (INAUDIBLE) and

2 other, you can see the number of deliveristas already  
3 responding to go and swap the battery so the pilot  
4 has started working since day one.

5 DOT continues to make it easier and  
6 faster to travel around the city for all New Yorkers.

7 In 2023, we made commuting faster and more reliable  
8 for over 300,000 daily bus riders with new or  
9 enhanced bus lanes including projects on Northern  
10 Boulevard in Queens; Gun Hill Road and University  
11 Avenue in the Bronx; Livingston Street in Brooklyn;  
12 Third Avenue in Manhattan; and Washington Bridge  
13 connecting Manhattan and the Bronx. We also studied  
14 Transit Signal Priority at 754 intersections to  
15 reduce the time buses spend stuck at red lights. This  
16 year, we will undertake a number of exciting bus  
17 projects, including improving the dedicated bus lane  
18 on 2nd Avenue in Manhattan, which will make the trip  
19 faster for 50,000 daily bus riders. We also began  
20 construction on our major bus and safety project  
21 along Kings Highway, Flatlands Avenue, and  
22 Pennsylvania Avenue in southern Brooklyn.

23 To make the city more accessible, DOT  
24 continues to install and upgrade pedestrian ramps  
25 throughout the city. We also installed accessible

2 pedestrian signals at a record of 866 intersections  
3 in 2023. This year, we are beginning an over 100  
4 million neighborhood reconstruction project in  
5 Rosedale, Queens, making long-needed repairs and  
6 upgrades to streets that have experienced ongoing  
7 flooding problems. In partnership with DEP and DDC,  
8 we will be installing sidewalks, accessibility  
9 upgrades, and redesigning intersections along with  
10 major sewer upgrades.

11 This Administration continues to  
12 reimagine the use of public space. DOT installed more  
13 than 666,000 square feet of new pedestrian space in  
14 2023, an all-time annual record. This includes new  
15 pedestrian plazas, curbs, sidewalk extensions,  
16 pedestrian safety islands, and medians. Now in its  
17 fifth year, Open Streets continues to be the nation's  
18 largest and most successful car-free program with  
19 over 200 locations across the five boroughs. Earlier  
20 this month, we announced new rules for the program,  
21 formalizing the application process and clarifying  
22 eligibility criteria. This Administration also  
23 announced Dining Out NYC, which was the result of the  
24 work of this Administration and also the Council,  
25 which is the nation's largest permanent outdoor

2 dining program and one of the most significant  
3 efforts of the last decade of re-imagining the city's  
4 streetscape. Last month, we released the final rules  
5 for the program after a robust public outreach  
6 campaign, and last week we launched the application  
7 portal so restaurants and other food service  
8 establishments such as coffee and (INAUDIBLE) shops  
9 and bakeries can also apply. We also implemented the  
10 most ambitious Summer Streets program, more than  
11 doubling its size and bringing the program to all  
12 five boroughs for the first time. We went from 79th  
13 Street to the heart of Harlem and then we also went  
14 across the other four boroughs. Along with the  
15 largest Car-Free Earth Day, we also did a second  
16 season of the popular Trick-or-Streets program.

17 DOT is taking action to better manage the  
18 curb to reduce congestion, double parking, and  
19 vehicle emissions. Last year, we published a Curb  
20 Management Action Plan to re-imagine how curb lanes  
21 are used and launched a Smart Curbs pilot to evaluate  
22 regulations, identify community needs, and test new  
23 technologies at the curb. We announced the microhubs  
24 program to provide locations for delivery trucks to  
25 transfer packages to cargo bikes for final delivery,

2 and we are in the process of finalizing rules to  
3 allow larger pedal-assist electric cargo bikes and  
4 make package deliveries more efficient.

5           Turning now to the Staten Island Ferry.  
6 After 13 years, I am thrilled to say that the  
7 Administration led by Mayor Adams reached an  
8 agreement with the Marine Engineers' Beneficial  
9 Association, the union representing Staten Island  
10 Ferry licensed officers. The new contract raises  
11 salaries to competitive rates and establishes a 40-  
12 hour workweek, which will allow us to hire and retain  
13 our critical workers who keep the Staten Island Ferry  
14 running.

15           On resurfacing, this budget protects the  
16 baseline funding for 1,100 lane miles and 50 miles of  
17 protected bike lanes for resurfacing each year. This  
18 amount of resurfacing reduces the number of potholes,  
19 and our average pothole response time is now under  
20 two days, our fastest response time ever.

21           For our bridges, the City adopted a rule  
22 to prohibit vending on bridges. This rule has been  
23 instrumental in the City's efforts to ensure the  
24 safety and security of our bridges. We have also  
25 nearly finished the four-year, 300 million project to

2 rehabilitate the Brooklyn Bridge, including cleaning  
3 all the bridge's stones, strengthening the bridge's  
4 approach spans, and add new energy-efficient  
5 lighting.

6 Turning to the difficult fiscal climate.

7 DOT is proud to have done our share to fill the  
8 citywide 5 percent Program to Eliminate the Gap, or  
9 PEG. In both the FY25 Preliminary Plan and the  
10 November Plan, DOT generated over 88 million of gap-  
11 closing measures for FY25. We did this through a  
12 number of savings, from conducting studies in-house,  
13 receiving funding from the federal government for our  
14 Traffic Management Center, and through programs that  
15 generate revenue such as Citi Bike. I am also proud  
16 to say we have applied for over 100 billion dollars  
17 in federal funding, and the great team of finance and  
18 budget have already secured over 81 million dollars.  
19 Following the Mayor's mandate, we reduced the 10-year  
20 capital total by nearly 5.5 billion and stretched the  
21 plan by 1.9 billion to the outer years. We do not  
22 believe this will affect current active projects, and  
23 we will work with the Administration to ensure future  
24 projects are fully funded as needed. Under this  
25 Administration, DOT has been a leader in Minority and

2 Women-Owned Business Enterprise, something that I  
3 know is important for you, Chair, and for all Council  
4 Members. I am proud to say that DOT has increased our  
5 M/WBE participation rate from 11 percent that I took  
6 when I got into the DOT to 24 percent in FY23 and, in  
7 FY24, we hope to meet the 30 percent M/WBE  
8 utilization goal for the first time at DOT.

9 In conclusion, I would like to thank the  
10 Council, especially you, Chair, for the opportunity  
11 to testify before you today. I look forward to  
12 partnering with the Council as we work together to  
13 make this city safer, more equitable, and more  
14 accessible for generations to come. We are proud of  
15 the work that the almost 6,000 men and women at DOT  
16 do every day to keep this city moving. We would now  
17 be happy to answer any questions.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.  
19 First, I'd like to take a moment to just re-emphasize  
20 how important it is for our Committee Staff to  
21 receive testimony in advance. We received testimony  
22 today at minutes to noon when we were already well  
23 into the first part of the Preliminary Budget hearing  
24 and, just to re-emphasize how important it is that we  
25 have meaningful conversation during the hearing so



2 that we're not trying to figure out what not to  
3 overlap with that's been addressed or additional  
4 questions. It's very important. I understand that has  
5 not necessarily been the way things have been done  
6 but, under my Chairmanship, I have asked all agencies  
7 to submit testimony in advance. The MTA was gracious  
8 enough to submit theirs two days in advance, and so I  
9 ask that the City agency show respect to this  
10 Committee and to our Staff and the work that they do  
11 by submitting the testimony in advance of the  
12 hearing.

13 With that being said, I'm going to yield  
14 my questions so that my Colleagues can ask theirs and  
15 then I'll ask mine. I am going to start with Council  
16 Member Louis followed by Krishnan followed by  
17 Restler. Thank you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Madam  
19 Chair, and having the testimony in advance is very  
20 helpful so I hope you guys could do that in the  
21 future.

22 All right, I have three questions. The  
23 first one, let's start with potholes. Thank you for  
24 being here, Commissioner, appreciate it, and your  
25 amazing team. All right. The PMR indicates that there

2 were over 7,784 pothole work orders in the first four  
3 months of Fiscal Year 2024, but there were roughly  
4 35,000 potholes repaired across the highway system  
5 and local streets in the same period. Can you explain  
6 the relationship between pothole work orders and  
7 pothole repairs and what's the cost of repairing a  
8 pothole?

9 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, I would  
10 pass it to a Margaret to get into more details, but  
11 one thing that I say, as I said, for the first time,  
12 when we get a 3-1-1 or any of you elected official  
13 about pothole, those potholes are taking care in less  
14 than two days unless there's other DEP matter that is  
15 about water under the street, things like that, but,  
16 Margaret, if you don't mind to take.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: And then I have two  
18 more quick questions.

19 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Thank  
20 you for your question. I'm looking now at the  
21 breakdown of our pothole repair by borough. We are  
22 showing for Fiscal '23, 176,000 repaired potholes. I  
23 have to check into the two numbers that you provided  
24 to understand exactly the nature of your question,  
25 but what I can tell you is that every single day we

2 have dedicated pothole crews in every borough. During  
3 the winter months when we're not paving, a lot of our  
4 workforce is seasonalized and they don't work over  
5 the winter, but the remaining asphalt workers do  
6 additional potholes during those months. We are able  
7 to address potholes in a very timely manner. Our  
8 average response time is now under two days so if a  
9 member of the public calls 3-1-1 or gets us a request  
10 in...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: That would be  
12 considered an order, because what we need for the  
13 record is the difference between just the repairs and  
14 then the orders, so the orders are coming in through  
15 3-1-1?

16 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: The  
17 orders come in from various means. Many of them do  
18 come in from 3-1-1.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: And what other  
20 avenues?

21 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: They  
22 can come in through e-mails, they can come in  
23 through...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Got it.  
25

2 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Phone  
3 requests, they can come in through letters, all sorts  
4 of ways and community boards as well. Our own workers  
5 identify them, other workers in the Department, lots  
6 of sources, NYPD, etc.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: A quick capital  
8 change order question. How much time does it take to  
9 perform change orders and what is the average value  
10 of change orders by project type? If you could break  
11 down the data and the reports for those change  
12 orders.

13 And my last question, I'll just ask them  
14 all and then you can answer. The M/WBE contracting,  
15 Commissioner, you said by a particular time you want  
16 to meet the 30 percent for M/WBE utilization goals so  
17 I wanted to know what are you using to measure to get  
18 to that 30 percent? What does that look like? Those  
19 are my questions. Thanks.

20 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I was (INAUDIBLE)  
21 and I will get Executive Deputy Commissioner Paul  
22 Ochoa to also answer on the change of order  
23 (INAUDIBLE), right?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: On the M/WBE, I  
3 will say the most important thing is as I've been in  
4 your seat in the past, when I was asking those  
5 question, M/WBE, the numbers was usually in my two  
6 years almost the same so it is the first time that we  
7 moved those number from 11 percent in two years and  
8 few months to 24 percent. What is working with us is  
9 that one, we are doing business with DOT event,  
10 second, we also, as a procurement team led by Nancy  
11 and Carlos (INAUDIBLE) they put the panels together  
12 that they go off over the RFP for any contract and  
13 are working hard to be sure that any panels that  
14 review any contract have the composition that reflect  
15 diversity.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: How are you getting  
17 to the 30 percent?

18 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Continue doing  
19 the same thing that I've been doing these two years...

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: And by when?

21 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Pardon?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: By when will you  
23 get to the 30 percent.

24 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Again, I will  
25 continue doing the same thing that I've been doing

2 this two year when I move it from 11 percent to 24  
3 percent. There's new contract that we have in front  
4 of us right now, like the horticulture is a 27-  
5 million-dollar contract that DOT awards for the  
6 institution that is in charge of management in the  
7 public spaces. First time that the institution, the  
8 RFP include that 30 percent should be M/WBE.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: The speed camera,  
11 also RFP is almost ready to go out. Also in the  
12 language. Also, everything that I'm doing it is  
13 including the mandated of the 30 percent, and the  
14 message to everyone who come to do business with DOT,  
15 please try not to come to us for waiver because in  
16 the past it was very common that a lot of private  
17 sector they came and they tried to get some waivers  
18 so that they didn't have to do the 30 percent so the  
19 message is clear that I am following from Mayor Eric  
20 Adams. 30 percent is our goal and we accomplished it.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: For Fiscal Year  
22 '25, right?

23 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: What's that?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: For Fiscal Year  
25 '25?

2 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: That's our goal.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Perfect, and then  
4 there's the capital change orders, how much time does  
5 it take to perform the change orders and what's the  
6 average value of change orders by project, and if you  
7 could provide that data for us. Thank you.

8 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA:

9 Thank you for that question, Council Member. How much  
10 time do you have to talk about change orders because  
11 it's a very pressing topic. In fact, the Mayor's  
12 Office established a Capital Reform Task Force, and  
13 change order were a big discussion, both from the  
14 agency side and from the industry, to be honest.  
15 Change orders happen for various reasons. Sometimes  
16 there are changes in the field that we didn't  
17 perceive when we were scoping or designing the  
18 projects that are just required, but you're right, it  
19 does take long for the City to process change orders.  
20 It is not beneficial for us as an agency to take long  
21 for change orders nor it is for the contractor to  
22 wait for payment. Typically, when a change order is  
23 approved, it takes about 100 days including  
24 Comptroller registration for the payments to be made  
25 for the contractor. I would also mention as part of

2 the Capital Reform Task Force that the Mayor's Office  
3 has established, one of the things that we've been  
4 discussing with the Comptroller is called expanded  
5 work allowance. It is essentially money, the easiest  
6 way to explain it is money up front that the  
7 Comptroller and the agency, in this case us, will  
8 allow for change orders so that they don't have to go  
9 through the formal process of change orders and they  
10 can just be incorporated in the normal sort of day-  
11 to-day work. We are in good conversation with the  
12 Comptroller and we hope to establish that citywide in  
13 the next few months.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: All right. Thank  
15 you for that. Madam Chair, it will be good to know  
16 when you ask your questions, how could they get the  
17 100 days cut in half so thank you for the time.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: (INAUDIBLE)

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Yes, please. How do  
20 we get that 100 days cut in half within Fiscal Year  
21 '25 with the change orders, and that's my last  
22 question, Madam Chair. Thank you.

23 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA:

24 Thank you. Part of it is, change order does go for  
25 registration with the Comptroller's Office. I think



2 the easiest way is to avoid them altogether, which is  
3 the expanded work allowance that I'm mentioning. That  
4 is the simplest way of us limiting change orders for  
5 capital contracts and large contracts for agencies. I  
6 agree with you. I think we, both the industry and the  
7 Administration and the agencies all want to reduce  
8 change orders. It's not good for business. It takes  
9 longer. Delays project, etc.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Good afternoon,  
11 Commissioner. Good to see you, First Deputy  
12 Commissioner, Borough Commissioner Garcia. Thank you  
13 all for your testimony today. I just have questions  
14 on two different topics.

15 First, Commissioner, thank you for your  
16 partnership. I appreciate our work together around  
17 street safety in our District and what we've done up  
18 until this point to address pedestrian safety in our  
19 neighborhood, but I want to go through what's been  
20 happening in the last six weeks alone in my community  
21 and right around it. Just yesterday, an 8-year-old  
22 boy was struck and killed by a pickup truck while  
23 holding his 10-year-old brother's hand walking in a  
24 crosswalk. This was in East Elmhurst, just a few  
25 blocks outside of my District. Before that, a 61-

2 year-old woman was struck and killed by a speeding  
3 SUV crossing the street. A man was struck and is in  
4 critical condition crossing the street in Jackson  
5 Heights, and also two women were struck and  
6 hospitalized by the same moped on 34th Avenue Open  
7 Street. What I want to focus on, there's obviously a  
8 street safety crisis in our city. These instances are  
9 all just in the past six weeks in one community.  
10 There's obviously a much bigger issue here. I know  
11 we'll talk about the hearing today. The one I want to  
12 focus on in particular, the element of this crisis,  
13 is the moped crisis in our city. As I mentioned, we  
14 had two women on 34th Avenue, our gold standard Open  
15 Street that's been a success around the city that  
16 were hit, the moped hit one woman, kept driving and  
17 then hit a second woman. I knew an 8-year-old boy who  
18 was hit by a moped and dragged a bit by the moped on  
19 our 34th Avenue Open Street so this is really  
20 affecting a major pedestrian safety project in our  
21 neighborhood, but it's also a larger crisis in our  
22 city of mopeds that are really driving roughshod on  
23 our streets. My first question is, what is DOT's  
24 strategy to address the moped crisis in our city and  
25 how can we partner together to address it?

2 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. There's no  
3 doubt that New York City today is not the New York  
4 City even when I was elected and serving here in 2009  
5 with the numbers of electrical bikes, mopeds that we  
6 have in the street. What we are doing is, one, we're  
7 doing the educational because even when we look at  
8 mopeds, even right now the technology is changing so  
9 fast that what could be is electrical bike, suddenly  
10 it can be transformed as a moped (INAUDIBLE) gas  
11 power, more pressing electrical bike. We do recognize  
12 that the whole industry is there because the demand  
13 that New Yorkers is putting on them. 80 percent of  
14 New Yorkers are placing order once a week, 24 percent  
15 placing order four times a week. When we in a cold  
16 day, raining day, we made the call. We want the food  
17 to go to our places. So what we're doing, one,  
18 educational, second, building the infrastructure. We  
19 are the first city, one of the first cities, we're  
20 almost sure that we're the first place to be safe  
21 (INAUDIBLE) first city that has taken to widening the  
22 bike lane, and we are widening the bike lane for the  
23 purpose to give more space to that sector. 200  
24 million bike trips every year is happening in New  
25 York City. So it's about educating. It's about

2 building the infrastructure. It's about enforcement.  
3 By the way, as I said before, the child who we lost  
4 yesterday involved a reckless driver whose license  
5 was suspended more than five times who failed to  
6 yield. Just for the record, this was not about the  
7 moped, electrical bike. This was about an  
8 irresponsible person with a reckless record that  
9 unfortunately took the life away of that beautiful  
10 person.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Very tragic.

12 Yes, that was a pickup truck, but it illustrates the  
13 larger safety crisis in our city. Just going back,  
14 and thank you for your point, as I mentioned  
15 specifically on the moped piece. My next question was  
16 I did receive this morning the DOT's proposals for  
17 addressing the 34th Avenue Open Street moped major  
18 safety issue we're seeing there. Thank you for  
19 sending them. It did take months. I asked them from a  
20 long time ago, but I do appreciate you all saying the  
21 proposals to address it. I do want to give context in  
22 that, this is, as you all know well and we've worked  
23 together well, it is a pedestrian walkway for people  
24 to walk, thousands of children walk there to school,  
25 but now it's becoming overrun by mopeds so I do

2 appreciate the DOT proposals that were sent over to  
3 address them. Given the magnitude of this crisis in  
4 my District and the questions I'm hearing from  
5 constituents, Commissioner, will you join me and  
6 Chair Brooks-Powers at a town hall in my District in  
7 Jackson Heights to hear the concerns of my  
8 constituents about pedestrian safety, in particular  
9 about the moped crisis and for DOT to present the  
10 proposals that you all sent me today. Will you join  
11 me, Commissioner, and the Chair at a town hall in my  
12 District on pedestrian safety?

13 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Of course, I  
14 organized before being a teacher before being a  
15 Council Member before being a Commissioner and the  
16 grassroot Commissioner in this Body so never shy to  
17 be in front of people, listen to different opinions.  
18 I think it is important to hear from the community.  
19 Next week, I'm going to be spending the whole day in  
20 Manhattan, as I do the commission in your borough, I  
21 do it, as you know, in the Districts of most of you  
22 as a Council Member. I think that I've been the  
23 Commissioner more accessible to give all the time  
24 that you and the rest of the Members of this Body  
25 need. When there has a request, more than happy to go

2 there. But as you also asking the question, the  
3 answer is yes. I also want to invite this Body for  
4 all of us to join this effort, to work with the  
5 Council Member Gennaro and Andrew Gounardes on the  
6 bill and Assembly Member Dinowitz and Jo Anne Simon  
7 to pass the red light camera bill since the program  
8 will expire in December. This bill led by the Body of  
9 the Assembly and the Senate one only to renew, but  
10 they want to expand it so your partnership, your  
11 support, your home rule on time is very critical in  
12 order for us to send the message loud and clear to  
13 Albany that the whole city is on board keeping and  
14 expanding a life-saving tool with the red light  
15 camera.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Absolutely.

17 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Like the red  
18 light camera save life. However, last year, we lost  
19 25 people in red light camera crashes, one of the  
20 larger number that we have so yes, to work with you,  
21 you bring a great partners. 34 Avenue is a national  
22 model. It's (INAUDIBLE) former Council Member Dromm  
23 (INAUDIBLE) you as a former staff and then was a  
24 Commissioner so you and all of you sitting here are  
25 very important partners for us to continue making the

2 city. This is the city, as I said before, Council  
3 Member, 2023, we have the lowest numbers of  
4 pedestrian fatality since we started collecting data  
5 113 years ago. When I was in Washington two days ago,  
6 all the national leaders (INAUDIBLE), they are saying  
7 New York City is leading the model. We have more bus  
8 lane, we have more bike lane, we have the best  
9 infrastructure than any other city. However, as  
10 resilient New Yorkers that we are, we also push our  
11 search to do more and to do better so more than happy  
12 to partner with you.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Absolutely. I  
14 appreciate that. I appreciate your raising the red  
15 light cameras as well. It's a very important issue,  
16 and I look forward to our town hall in the  
17 neighborhood to hear from my constituents about how  
18 important and concerning the moped safety crisis is  
19 and for you all to present both of your proposals  
20 that you sent over today.

21 My final question before I turn to  
22 another topic is just. One note, if you all can I'd  
23 ask you all as an agency and Commissioner too to  
24 prioritize, we had a meeting and then a visit to 73rd  
25 Street and 37th Avenue in Jackson Heights. It's a

2 complete gridlock right off the BQE. Trucks are  
3 double parked. It's a major traffic hazard and  
4 situation and, after we met, we had a meeting with  
5 your team there. Although I'm not sure one unit had  
6 communicated to the other about our meeting but we  
7 met there, but what happened is three days later, or  
8 several days after our meeting, a senior was actually  
9 hit at that intersection. He's paralyzed now. He's at  
10 the hospital. So that intersection is really  
11 dangerous. I would just ask if you can with your  
12 agency to just look into what measures, we proposed a  
13 bunch of safety measures. We'd love to work with you  
14 all and really in an expedited way to address the  
15 intersection because, unfortunately, the fear that we  
16 had materialized several days later so appreciate  
17 your partnership on that intersection, too.

18 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We will  
19 definitely look at it and, again, as I say like you  
20 are one of the persons that we work closer so even  
21 though you got a proposal today, but, as you know,  
22 when you call, you've been meeting with Margaret,  
23 you've been meeting with me. I think that the level  
24 of communication between you and us have been very  
25 productive (INAUDIBLE) 34th Avenue in a way also that



2 in the national summit that we're holding on  
3 transportation equity, we want to highlight 34th  
4 Avenue so more than happy to continue working with  
5 you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Absolutely, and  
7 I appreciate our communication and look forward now  
8 to actualizing our different ideas and improving  
9 tangibly pedestrian safety. My final three questions  
10 are on a different topic, shifting gears completely.  
11 We'll do a second round?

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: (INAUDIBLE)  
13 second round.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Okay. We'll do  
15 it second round, withdrawn.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you, Madam  
17 Chair. Commissioner and team, always good to see you.  
18 Thank you for being with us today.

19 Commissioner, I think if we were to go  
20 and get a beer and talk about all of these issues, we  
21 would agree on the vast, vast majority of what needs  
22 to be done to make our streets safer. I believe that  
23 you are committed to advancing safety on our streets  
24 deep in your core. The problem, of course, is that  
25 you report to Mayor Adams, who ran on a platform of

2 being committed to making our streets safer, ran as  
3 the bus Mayor to be the champion of the 2 million,  
4 predominantly low-income New Yorkers who ride the bus  
5 every day and, unfortunately, when we look at the  
6 data, despite DOT's best efforts, we're not producing  
7 the bike lanes and the bus lanes and the safety  
8 interventions that we need and that New Yorkers  
9 depend on, and I'll tell you, when I work with you  
10 and your team on projects that don't require City  
11 Hall interference, we do great things. The Livingston  
12 Street busway, the Schermerhorn bike lane, the mid-  
13 block crossings on Atlantic that are making District  
14 33 really a model in lots of ways but, when projects  
15 come over to City Hall like McGinnis Boulevard or the  
16 bike lane on Bedford Avenue and I could cite many  
17 more, that's when we get in trouble so I just want to  
18 start by asking there's often this like funny tension  
19 between the Council and DOT where DOT is saying if  
20 Council Members supported these projects they would  
21 happen so I support McGuinness Boulevard and a lane  
22 reduction south of Calyer. You said you'd come back  
23 to us in the spring. It's now March 14th so spring  
24 officially is in a week. Maybe I'm pressing my luck  
25 by asking you this question too early, but I hope

2 not. Do we have a solution on McGuinness Boulevard to  
3 achieve a lane reduction? Do we have a solution on  
4 Bedford Avenue to get the protected bike lane that we  
5 need? These are projects that are supported by local  
6 Council Members, myself, Jen, Chi, Crystal, etc. Do  
7 we have DOT support?

8 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: First of all, on  
9 the first comment that you made, and then I will ask  
10 for our Deputy Commissioner for Transportation and  
11 Planning and Management, Eric Beaton, to add on the  
12 second part of the question.

13 The first one, no Mayor has invested more  
14 to DOT for us to have the resources that we need to  
15 improve the safety than Mayor Eric Adams and, as I  
16 said before, we have improved public safety in so  
17 many locations in New York City, and I feel that  
18 someone like you that had been at City Hall in the  
19 past, who knows how City Hall works, you also  
20 appreciate the work that we are doing and more than  
21 happy...

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Commissioner,  
23 with all due respect, I know how City Hall is  
24 supposed to work.

2 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: More than happy  
3 to, more than happy, if you don't mind to let me  
4 finish.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Please.

6 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: More, more than  
7 happy again to go with the Chairman and you with all  
8 details how on this Administration we've been able to  
9 get 2023, the lowest numbers of pedestrian fatality  
10 in the last 113 years, how we were able from the 200  
11 million bike lane that is more than all largest city  
12 combined have built in this nation, New York City, 57  
13 of those being built, 31 of those bike lane last  
14 year. In McGuinness Boulevard, we are making a lot of  
15 improvement. There's other projects on bus lanes in  
16 different area that also we need the Council Member  
17 support that sometime the community engagement, the  
18 stakeholder work has to be done. Sometime, the  
19 support is not there. For the second part on  
20 McGuinness Boulevard, Eric, would you mind to answer  
21 the question?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Sure, and I  
23 think that we remain committed to doing what we said  
24 on McGuinness Boulevard. We said we were going to do  
25 the first part of it in the fall, get as much in as

2 we could before the winter. We did that. We said we  
3 were going to collect data over the winter. We've  
4 been collecting that data and putting it together and  
5 we can...

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So is there a  
7 timeline by which you'll be coming back to us?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: And then  
9 we're going to finish putting together the data,  
10 we'll come back to you soon.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Timeline?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: And then when  
13 we talk about spring, spring to us means we need  
14 weather consistently over 50 degrees, which today it  
15 feels so nice. Our marking season really usually gets  
16 going in April or May.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: My community  
18 deserves, look, I have a lot of respect for each of  
19 the people at the dais. I appreciate your partnership  
20 and the work that we do together each and every day.  
21 My intention here is not to beat you all up. I want  
22 to see you all meet your goals. I want to be your  
23 biggest champion in District 33. I deeply value the  
24 expertise and the hard work of the men and women and  
25 the people that work at the Department of

2 Transportation and the creativity of the people of  
3 the Department of Transportation. I want you all to  
4 be successful. You all put out a great plan on  
5 McGuinness Boulevard. We've all read the newspaper,  
6 we know what happened. Do we have a timeline that  
7 you're going to come back to us with an updated  
8 proposal?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: I wouldn't  
10 say updated proposal. We said we would look at the  
11 data, we'd come back and present the data and talk  
12 about when we're proceeding. I think we...

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: As we said,  
15 we expect to do that in the spring. I can't schedule  
16 a meeting at on the spot here, but we'll come back to  
17 you soon and talk about it.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: All right. I wish  
19 you'd come with a little more specificity, knowing  
20 how important a topic this is. I don't think I have  
21 time to dig into my least favorite topic, which is  
22 the BQE, but I just want to underscore I'm a Council  
23 Member who strongly supports the work of your agency.  
24 I will be out there every single time at community  
25 meetings with you, Commissioner, when it's a tough

2 room, trying my best to block and tackle to make the  
3 street safety projects that will save lives happen.

4 There are a number of indicators that have been  
5 moving in the wrong direction. Cyclist deaths in  
6 particular is a major concern of mine. We suffered

7 three fatalities in my District in just the last  
8 three weeks, one in Greenpoint and two in South

9 Williamsburg. Of course, your team is always

10 extremely responsive and tries to be helpful and make  
11 the improvements that make our streets safer. I value  
12 that partnership, but we need to be doing more and we  
13 need City Hall to get with the program.

14 I just want to comment on one more thing,  
15 which is WalkNYC.

16 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: If you don't  
17 mind, before the comment. With the cyclist loss that  
18 we have in the city and, again, Mayor Adams and I  
19 approach that one death is too many, but one  
20 information that we all should know is that the loss  
21 of cyclists in our city on average in the normal bike  
22 last year, we have one of the lowest year. The higher  
23 numbers of cyclists that we lost last year have been  
24 mainly individuals using an electrical bike, and  
25 that's why right now, very soon, we're going to be

2 launching educational bike safety campaign, also  
3 educating our cyclists about how to accelerate, how  
4 to use an electric bike because most of those cases  
5 when, unfortunately, we lost those cyclists happens,  
6 most of them (INAUDIBLE) 30 cyclists I think that we  
7 lost and I can't go concrete on the number, but...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: No, no, no. I  
9 know those trends be true, and we've done multiple  
10 events together around delivery worker safety events  
11 in District 33 that DOT has led where we've set up  
12 key locations and educated delivery workers about how  
13 to stay safe, giving away helmets, provided more  
14 training. I do think that we need to work together to  
15 much more rigorously regulate these app companies so  
16 that we're prioritizing safety rather than speed, and  
17 I hope that's an area where we can work together in  
18 the weeks and months to come.

19 The last thing I just wanted to ask about  
20 is WalkNYC and maybe the Chair will let us do a round  
21 two but, just on WalkNYC, these are map elements that  
22 help educate New Yorkers and tourists on where to go  
23 and how to get around. There were only five new  
24 walking elements or maps that were implemented in the  
25 first four months of FY24 in the PMMR and only 35 for



2 all of FY23. That's a big reduction from where we'd  
3 been in the past. I have a lot of tourists in my  
4 District. We'd love to be able to have better and  
5 more signage up to help direct people where to go. Is  
6 this something you're concerned about? Is it a  
7 priority for you to see those numbers increase?

8 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Eric will answer  
9 the question.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Sure, and  
11 this is the WalkNYC. For anyone who's not familiar,  
12 these are the wayfinding maps that we use to help  
13 people get around, and we are still committed to  
14 those. We have a number of actual federal grants that  
15 are helping support the program so we are moving it  
16 forward. We've had some interesting, interesting to  
17 me, maybe not to everyone, but supply chain issues  
18 around the epoxy that we use to attach the glass and  
19 plexiglass to the map to the structure itself. The  
20 manufacturer essentially stopped making the one that  
21 we were using. We have been testing a number of new  
22 materials to make sure that they're durable in all  
23 kinds of conditions and temperatures. That testing is  
24 still ongoing, but we hope that this year we'll be  
25 able to start putting out the new material. In the

2 meantime, we've been starting to use some of the,  
3 what we call the finger posts, which are the metal  
4 signs, they look a little bit more like our street  
5 name signs, and doing those in some locations,  
6 because those are just metal and don't have quite the  
7 same issues so it's a technical issue, but one that  
8 we are...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: You expect to see  
10 the numbers increase on more wayfinding getting  
11 installed by approximately when?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: I think we  
13 hope to be back on track this summer, but it assumes  
14 that we have a product that we are happy with.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I just want to  
16 reiterate, Commissioner, I meant what I said at the  
17 beginning of the testimony. I really know that your  
18 heart's in the right place. You care deeply about  
19 these issues and you've built a team that cares  
20 deeply about these issues, and I have a great deal of  
21 respect for the tremendous staff that you have at DOT  
22 and we want to do more to help you achieve your goals  
23 that you've worked on for so many years. Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I'd  
3 like to recognize that we've also been joined by  
4 Council Member Chris Banks.

5 Just touching on the Program to Eliminate  
6 the Gap, the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Plan reflects  
7 several revenue-generating PEGs that allow DOT to  
8 avoid significant reductions in spending to meet  
9 savings targets. In the Preliminary Plan, the agency  
10 projects an additional 12 million in bus lane camera  
11 revenue. These additional funds helped DOT meet its  
12 PEG targets in Fiscal 2025 but are also baselined  
13 across the plan period. Does DOT anticipate  
14 collecting this revenue by increasing the number of  
15 cameras or relocating cameras or is this revenue  
16 projecting a right-sizing based on actual revenue  
17 received in prior years, and then how was the  
18 decision made, and did the Department consider any  
19 potential equity impacts from any increases in  
20 enforcement?

21 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I'm going to say  
22 a few words and then Paul Ochoa will get into more  
23 details. Definitely for us, equity is a top priority  
24 for this Administration, and whatever decision we  
25 make on the PEG that we got to do, this measure is

2 very fiscally responsible and all of us have to do  
3 our part to be sure that, with the limited resources  
4 that we have in the city, that we distribute it well  
5 and that any PEG that we do is happening without no  
6 particular group being hurt more than the other so  
7 this has been a top priority, but Paul can get into  
8 more details on that.

9 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA:

10 Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, the automated  
11 enforcement program has been incredibly successful at  
12 DOT. I'll talk about...

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: When you say  
14 successful, do you mean in dollars and cents or...

15 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: No,  
16 actually...

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Fatalities?

18 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: I  
19 would actually say that the most successful program  
20 is one that we issued no violations. I'm talking  
21 about success in reducing speeding and blocking bus  
22 lanes in terms of our bus lane. We've seen a  
23 reduction in speeds of about 93 percent in the areas  
24 where we have a speed camera, and the same goes for  
25 bus lanes. We do see that New Yorkers tend to learn

2 at the second or third violations, in some instances,  
3 but, after that, they're not receiving violations  
4 which is exactly what we want to see from this  
5 program.

6 To your question, it is right-sizing the  
7 revenue that we were seeing in terms of the violation  
8 for the bus lane camera, but we are also expecting,  
9 Commissioner mentioned earlier that we're about to be  
10 launching an RFP for our entire automated enforcement  
11 program where we are expecting new bus lane cameras  
12 to be installed as part of this new RFP so both  
13 right-sizing and new cameras in the near future.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: In terms of  
15 the question pertaining to equity impacts.

16 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yes.  
17 We place cameras where there are speeding and where  
18 there is crash data. Those are the measures that we  
19 use to place the cameras. We have done an analysis  
20 that shows equitable distribution of cameras across  
21 the entire city, larger Council Districts do have  
22 more cameras because of their size, but we have not  
23 seen any impacts in terms of the placement. We are  
24 going where the speeding is and where the crash data  
25 is telling us to go.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And where the  
3 crash data is leading you to, how are you  
4 prioritizing the camera versus the infrastructure  
5 investments?

6 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: We  
7 do both. I think the camera, as I mentioned, it has  
8 been incredibly successful at reducing speed, but  
9 you've seen the Commissioner testified, Eric Beaton,  
10 and Margaret tell us about all the changes in  
11 intersections that we're doing on a yearly basis. The  
12 Mayor announced 2,000 changes in intersections that  
13 are going to be across the entire city so we're doing  
14 both, but Vision Zero has three E's, as we've  
15 mentioned. There's the engineering, there's the  
16 education, and then there's the enforcement, and the  
17 automated enforcement program is a component of the  
18 last E that I mentioned.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: As you mention  
20 Vision Zero, what are the current numbers of traffic  
21 fatalities and injuries year-to-date for 2024 and how  
22 do they compare to the previous year? Can DOT talk  
23 about its efforts to reduce these numbers in the  
24 coming year?

2 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA:

3 Yeah, give us one second.

4 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. As of  
5 today, we had fatals of 23 pedestrians, 1 with  
6 regular bike, 9 with motorized two wheels, and 18  
7 with motor vehicle. Those are the numbers that we  
8 have.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: 23, or is it  
10 29 because I think...

11 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: 23 pedestrian  
12 fatality, 1 regular bike, 1 motorized two wheels, I'm  
13 sorry, 9 motorized two wheels, and 18 motor vehicle.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What type of  
15 crashes were these, especially with the motorized  
16 bikes? Do you know?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Sure. Year-  
18 to-date, and this is the same number as the  
19 Commissioner said but just broken down a little bit  
20 more. We've had just the one traditional bike. We've  
21 had three e-bike, one standup scooter, four moped,  
22 and these are all the vehicle that the person was  
23 killed on, not necessarily all the vehicles involved.  
24 One motorcycle fatality.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm sorry. Can  
3 you clarify what you just said? I didn't understand  
4 you.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: This is the  
6 person who was killed. There may have been other  
7 vehicles involved in the crash.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: So four moped  
10 riders were killed, one motorcycle, zero other from  
11 that group, and then motor vehicle occupants, it was  
12 13 in cars, three in SUVs, and two in other, which  
13 is, it could be an ATV, it could be different types.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Those are  
15 also, you're saying that were killed?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Yes, so they  
17 could be a driver or a passenger.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: That was  
19 killed.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: That was  
21 killed.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I think I  
23 missed some of the numbers, so four moped, one  
24 motorcycle. What was in between that? I'm sorry. I'm  
25 just trying to write this.



2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: One standup  
3 scooter.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: One stand..  
5 that's the one I missed.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: That's the  
7 one.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. I think  
9 I have everything else.

10 Recent reporting shows that communities  
11 with lower percentages of black and brown residents  
12 saw a reduction in injuries and deaths during the  
13 latter half of the Vision Zero era, while lower  
14 income and minority areas experienced an increase.  
15 What steps are being taken to ensure that the  
16 residents of the city benefit equitably from efforts  
17 to reduce traffic violence and, when I talk about  
18 equity, just to kind of make sure we're talking  
19 apples to apples, it's not saying we're giving a  
20 community that is often resourced, let's say five new  
21 infrastructure projects and then one that's been  
22 historically under-resourced five new projects as  
23 well, because then that's not equity, because that  
24 under-resourced community is starting from a deficit.

2 Taking that into account, I'm interested in hearing  
3 DOT On that.

4 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. Is that the  
5 TA report that you referenced because it's not coming  
6 from DOT.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yes, and there  
8 has been reporting as well on this.

9 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I have a lot of  
10 respect for TA. Together as a former Council Member,  
11 I passed a bill reducing the speed limit to 25 miles  
12 per hour. We went together to Albany. They're great  
13 partners. However, we completely disagree on those  
14 findings. Because that report is based on the last  
15 three years, it's not accurate, and this is something  
16 that we expressed to T.A., but Paul can add more  
17 information.

18 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: No,  
19 that's right. It is looking at I believe 2020, 2021,  
20 and 2022 when, as the Commissioner mentioned in his  
21 testimony, Vision Zero has been a 10-year effort  
22 where we've invested all across the city and, in  
23 fact, our 10-year Capital Plan is the most equitable  
24 Capital Plan in the history of New York City DOT.  
25 We've billions of dollars slated for communities of

2 color. As the Commissioner mentioned, I would also  
3 point out in the report something, aside from the  
4 data that we disagree, we also disagree what seems to  
5 me a premise of the report, which is less community  
6 engagement is good for the projects. It's not what  
7 the Mayor expects us to do, it's not what the  
8 Commissioner has asked us to do and, quite frankly,  
9 it's not what you all expect us to do. We think  
10 community engagement strengthens a lot of the  
11 projects that we have, and we hope T.A. can start  
12 going to these communities side-by-side with us to  
13 make sure that they get the approval that we hope to  
14 get from communities of color.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The plan  
16 includes a PEG of 3 million dollars for Vision Zero  
17 education and outreach. These savings are baselined,  
18 and the funding is removed from the budget. Why is  
19 the Administration reducing education and outreach  
20 for traffic safety when we still see hundreds of  
21 fatalities on our streets each year? If this PEG was  
22 due to contract underspending, does this mean that  
23 the services the Department contracted were not  
24 implemented is the second part of that question as  
25 well.

2 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA:

3 Thank you, Chair. As I mentioned before, Vision Zero  
4 has three components, engineering, education, and  
5 enforcement. The fiscal climate had forced us to make  
6 very tough decisions. This is a reduction in our  
7 outreach and education campaigns. However, we are  
8 still doing a lot of work, both in-house and  
9 externally. The Commissioner mentioned that we're  
10 going to be launching an e-bike education campaign  
11 shortly. You're right. This is one that hurt, I'm not  
12 going to lie, but we are finding the resources  
13 internally to make sure that we continue the key  
14 component of Vision Zero, which is education.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I understand  
16 Vision Zero has been a priority for DOT, and so what  
17 did DOT feel could have been cut as opposed to Vision  
18 Zero because I understand it was like a backup PEG?

19 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Oh,  
20 you're getting inside baseball here. No, listen, we  
21 looked at everything. We looked at our operations. We  
22 looked at administration. There was a lot of PS  
23 accruals, for example, that we had to take too. It  
24 was a concerted effort to make sure that we weren't  
25 hitting one area of the agency more than others. We

2 tried to be fair and balanced, and that means that  
3 what traditionally is a Commissioner's office  
4 priority also needed to take a haircut, just like the  
5 other operational divisions.

6 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I would  
7 just add, within that same period of time, we put out  
8 a record 117 press releases in that period. We have  
9 more social interactions than we've ever had before  
10 so, even within that moment, we knew that we could  
11 successfully navigate those stormy waters.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: In the Fiscal  
13 '24 to '33 10-year Capital Plan, in your remarks, you  
14 mentioned nearly 4.2 billion in Vision Zero, but  
15 there is a difference from what we saw in the actual  
16 plan of 111 million. Where's the extra money and why  
17 wasn't it labeled as Vision Zero.

18 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Is  
19 there a specific, it's a large capital plan, and  
20 there may be some different figures. Can you repeat  
21 the question, please? Maybe you're talking about the  
22 cut.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So in the  
24 plan, there's 111 million that is labeled  
25 specifically as Vision Zero but, in the remarks, in

2 the testimony, it says 4.2 billion dollars so where's  
3 the rest of the money?

4 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: When  
5 we talk about Vision Zero in terms of capital  
6 dollars, mainly talking about street reconstruction,  
7 our sidewalk work, our signal work, so the 4.2  
8 billion dollars includes all those types of projects,  
9 and I'd be happy to provide a breakdown if that's  
10 helpful.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So then  
12 that's, to be fair, not necessarily Vision Zero, it's  
13 construction work that needed to happen?

14 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: It's  
15 construction work that includes Vision Zero  
16 components. For example, we wouldn't go on a street  
17 reconstruction to rebuild it just as it is. We always  
18 make provisions, area improvements on that street,  
19 whether it's expanding median lanes or bike lanes,  
20 widening sidewalks. They always have a Vision Zero  
21 component. These types of street reconstruction  
22 projects always have a Vision Zero component.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Going back to  
24 the PEG conversation, the November Plan included a  
25 revenue PEG of 42 million dollars in Fiscal '24 and

2 40 million dollars in Fiscals 2025 and 2026 due to  
3 additional revenue related to speed camera revenue  
4 from high speeding areas. Will any cameras be added  
5 or relocated as a part of this PEG?

6 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA:

7 Yeah, so we are not expecting to add new cameras. We  
8 are moving cameras around. Essentially, we've been  
9 looking at areas where we've seen a reduction in  
10 speeding where the cameras have successfully reduced  
11 speeding, and we're moving those to high-speed areas  
12 so we are moving them around the entire city, yes,  
13 but we're not expecting at this point to add new  
14 cameras. We operate about 2,200 cameras in about 750  
15 school zones.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Now, the areas  
17 that you haven't seen any improvement, has DOT taken  
18 any steps to dig deeper to understand what further  
19 investments may be needed to make that area or  
20 corridor safer?

21 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes, and this is  
22 a top priority for Mayor Eric Adams. Every two weeks,  
23 we have our discussion together, DOT, NYPD, Deputy  
24 Mayors, City Hall to go over any new thing that we  
25 can do to improve safety from the perspective of

2 Vision Zero. As I and Paul said before, Vision Zero  
3 has three E's, which is the engineer, redesigning  
4 major intersections, it's about putting more raised  
5 crosswalks, 1,000 daylighting that the Mayor  
6 announced, it's about reorganizing the signal system  
7 so every day we work hard and, because of that work,  
8 is that we've been able to be the city that had the  
9 lowest numbers of pedestrian fatality. As a father of  
10 two daughters and most of us, we had children,  
11 grandchildren, we know that we want for everyone to  
12 walk safe or to bike safe in the city of New York  
13 City, but we also know that's a world that required  
14 for us to always thinking what else can we do so as  
15 we do in the reality of fiscal responsible or any PEG  
16 that we have to do, we always give priority to  
17 maintaining the resources that we need to redesign  
18 the intersection, to other resources to educate our  
19 New Yorkers about the responsibility that they had to  
20 protect cyclists, to protect pedestrians, to protect  
21 senior citizens, to improve safety around the school  
22 so for us, led by Mayor Adams, it's a top priority to  
23 continue having the resources that we need again and  
24 it's about data-led decision. It's about where  
25 crashes are happening, and that's why we do a lot of



2 work with NYPD or the New York City Department of  
3 Health. Now we're also working with the Department of  
4 Education to be sure that when we look on everything  
5 that we have to do to improve safety, it's about  
6 looking at the box and seeing all the tools that we  
7 have that we can use.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What areas of  
9 the city have higher rates of projected speed camera  
10 revenue? What boroughs or Council districts in  
11 particular?

12 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Again, our  
13 approach at DOT and I was in that side for two years,  
14 that money that we get from, especially from crashes  
15 (INAUDIBLE). We hope that one day we don't get 1  
16 dollar from a speed camera so we don't make decisions  
17 based about where we can get more revenue. We make  
18 decision where crashes are happening so we will be  
19 moving around the city based about where data are  
20 showing that the year after speed camera will allow  
21 to be 24 hours, we were able to see a 30 percent  
22 decline of speeding and a 25 percent reduction of  
23 fatality so all we use to make decision where we  
24 bring the camera is not about the revenue, it's about  
25 where crashes are happening.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I hear you and  
3 I've heard that and I know in my short time as a  
4 Council Member, based on some of the reports that I  
5 see, one would argue that parts of Southeast Queens  
6 have not seen a decline, but we do have a lot of  
7 speed cameras and we do get traffic fatalities. I  
8 think about Davina Afokoba from Far Rockaway, a young  
9 10-year-old girl that was struck and pinned under a  
10 building and, even through my advocacy as Chair, how  
11 many times I had to go to DOT just to get some level  
12 of infrastructure placed there. I question how we're  
13 looking and prioritizing where the investments are  
14 going because I always say that cars drive the way  
15 that the roads are designed so how do we design them  
16 to slow the vehicles, how do design them so  
17 pedestrians are safe, and so I'm just curious in  
18 terms of when we talk about equity and where these  
19 cameras are placed, and this is why we passed the  
20 bill to bring out equity metrics from the Streets  
21 Plan. It was because we want to see how DOT is  
22 prioritizing the infrastructure dollars of the agency  
23 to truly keep pedestrians safe so just going back to  
24 my question and then I'm going to pivot to Council  
25 Member Rivera followed by Council Member Banks. I

2 would like to know what areas of the city have higher  
3 rates of projected speed camera revenues based on the  
4 boroughs and the Council Districts, and I also am  
5 interested to comparing and contrasting what  
6 infrastructure investments are happening in those  
7 Districts at the same time. Where are those, even if  
8 we had like a heat map that was created, where are  
9 those cameras and then let's heat it up and see where  
10 are the infrastructure dollars going, whose Districts  
11 are they going into, because there are some districts  
12 that I travel in and they have widened sidewalks that  
13 are amazing, they got their curb cuts, amazing. We  
14 have broken up streets and unpaved roads, potholes  
15 sinking holes in our District so I'm really  
16 interested in seeing hard facts, and I hear how we  
17 feel, but hard facts on what the data is showing us  
18 as it pertains to equity from DOT.

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, I would  
20 say, Chairman, that when I leave DOT, one of the  
21 areas where I want to be defined, besides my job as a  
22 Commissioner, having my (INAUDIBLE) my first ever  
23 commission and I oversee operation (INAUDIBLE) I  
24 might believe 90 percent of my job is to run the  
25 operation every day. It's about the 44,000

2 intersections, it's about the 800 bridges, about the  
3 ferries, about the signal, it's about the sidewalk,  
4 it's about the roadway. It's 27 percent of the land  
5 in New York City that is under our agency so I'm  
6 proud to be surrounded with a great team of operation  
7 that run this well, but the part that I want to add  
8 as a Commissioner, as Lin Manuel say, I'm not wasting  
9 my shot, is equity. Equity and M/WBE are two of the  
10 top priorities. As I fought as a Council Member for  
11 two years, I have brought the same energy, and I can  
12 say that the men and women at DOT, they have embraced  
13 so every decision that we make on how we distribute  
14 the resources, how we redesign intersection is coming  
15 for that approach, but I think that Margaret, if you  
16 don't mind to add a little bit to the first question,  
17 but on equity and what I can say, Chairman, I'm more  
18 than happy to sit down with you, more than happy to  
19 look at Council District by Council District to go  
20 with more detail. If we see any District that there  
21 is disparity, that there's a less investment, and I  
22 don't care the composition of the District. I am  
23 committed to be the Commissioner that invests the  
24 same amount of resources across all community  
25 regardless of the ethnic, social background on the

2 District so for me, again, as you know because you  
3 and I worked together for many year, equity is a top  
4 priority, but I want to follow with you and to  
5 compare (INAUDIBLE) how we invest.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And I'm  
7 looking forward to that followup, I'll say, because  
8 even through the Comptroller's recent reports, when  
9 we look at the MBE participation in particular with  
10 the capital projects, black participation is reported  
11 out as zero percent and, again, when you start to  
12 break it down by disparity and under-utilized groups,  
13 when we talk about M/WBES and MBES in particular,  
14 there's a lot of work for DOT to do so I look forward  
15 to sitting down with you looking District by District  
16 and I'm sorry.

17 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: By the way, DOT  
18 is the agency, and I'm proud and honored to be  
19 leading right now that has been identified as one of  
20 the role model across the agency in New York City on  
21 how we've been able to move those numbers on M/WBE  
22 from 11 percent when I got there to 24 percent as we  
23 have it right now, but Margaret has the answer for  
24 the first question and, if you don't mind, Paul also  
25 has something to add.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Sure.

3 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Thank  
4 you. An example of a corridor that had consistently  
5 high-speed camera violations was Secor which, as you  
6 know, we redesigned. What I'd like to suggest is  
7 maybe we come and sit with you and talk to you about  
8 corridors that we do see consistently high-speed  
9 camera violations within your District and brainstorm  
10 with you on corridors that we can.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I know, my  
12 Borough Commissioner knows I've asked for hard  
13 infrastructure on Secor, and I was not approved with  
14 it because I know it needs dollars and cents, but we  
15 have a plethora of speed cameras on Secor. I do  
16 appreciate though that some crosswalks were painted  
17 there. That was a good step, but we need some hard  
18 infrastructure on Secor to make it safer and I have  
19 asked for that.

20 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Okay,  
21 good, so we will follow up on that, and then I think  
22 what we should do is come back to you over a period  
23 of time and let you know how it's operating and what  
24 we're seeing and have we seen improvements and do we

2 want to relocate some cameras? Do we have other  
3 higher priority places to put those cameras?

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.  
5 Council Member Rivera.

6 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA:  
7 Madam Chair, if I may.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS; Oh, sorry,  
9 Paul.

10 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Can  
11 I just make one correction on the Comptroller M/WBE  
12 report? It's a methodology question. I think the  
13 Comptroller in their report included projects with  
14 federal dollars which, as you know, those have DBE  
15 requirements, those are disadvantaged business  
16 enterprises, so they're not part of Local 1 M/WBE  
17 reporting so there's just a difference in methodology  
18 and the 0 percent number is based on the federal  
19 projects which do not have M/WBE goals, they have DBE  
20 goals so I just wanted to make sure that was on the  
21 record.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And so even  
23 though they're going by the federal standards, in the  
24 event that an MBE is used, would that still not be  
25 included in the report?

2 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA:

3 Exactly. So the DBE and M/WBE are reported  
4 separately, so that's why you can't compare, they're  
5 the sort of apple to oranges. That was our...

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Because the  
7 section I'm talking about actually has a MBE  
8 category.

9 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: But  
10 there's no project that we would do that has 0  
11 percent...

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay.

13 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: So  
14 if it maybe has 0 percent M/WBE because it's a  
15 federal project that has DBE requirements...

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Understood.

17 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: So I  
18 just want to make sure that there's a distinction.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Understood.

20 Thank you.

21 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: We  
22 would never do a project that has 0 percent on either  
23 one.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
25 the clarification.



2 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you. Thank  
3 you, Madam Chair. I just want to thank you all for  
4 your testimony and for your partnership over the  
5 years. I guess now with you as Commissioner, we had  
6 the e-bike charging station at Astor Place. That was  
7 great at Cooper Square, I should say. I know we have  
8 a redesign of Broadway, 3rd Avenue, and 2nd Avenue on  
9 the horizon. Specifically, I'd say on 3rd Avenue,  
10 looking at 23rd and 24th Streets and, on 2nd Avenue,  
11 when you're ready to announce these changes, I have  
12 the perfect space to do it. It's on 2nd Avenue and  
13 20th Street, across the street from PS40, a lane that  
14 is clogged, a bus that is constantly blocked, the M  
15 15, highest ridership as we learned, in the city, and  
16 I think the school and the neighbors there would  
17 appreciate a redesign in that space probably more  
18 than anywhere else along Second Avenue. All right.  
19 Other parts of my District clearly have challenges. I  
20 think daylighting is something that we all really  
21 believe in. It has proven to be a great way to  
22 activate curb space, improve the pedestrian  
23 experience. I know that it's really important that we  
24 harden daylight spaces by placing infrastructure there,  
25 boulders, planters, bike racks. How much would it

2 cost to place hardened infrastructure in all existing  
3 daylight spaces, and do you know how much would it  
4 cost to harden the 1,000 daylight spaces that Mayor  
5 Adams committed to create each year?

6 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I will get Eric  
7 to get into more details, but, I can say that we are  
8 looking at the daylighting as using different way of  
9 how to accomplish our goal, and you know that we  
10 testified in front of you last year, even before that  
11 decision, we already been doing hundreds of  
12 daylighting every year, and the daylighting is one of  
13 the tools of many that we use to improve safety.  
14 Eric, if you don't mind.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Sure, and  
16 we'll have to get back to you with the detailed  
17 number but, just conceptually, there's different ways  
18 that we harden.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: All right, so hold  
20 on because I don't have a lot of time but, if you get  
21 back to me with the numbers, that would be great. Let  
22 me ask you about Open Streets because I only have  
23 about a minute. We love Open Streets. I remember when  
24 we passed the bill. It has seen substantial  
25 challenges. Recent reporting come out that Vanderbilt

2 and Fifth Avenue Open Streets, they're facing funding  
3 shortages. What is the funding allocated to DOT for  
4 Open Streets? Approximately, how much is DOT  
5 contributing to operating expenses per Open Street  
6 because the groups are reporting shortages of 20,000  
7 to 40,000 dollars, which for a volunteer-run group is  
8 a lot to fundraise and provide. Of course, I want to  
9 shout out the Hort on Avenue B, who does an amazing  
10 job of maintaining that space, but how can we work to  
11 provide increased direct funding to these volunteer-  
12 run organizations, and are we specifically looking at  
13 some of the streets that do the school streets  
14 because I think that's so important for the safety of  
15 the kids.

16 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, Council  
17 Member, as I said with other Council Members, you are  
18 one of the great champions for public safety, and we  
19 work together for all those years. So Open Street, as  
20 we know, is to put in context, the whole thing is  
21 Open Street. During COVID, that was when New York  
22 City saw thousands of Open Street, but Open Street  
23 during COVID was more. Here, we are putting the  
24 barricade and the block is closed because families  
25 needed space to walk (INAUDIBLE) is safe. In 2022, we

2 took Open Streets to a place where all of them, there  
3 were partners with CBOs, Business Improvement  
4 Districts, and in other cases then we put our  
5 resources. We have to have in mind that there was a  
6 lot of COVID money that also came. In 2020, there was  
7 more resources. The resources not only came through  
8 DOT, but they also came through other agencies so  
9 there was more. Now that we pass a rule and the Open  
10 Street is permanent, DOT continue having through a 7-  
11 million investment in the program, DOT can offer  
12 funding and direct operation support to partners  
13 executing Open Streets and, yes, with the article  
14 that talk about some Open Streets that (INAUDIBLE),  
15 there was like a few and they still are great  
16 partners. Like everyone that have any challenges in  
17 many of those cases, it was in those institution that  
18 they had to provide some paperwork. It was not about  
19 lack of funding from our end so we continue being a  
20 good place to have the financial aid in our hand to  
21 support Open Streets. One of the best programs, Open  
22 Street. Again, 34 Avenue has been identified as a  
23 national model, 1.8 million street that used to be  
24 used only by car, now is you for working middle-class  
25 New Yorkers to walk, art, entertainment, (INAUDIBLE),

2 so thank you, also Council Member, so yeah, we will  
3 continue having the financial to do the Open Street,  
4 but in those few cases that a CBO that they were not  
5 paid, in most cases, first of all, we are in  
6 conversation to help them to get the money but, in  
7 most of those cases, it was not lack of us having the  
8 money, it was more some paperwork that they were  
9 missing.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Okay. I look  
11 forward to the numbers for daylighting, Open Streets  
12 specifically. You mentioned federal funds, and I know  
13 we have a Greenway Plan. I'd love details on that,  
14 and I just want to thank the Chair for the time. Then  
15 street lighting, I know there have been some delays.  
16 All of us have intersections where street lighting  
17 can be improved, and we look forward to getting you  
18 that.

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: And if you don't  
20 mind, Paul has the numbers also for the Open Street.

21 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA:  
22 Yeah, Council Member, I think we were having a  
23 discussion earlier about the hard decisions that we  
24 made, but in a time of fiscal crisis, we actually  
25 allocated 30 million dollars for our Open Streets

2 program as support to provide staffing support,  
3 direct support for all Open Streets in the city. I  
4 think the article, you mentioned 5th Avenue, I think  
5 we do expect to have another partner for 5th Avenue,  
6 so we expect that Open Street to be open, and you're  
7 right, our reimbursements are about 20,000 dollars of  
8 direct reimbursements that we provide aside from the  
9 work that we do on the staffing side and other type  
10 of support.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Thank you, Madam  
12 Chair, and good afternoon, Commissioner, to your  
13 team.

14 Street maintenance is extremely important  
15 to the residents in New York City, and I wanted to  
16 know the PMMR reports that 70 percent of streets had  
17 a good maintenance rating in Fiscal Year 2023 and  
18 about 22.3 percent were rated as fair. The PMMR shows  
19 that a street is rated good or above the agency's  
20 target, but there are no targets for fair. What is  
21 DOT's target for the streets with a fair or better  
22 rating?

23 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Our First Deputy  
24 Commissioner Margaret Forgione will get into details  
25 to answer that question.

2 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Okay.

3 Thank you for the question, Council Member. Every  
4 year, we mill and pave about 1,150 lane miles. We  
5 allocate them throughout the city and then we base  
6 the actual streets that we mill and pave on our  
7 detailed inspections of the conditions and some of  
8 the conditions that you've cited. Sometimes there are  
9 cases where we have streets that are in fair or poor,  
10 but a capital project is coming so we do not pave  
11 them. Sometimes, there could be some concerns with  
12 that. If you have any particular, as always, areas of  
13 concern, you can let us know, and we'll make sure  
14 that we check into them. We don't have actual targets  
15 of 80 percent good, 10 percent fair, or anything of  
16 that nature.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: So there's no  
18 rating system that will determine what street...

19 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: What  
20 will actually be paved?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Right.

22 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE:  
23 Right. It needs to be in the lower part of fair  
24 category, usually poor have to do, very, very tiny  
25 percentage of poor are dealt with in capital projects

2 and sometimes on the lower end of good, we also pave  
3 them too.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Okay. Street  
5 lighting. I know that was brought up by my  
6 Colleagues. That's something that the 42nd Council  
7 District suffers with. I can name a litany of streets  
8 where multiple complaints have been put in through 3-  
9 1-1, and we're just getting the response from DOT. It  
10 seems like a back and forth, and I can give you one  
11 problematic block, which it's definitely a need of  
12 lighting which is on a major transportation strip in  
13 East New York, and we're not getting the support. The  
14 residents constantly complain that they put in a  
15 complaint to 3-1-1 and nothing is being done, and  
16 it's been problematic. I could show you even before I  
17 was in the City Council where there's been complaints  
18 going back five or six or seven years and it's a  
19 block that needs lighting because there's a lot of  
20 activity, if you know what I mean, on that block, and  
21 I believe if the lighting was there, it would  
22 definitely curtail some of the activity, but these  
23 are some of the things, I think, that are spread  
24 throughout my District, and I need your assistance on  
25 this, Commissioner, I really do so when we talk about



2 equity this is something I think needs to be focused  
3 on and also, too, if we can have a sidebar  
4 conversation on the oversaturation of cameras in my  
5 District, the speed cams, I would definitely love to  
6 have that conversation with you.

7 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE:  
8 Council Member, a quick question, so the block in  
9 question, it's not that there's existing lighting  
10 that is not functioning. It's that additional  
11 lighting needs to be added. Is that correct?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: No, the light  
13 that's existing is not functioning, and we would  
14 definitely, if we can get additional lighting, that  
15 would definitely help out, but the existing light is  
16 not functioning, and we can get you that information.

17 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Could  
18 you get us that location. We will follow up  
19 immediately and we'll also assess if there needs to  
20 be...

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: I'll get it to you  
22 dating back five years back.

23 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Okay,  
24 and we don't even need that. If you get me the  
25 location, we will make sure we get the light back on.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: First of all,  
4 thank you for you running on a record of your  
5 commitment on transportation.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: And we noticed  
8 that, as you were running, as you were elected, you  
9 were also very clear on your commitment to be a  
10 leader in improving safety for pedestrians, for  
11 cyclists, supporting both leg and bike lane. Those  
12 things are important for us because this is like,  
13 whatever we do, we have to put in context that we are  
14 in the most dense city in the whole nation. I always  
15 say when the Mayor asks a question, what are you  
16 doing DOT? For me, it's about if the signals are  
17 working, if the lights are working, if we're taking  
18 care of the pothole, taking care of the roadway, then  
19 we have the time for the other work that we do so  
20 whatever, not only with you, but as all the Council  
21 Members know, we are committed. Mayor Adams has  
22 instructed all agency, Commissioners to say work  
23 close with all Council Members so whatever is  
24 important for you, it's priority for us so Margaret  
25 will follow with you.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Thank you for your  
3 commitment. If I just may get 30 more seconds, Madam  
4 Chair? Bike lanes is an issue in my District. We're  
5 one of the Districts that there have been bike lanes  
6 placed in certain areas that have created a public  
7 safety issue. I was listening to your statement just  
8 now. Quite the contrary. We want certain bike lanes  
9 removed from those areas and placed in areas where  
10 doesn't cause a public safety matter, and I believe  
11 DOT actually came out to my District a couple of  
12 months ago and did a walk-through on a particular  
13 bike lane on Cozine, which is right across the street  
14 from, it's in the middle of a NYCHA development and a  
15 a condominium, Fairfield or Meadowood, and the  
16 residents said loud and clear that they didn't want  
17 those bike lanes and they were put there. Not only  
18 that, but we lost parking spaces and, as you do know  
19 what the conversions that's taking place in NYCHA,  
20 the new tenants that are coming in so we don't have  
21 the parking, the bike lanes are putting pedestrians,  
22 putting the folks who are driving, coming out of the  
23 parking lots in danger and it's just been a mess so  
24 we can finally get a commitment to have that bike

2 lane removed, I would love to have a conversation  
3 with you about that going forward. Thank you.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Sure. We're  
5 always happy to keep a conversation going, but just  
6 on Cozine and Wortman, the reason we did that  
7 project, we spent two years working with the schools  
8 and many other residents in the area. It was a  
9 dangerous street. It had a lot of speeding and rather  
10 than just go with enforcement, rather than just go  
11 with speed cameras, we wanted to make sure that  
12 neighbor got the same level of investment, the same  
13 types of redesigns that we do elsewhere in the city,  
14 which we hadn't done as well all around the city so I  
15 think what we'd like to do is get back to you with  
16 the data of is it causing more crashes...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Well, I got the  
18 data already. I don't want you to waste your time on  
19 bringing me, we know the data. It was expressed to us  
20 who was in support of it but, at that time, every  
21 elected official in the District said no to the bike  
22 lane, the Community Board said no to the bike lane so  
23 if you can bring that data to me, I'll accept that,  
24 but we need to have a deeper conversation as to where  
25 these bike lanes are being placed and really take

2 into consideration the desires of the community.

3 Thank you.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: We understand  
5 that. You said that the street is more dangerous. I  
6 think that's not what we're seeing. We're seeing that  
7 the street is really safer, and that's the data that  
8 we'd like to go through with you before we do  
9 something that we think would make the street more  
10 dangerous...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Well, I live two  
12 blocks away from it so we can agree to disagree on  
13 that, and there are a multitude of residents that  
14 live there, that cross that street, that live there  
15 day-in and day-out that would tell you different so  
16 if you want to come and purchase an apartment or rent  
17 an apartment over there and see what your experience  
18 may be, I'll invite you to do that, but I would  
19 prefer to have a productive conversation on how we  
20 can be more inclusive in making sure that the  
21 community is involved in the decision-making process  
22 before bike lanes are placed in my District. Thank  
23 you.

24 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We will  
25 definitely follow with you and, again, this is like

2 (INAUDIBLE) reality where now we have to have this  
3 conversation about this Street Master Plan, doing the  
4 bike lane and the bus lane, because then, overall, we  
5 all agree with the numbers of the law that we have to  
6 follow or the numbers of bike lanes and bus lanes  
7 that we have to do but, then when you go through some  
8 Districts, then we have those realities, and then we  
9 have to come back to you, say, here we are able to do  
10 these numbers because of those realities so more than  
11 happy to continue sharing those data. As I said, as  
12 you were running in the street, a community, the  
13 advocate community, they also were happy with your  
14 proposal, your agenda, your vision for  
15 transportation, but more than happy to follow the  
16 details about that particular piece of the package.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Thank you, Madam  
18 Chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.  
20 We've been joined by Council Member Salamanca and  
21 Minority Leader Borelli. Council Member Salamanca  
22 will ask questions.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yes, thank you,  
24 Madam Chair. How are you? Good afternoon,  
25 Commissioner and your team.

2 Commissioner, first I wanted to thank  
3 you. We finally have a Bronx Borough Commissioner for  
4 DOT, Anthony Perez and, yes, yes, yes, trust me, and  
5 I'm happy that I put the pressure on your agency to  
6 finally get it done and you got it done and I can say  
7 that your Commissioner has been doing a good job and  
8 making his rounds throughout the borough of the  
9 Bronx.

10 There are certain issues that I'm going  
11 to bring up that are issues that are prior to this  
12 Commissioner here so I hope, Mr. Commissioner, you  
13 don't get too worried about these issues because  
14 these are major concerns that I have with DOT for  
15 years. I'm going to start first with your carshare  
16 program that you have. I know that when you rolled it  
17 out there may have been some notification to our  
18 offices into community boards but what I'm seeing and  
19 throughout my District is that you're normally taking  
20 two parking spots, and my neighbors are telling me  
21 they're not seeing some of these vehicles being  
22 utilized or, at times, we're seeing that these two  
23 parking spots that have been taken are not occupied  
24 at all for weeks on end, and it's valuable parking  
25 that you've taken from our community. Is there data

2 to show how often these vehicles for carshare are  
3 being used that depending on specific locations.

4 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We're able to get  
5 back and get those data and share that data with you,  
6 but what we know is that the Zipcar program has been  
7 a program, very popular, very supported. People have  
8 been using those services, but I'm more than happy  
9 again to a look back to the team and look for those  
10 data.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So that  
12 information is not public on your website.

13 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Again, as the  
14 question being asked right now, let me look and get  
15 back to you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I think that  
17 it's important information because there may be  
18 certain neighborhoods where parking has been removed  
19 for different reasons, and there's valuable parking  
20 that is sitting there and again, going back to the  
21 examples, there's parking spots that are just empty,  
22 just sitting there, and people are scared,  
23 constituents are scared to get a violation if they  
24 park there.



2 I brought this up at the last hearing  
3 when you were present and I was here, is the  
4 Westchester redesign project. I know that you did a  
5 walk-through with me about a year ago. I did a walk  
6 through with the Commissioner. He's going to follow  
7 up on certain recommendations that we did on bringing  
8 back parking, but I want to warn my Colleagues, just  
9 be mindful of these redesigns that DOT implements.  
10 You have individuals that do not live in our  
11 communities that are making decisions for our  
12 communities and are creating major congestion in our  
13 communities. Commissioner, if I tell you that every  
14 day on Westchester Avenue between Whitlock and  
15 Southern Boulevard, there is major congestion, I am  
16 not lying, and my constituents are angry with me  
17 because DOT made these changes. Now in terms of when  
18 a design in this magnitude is implemented, when does  
19 DOT come back to do a review of their implementation  
20 and how it's affecting that immediate community?

21 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. Eric will  
22 get back on when do we get back and share, but what  
23 we have seen, Council Member, in most areas where we  
24 do projects, they have been improving safety, and we  
25 are responsible to do our planning, thinking about

2 the safety of our people. New York City right now is  
3 a role model across the United States on reducing  
4 pedestrian fatality. We can get back to you again,  
5 share those data but, share on how do when do we get  
6 back to the stakeholders, share the outcome, but most  
7 of the project, the Council has been supportive of  
8 Vision Zero and the third E beside education and  
9 enforcement, one is redesigning. When I did my  
10 project in uptown, I didn't, even against many  
11 stakeholders in my community, but what I have seen is  
12 about in those areas where we did those projects,  
13 there have been a reduction of pedestrian fatality.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Commissioner,  
15 let me, please, my time ran out, and I thank you, and  
16 I understand that the priority here is to increase  
17 pedestrian safety but, when you incorporate a  
18 redesign and you have major congestion, what you have  
19 in my community are drivers that are desperate, are  
20 upset, and stop following traffic rules because of  
21 the congestion and the implementation that was put  
22 in. Now, with this redesign, I'm not getting more  
23 enforcement, I'm not getting NYPD to come and stand  
24 there and do more enforcement because I prefer them  
25 to go out and fight crime and so I feel that these

2 plans are leaving our communities, especially  
3 communities of color, out to dry, especially a  
4 community such as mine that has major construction  
5 happening with the Sheridan and the Brockton  
6 Boulevard and has major fairways that gets you  
7 throughout the entire city or different states so I  
8 just feel that this plan, again, while it was  
9 designed to increase safety, there was no plan to  
10 address congestion, and that is why I am asking if or  
11 when there would be a review that you can send back  
12 to the communities to say, hey, we increased  
13 pedestrian safety because accidents, pedestrian  
14 accidents have decreased, number one, and, number  
15 two, be honest and realistic about the congestion and  
16 the time that it takes to get from point A to point B  
17 because of this implementation of this redesign.

18 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. Eric will  
19 add on that when he come that part related when we  
20 get back to the community, but, Council Member,  
21 before closing on that, in the first comment that you  
22 may ask on how DOT go through the community and get  
23 into project. As I said at the beginning, I spent one  
24 day a month, yes, being in the field of each Council  
25 Member in each borough, and I think in your case, not

2 only Anthony is a great Commissioner, but Yalisa  
3 (phonetic) is someone that also hold a great  
4 leadership so from your District to the other 50  
5 Council Districts, in this Administration, being in  
6 the community, sending ambassadors, members of DOT  
7 that look like the community is a priority, and we've  
8 been very committed to do the community engagement so  
9 most of the projects that we do is the result of the  
10 community engagement.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Sure, and I  
12 think in some ways Westchester is an example of, we  
13 don't do these projects and then walk away, right? We  
14 do them and then then if there's changes that need to  
15 be made, and I hear you that we need to maybe look at  
16 some more, but if there's changes, we keep working  
17 with them and, on a typical project, we look at six  
18 months to a year afterwards to give people a chance  
19 to adjust and make changes. Obviously on that one, we  
20 heard the issues right away. We came sooner, but we  
21 can put together a review as we do for all projects  
22 that looks at safety of all types but also looks at  
23 traffic flow and how long it takes to get down  
24 Westchester Avenue and other streets, and we can look  
25 at that all as a package, and we understand that

2 there are different effects in different places and,  
3 as the Commissioner said, the top goal we have is to  
4 make the streets safer. We try to do that while being  
5 cognizant of all the other goals that we have on the  
6 streets in terms of mobility and creating quality  
7 public space, and we are more than happy to put that  
8 data together and share it and review it with you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Yeah. Finally,  
10 Commissioner, I just want to thank your two Deputy  
11 Commissioners because they've been accessible as well  
12 and they've done walk-throughs with myself, but I'm  
13 going to keep pushing the envelope because we have to  
14 address the congestion there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,  
16 Council Member Salamanca. I'm just going to ask a  
17 couple of questions on behalf of my Colleagues that  
18 are a part of the Staten Island delegation. The first  
19 question pertains to service interruptions overnight.  
20 Just wanting to get some updates on how hiring up is  
21 going since the contract was signed.

22 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: You want to take  
23 it?

24 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: So  
25 I'll talk about the hiring. We are very excited and

2 grateful that the Administration settled on the MIBA  
3 contract, which we've been waiting since 2010. We do  
4 expect that the wages that were historically very  
5 low, we essentially, the way it worked, we couldn't  
6 post for the new salaries until the settlement was a  
7 done deal so we do hope that will help increase the  
8 staffing at the Staten Island Ferry. I would also  
9 note that most of the positions in the Staten Island  
10 Ferry are not subject to the hiring freeze since they  
11 are grant funded, so that is also very helpful for us  
12 to staff up. I'll turn it over to Margaret in terms  
13 of the service disruptions, which I understand have  
14 come down.

15 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: We  
16 are getting positive feedback in our recruitment  
17 efforts as a result of the higher wages as a result  
18 of the settlement of the contract so we are doing  
19 well, and we think that we're going to continue to  
20 see the effect overnight come down further over the  
21 next few months. We've already seen improvements. One  
22 other thing I wanted to mention is that we're doing a  
23 marine oiler training program, which has been one of  
24 our very difficult to recruit titles and the way the  
25 ferry works, of course, unless you have the full

2 complement of staff members on the boat cannot sail,  
3 right, so if you're down, even one person, you're not  
4 going to be able to make it. So in certain titles,  
5 we've had some difficulties and we're developing a  
6 training program, which will help us to recruit and  
7 retain this critical title and..

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: (INAUDIBLE)

9 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: If  
10 that's effective, yes, absolutely and, if that's  
11 effective, we might look at doing it with other  
12 titles as well.

13 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We hired almost  
14 80 people last year just for the ferry, and I got to  
15 say (INAUDIBLE) as a person who is in charge of the  
16 ferry with the leadership of Margaret, they're doing  
17 a great job. I also want to take advantage to  
18 recognize Rosanne who is here from the Staten Island.  
19 One of the things that we're doing, as I come to  
20 testify, to be sure that all the Borough  
21 Commissioners, from Rosanne Staten Island, Keith from  
22 Brooklyn, Anthony from the Bronx, Nicole from Queens,  
23 and Ed from Manhattan. They all are here because as  
24 we have to respond answers related to the budget,  
25 they also here to be the ears, to be sure that we

2 follow with all the 51 Council Members or any local  
3 issue that you bring to us.

4 Next, reliable ferry service was the  
5 second part of the question, like reducing service  
6 interruptions, advanced notice of service  
7 interruptions, and then the last question is what is  
8 the total number of lane miles paved this year on  
9 Staten Island and how does it compare to previous  
10 years?

11 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: It's  
12 going to be very, very similar to previous years, and  
13 I'm trying to stall while we get you the exact  
14 number.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: While you're  
16 doing that, if you could also answer the reliable  
17 ferry service piece in terms of the advanced notice  
18 of service interruptions.

19 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Okay.  
20 As soon as we realize, and usually again, it's on the  
21 overnight, as soon as we realize we are going to have  
22 a service delay, we put it out in our social media on  
23 Facebook. Often, again, it's overnight and we get  
24 that out often in the late afternoon.



2 Staten Island paving is about 160 lane  
3 miles per year.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And in  
5 previous years, it's been?

6 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: You  
7 know, it has fluctuated according to how we've been  
8 funded. Fiscal '20 was 157 lane miles, Fiscal '22 was  
9 156, '21 during COVID was all the way down to 116 so  
10 it fluctuates but, at this point, it should be pretty  
11 consistent at around 160.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. Also, in  
13 terms of commuter vans, I have a question as it  
14 pertains to the commuter van stop in downtown  
15 Brooklyn. Just wanted to know when that stop will be  
16 restored. I believe that stop was taken away. It was  
17 supposed to be temporarily, but it has not been  
18 restored as my understanding.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Can you just  
20 clarify which stop? There's a couple of commuter van  
21 stops in downtown Brooklyn.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Do you know  
23 which ones you've taken away downtown?  
24  
25

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: I'm not  
3 familiar with that offhand but, if you get us the  
4 location, we can...

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'll circle  
6 back to the location as I'm waiting for it.

7 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: If  
8 you can get that to us by the end of the hearing,  
9 that would be great.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Of course,  
11 cute, but I'm glad you did that because guess what?  
12 We're going to talk about Streets Plan now. I was  
13 saving this for being able to go into much more  
14 detail, but we're talking about the stop that's on  
15 Smith Street so, while you come back on that, we'll  
16 delve into Streets Plan. In yesterday's State of the  
17 City, Speaker Adams spoke about holding the City  
18 accountable for the Streets Master Plan, which sets  
19 out legal mandates for construction that DOT must  
20 meet. DOT continues to fall short of these  
21 requirements. That includes building just five of a  
22 required 30 protected bus lanes citywide. Anyway, in  
23 your latest Streets Plan, you wrote, "given fiscal  
24 challenges that hit New York City in 2023, serious  
25 actions were taken citywide, including a hiring

2 freeze and a 5 percent Program to Eliminate the Gap.  
3 In multiple financial plans, New York City DOT did  
4 our best to protect services but, unfortunately, many  
5 programs, including supporting the Streets Plan, had  
6 to be reduced." Why don't we see reinvestments in  
7 these areas in the Preliminary Plan, and do you  
8 expect further investments in the Executive Budget?

9 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: I'll  
10 take it from the budget perspective. As we mentioned  
11 in the Streets Plan, yes, there were some impacts. We  
12 tried to protect essentially the funding levels at  
13 the outputs that were producing. We had a record-  
14 breaking year this year in terms of protected bike  
15 lanes, but we did have to take some PEGs, especially  
16 on the OTPS side so that's barriers, gantry poles,  
17 street lights, it was a very difficult decision, but  
18 I think we've done an amazing job not only surpassing  
19 a lot of the goals in the Streets Plan, like the open  
20 space goals, but also doing things that are not in  
21 the Streets Plan. I know you've heard this before,  
22 but the bike lane widening, the bike lane hardening.  
23 As a cyclist, to me, that's a new protected bike lane  
24 that was not envisioned when the Streets Plan was  
25 created in 2019. We're not counting those towards the

2 protected bike lane miles, although I think we  
3 should, because they've already been counted in other  
4 ways so we're trying to do and we'll continue to  
5 exceed in a lot of areas, and I think You saw a  
6 perfect example of why it's tough to have these  
7 conversations with all the Council Members. Some of  
8 these projects are not always welcome. You just heard  
9 Council Member Banks asking us to take away a bike  
10 lane but, listen, we're going to continue doing what  
11 we have. We're going to continue striving for record-  
12 breaking years, and we'll continue having these  
13 conversations. I would also mention the Budget  
14 Director in his testimony mentioned two very  
15 important factors. That is not just OTPS dollars.  
16 Staffing, space, vehicles, those are all things that  
17 we've mentioned before that are..

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I often feel  
19 like DOT moves that marker. Sometimes it's the  
20 Council Members, sometimes it's funding.

21 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: It's  
22 not a single...

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Sometimes it's  
24 supply chain. Like every hearing, we talk about why  
25 DOT is not meeting its mandated goals and we get a

2 different reason each time so it's hard for us as a  
3 legislative body to be able to support this work, to  
4 help the agency be able to achieve these goals  
5 because if we don't have a clear idea of what is  
6 holding up the progress, how can we move forward?

7 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I think we've  
8 been consistent.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No.

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I feel that, one,  
11 definitely having support all Council Members as we  
12 go through their District to do the bus lane and bike  
13 lane will definitely make a big difference for us.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I also think  
15 that's a poor excuse for a number of reasons, and I'm  
16 sorry, Commissioner and, one, it's not the Council  
17 Member's jobs to determine where these are going.  
18 It's up for the agency to work with community and  
19 position them where the community would like to see  
20 it. I also feel like it is unfair to continue to  
21 place that blame when the agency hasn't done its part  
22 because, again, every time we come into these  
23 hearings, I hear something different. If we were to  
24 go back to the record, every hearing, we've literally  
25 heard something different. We've heard supply chain

2 and we understand COVID happened. We've heard  
3 staffing issues, and this was even before the hiring  
4 freeze. So each time it changes, and there's not  
5 really full transparency also in terms of what is  
6 happening and, not for nothing, when the agency wants  
7 to place a bike lane somewhere, regardless of what  
8 the Council Member says or the community, DOT has  
9 done it. When you look on Beach 20th Street in  
10 Rockaway where all of the merchants and the community  
11 in that area said do not place this hard  
12 infrastructure bike lane right here, DOT still placed  
13 it there. When the community came out against having  
14 it on Secor, when there is a parallel bike lane on  
15 the boardwalk, DOT placed it there, so to say that  
16 because the community or the Council Member is doing  
17 it, we're not holding it up because when DOT has the  
18 political will to do it, they have done it.

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Again, I feel  
20 that, and that is another conversation that we can  
21 follow, I think that we've been very consistent on,  
22 one, to continue supporting, understanding that the  
23 Streets Master Plan is a law, a law that I had the  
24 honor to be a co-prime as a Chairman, I pass the  
25 bill. Second, this Administration is committed to the

2 Street Master Plan. While we are adding that there's  
3 other things also that we do, right now that is  
4 supported by all of all from an Open Street, things  
5 that Paul mentioned in dining out is not part of the  
6 Street Master Plan. When it came to two of those  
7 areas, which is about the bus lane and bike lane,  
8 definitely sometime, we have the whole plan, but  
9 sometimes there's challenges that we face, especially  
10 through some part of the city that communities,  
11 elected officials, other, they are not supporting all  
12 those projects in those communities. However, as I  
13 say, even with all these challenges, and I repeat it  
14 again, New York City has built more protected bike  
15 lanes that all cities have.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Absolutely. We  
17 see the bike lanes as like the top priority for DOT,  
18 but we see with the bus lanes, as congestion pricing  
19 is nearing, we are not prioritizing how we are being  
20 able to create that infrastructure to address getting  
21 communities that are from the furthest parts of the  
22 city into where they need to go.

23 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Bus lane is a top  
24 priority for us too and more than happy to, again, I  
25 know that, you have toured many Council Districts,

2 looking for different need that they have, more than  
3 happy again to see that with you as the Chairwoman,  
4 and this goes with you, our plan to get all those bus  
5 lane because in most cases also there have been  
6 places in the city that we want to do the bus lane  
7 that some Council Members, they're saying not in my  
8 District so more than happy to sit down with you and  
9 see how it can be helpful to us as we go across the  
10 five boroughs to do the bus lanes that is mandated in  
11 the Streets Master Plan.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And I'm  
13 willing to work with you on that, and I know we've  
14 had conversations, even with Southeast Queens. I  
15 think sometimes it gets messaged out like Members are  
16 solely against bus lanes or bike lanes, but it's not  
17 necessary that they're against it. It's nuances to  
18 it. As Council Member Salamanca said, we have people  
19 who are not familiar with the community and the  
20 movement of the community. You may come there at 2  
21 o'clock in the afternoon and see one dynamic on one  
22 day, but not really taking into account what members  
23 of the community feel so there are times where I've  
24 seen Members literally ask DOT, we would like to see  
25 a bus lane in a particular area and then DOT will



2 ignore that request and they will put it somewhere  
3 else. I've seen that also with the bus lanes so,  
4 again, I think there's some work to be done on it,  
5 but the bus lanes in particular are extremely  
6 important as we're looking at congestion pricing to  
7 make sure people can get to where they need to go. I  
8 think about Council Member Lee's District that's very  
9 bus heavy. My own District as well and Council Member  
10 Narcisse in Brooklyn and so many others.

11                   Considering that the Department of  
12 Transportation has not met the its mandated targets  
13 in the Street Plan, does DOT believes that the  
14 current level of funding is sufficient?

15                   COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: With the funding  
16 we have, we will be able to do the work and, if we  
17 would need more resources, we go back to OMB. We go  
18 back and make those asks but, so far, we have  
19 planning to have a financial support that we need to  
20 accomplish our goal from 2024.

21                   CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So then why in  
22 the Streets Plan did you did you acknowledge the  
23 fiscal challenges impacting your ability to meet the  
24 mandate?

2 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA:

3 Yeah, that's right. We did take a OTPS PEG on Streets  
4 Plan-related matters. What we mean about we have the  
5 proper level of funding is we have the proper level  
6 of funding to continue doing the amount of projects  
7 that we've been doing in the past, which have been  
8 record-breaking.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But they're  
10 still not meeting the goals.

11 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: So let me ask, if  
12 you think about where we have failed, which is the  
13 area of the Streets Master Plan that you feel that we  
14 have not accomplished?

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Particularly  
16 the bus lane.

17 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Bus lane, and I  
18 can tell you that funding is not the only reason.  
19 Like when we couldn't do (INAUDIBLE), it was not just  
20 about the funding. When you go through other places  
21 in Brooklyn, other locations, it's not about the  
22 funding so I think it is important, again, as I said,  
23 we would love to sit down with you so that we can  
24 identify those areas.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What about the  
3 areas that you haven't received the pushback? Have  
4 you prioritized those areas to at least still  
5 continue to build it out?

6 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes, and I would  
7 say that, as I said before I've been going around as  
8 you have, doing the tour, walk-through with different  
9 Council Members in different parts of the city. As a  
10 Commissioner beside that, I have a great team from  
11 the intergovernmental and probably Rick can also add  
12 a little bit about it or Rick Rodriguez on how are we  
13 doing the community engagement. Why don't you share a  
14 little bit about what is the work that we do in the  
15 community engagement because I think that in the last  
16 two years, the DOT has definitely been taking that  
17 approach to have a strong community engagement, Rick.

18 So the reality is that we have a great  
19 intergovernmental division that works directly with  
20 each of the Council Member that we go and present the  
21 project to you guys, and we also have a, I'm  
22 (INAUDIBLE) since I became a Commissioner and I  
23 brought a person to be in charge of connecting DOT  
24 with immigrants community. I'm a (INAUDIBLE). I can  
25 say, I don't know which Council Member had not met or

2 visited the District but, if there is any, there's  
3 few. In this year, I have walked with most of the  
4 Council Members and, not only myself, I've been sure  
5 that the team know that the direction not for me  
6 only, it's from Mayor Eric Adams. Mayor Eric Adams  
7 said go and meet with the Council Member, go and meet  
8 with other elected official, be sure that they are  
9 included so I feel that we definitely can always look  
10 on how we can do better improve the engagement, but I  
11 can say right now if we go back on the Streets Master  
12 Plan and just on the bus lane, it's not just about  
13 resources. Resources are one of the pieces, but the  
14 other most important one is about the support from  
15 some community where we want to build those bus  
16 lanes.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And then also  
18 in terms of the bus stop upgrades, only 54 of the 500  
19 were mandated so what's the reason for that?

20 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: I  
21 can take it from the budget perspective. The reality,  
22 last time we came to testify, we said that we were  
23 working with the selected contractor to do the work.  
24 The prices came in way higher than we expected and in  
25 a time of very difficult decisions, we needed to make

2 a pivot so financial uncertainty so we're going to be  
3 maintaining the current RTPIs and bus stop  
4 improvements and, in the future when things get  
5 better, we're going to be thinking of a way to  
6 install new ones but, at this point, we're just going  
7 to be maintaining the current real time passenger  
8 information.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So in that  
10 regard, are you saying that's a budgetary reason?

11 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: It  
12 is part of the conversations that we're having with  
13 City Hall and OMB, yes.

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: But  
15 also, again, it would be highly irresponsible of the  
16 agency to be spending over what we know that a  
17 project should be costing. This is about being  
18 fiscally responsible as well.

19 I just wanted to go back to the question  
20 about community outreach for bus projects in  
21 particular. Again, some of the most thoughtful  
22 individuals are going door to door, reaching out to  
23 small businesses, working with community boards. We  
24 have over 10 languages that we're working with to  
25 make sure that people are hearing information and

2 receiving information in their native tongue, and  
3 that's baseline. You see the different ways that we  
4 work exceptionally hard to work on when we're  
5 receiving some of that community pushback. Again, our  
6 engagement strategies are robust and profoundly  
7 intense.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Has DOT been  
9 working with like SBS to your point in terms of going  
10 and talking to the merchants?

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes, we  
12 have, and they're one of our closest partners for  
13 this Dining Out NYC as well.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Just going  
15 back really quickly, I'm going to come back to  
16 Streets Plan. In terms of the locations for the  
17 commuter vans, one is in front of 140 Schermerhorn  
18 Street. Another one is between Livingston and  
19 Schermerhorn. Another one is on Lewiston between Hoyt  
20 and Smith. There's one on Flatbush Avenue as well  
21 that is on the southbound side on the corner of  
22 Avenue U. Those are some of the different locations.  
23 I guess they were taken down. They were supposed to  
24 go back up. I'm not sure what happened.

2 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Okay,  
3 we'll report back to you on that.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Yeah, the one  
5 that you had mentioned was taken down for  
6 construction, so we expect to put it back up when  
7 construction is finished there. We'll check into all  
8 those locations. I don't know that they all got taken  
9 down recently, but we'll figure out what's going on  
10 there.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Going back to  
12 Street's Plan. The transit signal priority also, was  
13 that also because of funding?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Yeah, I think  
15 we've been maintaining at 750 intersections for  
16 transit signal priority year over year. The target  
17 went up from 750 to 1,000, and I think we're just..

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The benchmark  
19 is 1,000 over 2023.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Right, the  
21 benchmark the first year was 750, the second year was  
22 1,000. We continued at 750, and that's about really  
23 staffing. That's something we do primarily in-house.  
24 We have signal engineers that go and look at each of  
25

2 these intersections. 750 is a tremendous number. Like  
3 we are doing...

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I didn't go  
5 back to a question I asked...

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: (INAUDIBLE)  
7 20 or 30.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: In like a  
9 previous hearing, which was, do you feel that the  
10 benchmarks are realistic for the agency because it  
11 seems to be the agency hasn't been able to meet these  
12 goals and, while I hear you, you're like, okay, we've  
13 done 750 before, we decided we're going to keep going  
14 and doing 750, but the goal is 1,000.

15 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I think that  
16 probably we should, again, you as someone doing your  
17 job as a Chairman of this Committee, as well as  
18 understand, like this job from the side. Probably, we  
19 should also follow that conversation because..

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: That's what  
21 I'm trying to understand right now on the record.

22 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: (INAUDIBLE) that  
23 number, but I also feel leaving with the Streets  
24 Master Plan, like, as I said this, we are committed  
25 to work toward our numbers, but then I think it's



2 important that also we look at it and revise, is the  
3 number of bus lane, is the numbers of bike lane  
4 numbers (INAUDIBLE) that as we, as a Council, voted  
5 in the past in the Streets Master Plan, something  
6 that we (INAUDIBLE), like from this end we work hard  
7 24/7 to work toward that goal but, as I say, all the  
8 challenges that we have, that also I think it's  
9 important to probably sit down and have those  
10 conversations with you.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No, I  
12 definitely welcome the conversations as well.

13 I know Council Member Louis had a  
14 followup question.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Madam  
16 Chair. You actually asked one of them. It was  
17 regarding the DOT commuter van stops. They actually  
18 have not been restored. One of them is on Flatbush  
19 Avenue, and the Chair mentioned the other one so if  
20 we could get an update on that. There are people in  
21 the audience right now that want that information, so  
22 I just want to give you a heads up on that.

23 I do want to circle back on the community  
24 engagement that was shared earlier. Community  
25 engagement with DOT is ineffective, and the community

2 ambassadors, I don't believe are provided the correct  
3 framework in order to engage the community the way  
4 the agency may be expecting them to do so not only  
5 are we failing the ambassadors, we're failing the  
6 community, and we're failing overall the framework  
7 and infrastructure in order for us to all be working  
8 together for safety purposes so I just wanted to  
9 highlight that, but I wanted to know if you all could  
10 provide an update on the carshare pilot program and  
11 can we get a commitment to move and eliminate  
12 particular stops? I mention this at every  
13 Transportation hearing and every time I could get in  
14 front of you all. It's unfair to put carshare spots  
15 in front of people's homes, especially if they are  
16 wheelchair bound and if they have disabilities. Those  
17 particular spots still have not been removed out of  
18 my District and Council District 46, and also I  
19 wanted to just quickly highlight I was a proud  
20 supporter of Sammy's Law. It's a policy that needed  
21 to be implemented, but the saturation of cameras in  
22 BIPOC and black communities and neighborhoods to  
23 support red light, speed cameras, everything that  
24 you're asking us to support is also going to be  
25 ineffective for our communities. The approach to be

2 aggressive to us to support these particular  
3 projects, I don't think it's fair, and then it causes  
4 contention amongst all of us. Therefore, we cannot be  
5 effective with you so I'm asking if we could get a  
6 commitment the same way you're asking for  
7 implementation for speed cameras, which I support  
8 Sammy's Law, the same way you're asking for red light  
9 cameras, you have to put in the same approach and  
10 aggression for speed bumps and speed cushions as had  
11 been asked by my Colleagues over and over again. Can  
12 we get that commitment to have a conversation, you  
13 all sit with the Chair, you know, I know you guys are  
14 a big fan of Council Member Restler, the same way you  
15 could sit with him and build a successful  
16 relationship you should be able to do that with the  
17 rest of us. We have been asking for years, before we  
18 even got here, can we get speed bumps and speed  
19 cushions in particular neighborhoods, and it falls on  
20 deaf ears all the time so I'm asking for a commitment  
21 with that as well as the carshare. There are areas  
22 that you guys should have never put those spots in,  
23 and we need them removed.

24 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, so the  
25 answer is yes. Let's get time, let's follow up on,

2 we're more than happy to share changes that we have  
3 made, that Margaret can take it on, go into details  
4 on when it comes to the people. It's people be like  
5 how, we've been making changes (INAUDIBLE) that we  
6 have reduced in the timing to respond and get those  
7 speed bumps built, but I will leave that one to  
8 Margaret.

9           With the first question related to the  
10 Street Ambassadors, I want to say that DOT's  
11 ambassador program added important resources to our  
12 community approach to our outreach, and the Street  
13 Ambassadors literally meet New Yorkers where they  
14 live, and one of the good things about, especially  
15 the new group of the Street Ambassador, because, for  
16 me, it's a commitment. I say I want to be the  
17 Commissioner that everyone know that I bring  
18 fairness, that each community also get individuals  
19 that look like them when they go and present any  
20 projects so right now the Street Ambassador  
21 composition, a team is comprised of multi-language, a  
22 public engagement specialist, who at this moment  
23 currently can speak 10 languages so this is an  
24 expansion that we're doing with the Street Ambassador

2 but also being sure that those ambassadors that will  
3 go to the community that also speak the language.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Commissioner, we'll  
5 sit and talk, and I'll give you some ideas about the  
6 Street Ambassador program.

7 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Okay, thank you.

8 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE:  
9 Thanks for the comments on the speed humps. We have  
10 heard from you and the Council and communities loud  
11 and clear that they want more speed humps. They want  
12 the speed humps to be reviewed and implemented more  
13 quickly so we've done some great things on that  
14 front, and I think you're going to see results. We  
15 have developed a new program to evaluate the criteria  
16 for the necessity of a speed hump much more quickly  
17 and less labor-intensive and using data that we have  
18 available so we're evaluating them quicker. Another  
19 thing that we're doing is that previously we had one  
20 speed hump crew, large speed hump crew. They were  
21 responsible both for restoring speed humps after  
22 resurfacing, which is just simply replacements, as  
23 well as the new ones. We have just embarked on an  
24 effort to train a lot of additional people so in  
25 every borough, what we've done is have the main speed

2 hump crew train the other asphalt workers. Those  
3 asphalt workers are going to be able to do them on  
4 the weekends and on overtime to eliminate that  
5 backlog. So far, we've done that in two boroughs,  
6 we're now training in our third borough, we're going  
7 to do all five boroughs, but if you give me a list if  
8 you have speed humps in particular that you know have  
9 been approved, and we can work with the Borough  
10 Commissioner of course, we can make sure..

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: I'm going to send  
12 them for the whole Brooklyn delegation.

13 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: We  
14 expedite those and get those done for you, but I  
15 think all of you..

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you so much.

17 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Will  
18 see we're going to do better on the speed humps.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: I appreciate the  
20 update. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm looking  
22 forward to seeing that. Thank you, Council Member.

23 Thank you, DOT, for your testimony and  
24 participation in today's hearing.

2 We will next here from the TLC, and they  
3 can just come right up.

4 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: If everybody could  
6 settle down and find a seat, we're getting ready to  
7 continue. Everybody settle down and find a seat. We  
8 are getting ready to continue.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Hello, we're  
10 going to have you sworn in by Counsel.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: For the next  
12 portion of our hearing, we'll hear witnesses from the  
13 Taxi and Limousine Commission, Commissioner David Do,  
14 and Deputy Commissioner for Finance, Edward Wilton.

15 I will now administer the oath. Please  
16 raise your right hands.

17 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
18 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this  
19 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member  
20 questions?

21 COMMISSIONER DO: I do.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILTON: I do.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: Thank you. You  
24 may begin when ready.

2 COMMISSIONER DO: Okay. Good afternoon,  
3 Chair Brooks-Powers and Members of the Committee on  
4 Transportation and Infrastructure. Thank you for  
5 inviting me to brief you on the status of the Taxi  
6 and Limousine Commission's operations, update you on  
7 the industry, and introduce our 2025 Preliminary  
8 Budget. I look forward to answering any questions,  
9 and with me today is Deputy Commissioner of Finance  
10 Edward Wilton.

11 Ever since the pandemic brought profound  
12 disruptions to the TLC-regulated industries, we've  
13 begun these hearings by sharing how the recovery is  
14 going. Compared to the previous year, overall trips  
15 are up 3.7 percent. We had over 9,000 taxis in  
16 service in January, 1,000 more than the same time  
17 last year. This is the first time this many have been  
18 operating since the pandemic. In terms of active  
19 yellow trips, we are at about 50 percent of what they  
20 were pre-pandemic. Yellow daily revenue in the month  
21 of December 2023 was 2.7 million. This was 30 percent  
22 higher than the year before, following TLC's first  
23 fare increase in a decade. Trip volumes of our  
24 largest sector, rideshare vehicles, are at 92 percent  
25 of what they were pre-pandemic, while liveries and



2 community car service trips are hovering near 70  
3 percent of what they were pre-pandemic. Rideshare  
4 drivers' gross earnings are stable at between 1,000  
5 and 1,300 a week consistent with the compensation  
6 rate since 2021 TLC. TLC recently increased minimum  
7 pay rates by 3.49 percent to keep pace with  
8 inflation. Licensed commuter vans, an important asset  
9 in providing affordable transportation in underserved  
10 areas, still struggle with insurance requirements,  
11 which are regulated at the state level. We continue  
12 to have dialogue with the State Department of  
13 Financial Services and relevant stakeholders, and we  
14 support the expansion of insurance options and any  
15 measures that DFS can take to invest in the  
16 stabilization and growth of the commuter van  
17 industry. Critical to stabilizing the taxi industry  
18 has been our historic program providing debt relief  
19 for medallion owners negatively impacted by market  
20 disruptions and the pandemic, the Medallion Relief  
21 Program. Two years ago, I would not have believed I  
22 would be here telling the City has granted almost  
23 half a billion dollars in relief, but that is what we  
24 have been able to achieve, over 450 million in relief  
25 for 2,324 medallions. In real terms, that is more

2 than 1,900 medallion owners who have been able to  
3 keep their homes, provide for their families, and  
4 stay afloat through hard times. All New Yorkers  
5 should be proud of this achievement. I'd like to  
6 thank the Council for supporting this program along  
7 with the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor of Operations, the  
8 participating lenders, the Taxi Workers Alliance, and  
9 everyone at the TLC and the New York Legal Assistance  
10 Group who have provided tireless work to keep this  
11 program moving and growing. The Medallion Relief  
12 Program has been a clear example of how government,  
13 private industry, and collective representation can  
14 unite to bring positive change to the people of New  
15 York. Our efforts to support the taxi industry  
16 certainly will not end there. We are always looking  
17 for ways to bolster the iconic transportation  
18 resource.

19 Now, I would like to update you on the  
20 City's Green Ride Initiative, which requires all Uber  
21 and Lyft trips to either be zero emissions or  
22 wheelchair accessible by 2030. This first-of-a-kind  
23 initiative sets a series of benchmarks to get us  
24 there. 5 percent of all trips must be zero emissions  
25 or wheelchair accessible by the end of the year; 15

2 percent by the end of 2025; and 25 percent by the end  
3 of 2026 and so on. As part of our launch of this  
4 initiative and after our review of the for-hire  
5 vehicle license pause on October 18, we decided to  
6 open applications for electric vehicle licenses. I  
7 would like to apologize to the Council for any  
8 confusion associated with the launch of Green Rides.  
9 As I mentioned, following Local Law 147, we based our  
10 decision to lift the pause on EV vehicles on various  
11 factors. These included driver income, potential  
12 impact on congestion, traffic safety, utilization  
13 rate, access to service, vehicle supply, trip  
14 volumes, vehicle attrition, EV infrastructure, and  
15 other analytical tools. We were confident that the  
16 industry could absorb EV-only licenses without  
17 undermining the gains of the license pause. We  
18 decided not to state any limits on applications to  
19 avoid scarcity conditions and a chaotic run on  
20 licenses. We wanted to give drivers flexibility to  
21 decide if this was the right time for them to  
22 transition to zero emissions and get their own  
23 license without feeling pressure that it was now or  
24 never. This strategy is working. Following our  
25 announcement that EV licenses would be available, we

2 were receiving 100 to 150 applications a day, a  
3 manageable rate that would let us monitor the impact  
4 on the industry and adjust accordingly. We did not  
5 foresee the litigation against EV licenses would be  
6 filed or that a temporary restraining order would  
7 give drivers only five days to apply for these  
8 licenses. Once drivers saw the doors closing on them,  
9 applications skyrocketed to 2,000 licenses a day.  
10 This caused the very outcome that everyone wanted to  
11 avoid, a run on licenses. In total, we received 9,756  
12 applications. You may have questions about how the  
13 city and the industry are absorbing these vehicles,  
14 so I want you to walk through them. About 7,500 of  
15 these vehicles are now on the road. EVs now comprise  
16 10 percent of our rideshare fleet, and January marked  
17 the first time New York surpassed 1 million EV rides  
18 in a month. 88 percent of these new vehicles are  
19 owned by individuals. They are small business people,  
20 mostly hard-working immigrants looking for a chance  
21 at ownership and a pathway to the middle class. Most  
22 of the rest of these licenses are owned by LLCs. It  
23 is likely that many of those are also incorporated  
24 individuals as well. Leasing licenses can involve  
25 significant cost for drivers. We anticipate before

2 making the EV licenses available that there would be  
3 heavy demand by individuals who were leasing. So how  
4 are these drivers doing? My team and I have been  
5 visiting charging hubs and conducting extensive  
6 outreach to EV drivers. Here's what we've learned.  
7 Unsurprisingly, utilization rates at the City's  
8 charging stations, particularly DC fast chargers, are  
9 at an all-time high. In some cases, 10 times what  
10 they were prior to Green Rides. On the two coldest  
11 days this winter, as a population new to EVs  
12 attempted to charge, we saw long lines at several  
13 charging stations. Charging times can double in  
14 frigid temperatures, especially if people attempt to  
15 charge beyond 80 percent but, once temperatures  
16 improved, lines got smaller. Some charging hubs are  
17 busier than others, but there are times of days when  
18 traffic is still relatively light at other hubs. How  
19 familiar drivers are with the overall charging  
20 landscape is important. To this end, we have been  
21 handing out informational pamphlets, running them  
22 through the basics, as well as emailing them about  
23 new charging opportunities and discounts. We also  
24 conducted an informal survey of more than 1,000 new  
25 EV drivers moving through our inspection facility at

2 Woodside, asking them where they plan to charge.

3 About one third indicated that they plan to charge at  
4 home. This has likely helped ease the pressure on  
5 existing infrastructure. I visit charging hubs about  
6 once a week to talk to TLC drivers. The majority tell  
7 me that they're overall happy with their EVs, they  
8 like their car, and they like owning rather than  
9 leasing, and they like contributing to a cleaner,  
10 more sustainable planet. We also know that their pay  
11 is higher, about \$2.89 cents per trip. One thing they  
12 all tell me is that they want more charging options.  
13 We need more fast charging hubs as soon as possible.  
14 To this end, the TLC formed the Charging Task Force.  
15 We have been meeting with DOT, DCAS, Con Ed, the New  
16 York Power Authority, Tesla, Revel, Electrify  
17 America, Gravity, ChargePoint, the Port Authority,  
18 EDC, and other key players to identify and facilitate  
19 ways to bring more chargers to TLC drivers, and the  
20 response has been incredible. Thanks to the Green  
21 Rides Initiative, the providers now know they have a  
22 guaranteed market. They are actively competing to get  
23 more hubs up. It will not happen overnight, but every  
24 new hub relieves pressure and increases competition.  
25 Less than two weeks ago, we saw the opening of the

2 largest, fastest hub yet in midtown Manhattan. We  
3 also learned that 48 plugs are coming to LaGuardia by  
4 early 2025. We need more hubs everywhere, especially  
5 in the Bronx and Queens, and we need them yesterday,  
6 but many seeds are being planted in the forest of  
7 fast chargers. Our drivers are already benefiting.  
8 Uber and Revel just announced a deal giving Uber  
9 drivers 25 percent off Revel hubs. An unforeseen  
10 result of the litigation is that now the city is two  
11 years ahead of schedule on the Green Rides  
12 Initiative. We now have the largest zero emissions  
13 rideshare fleet in the United States. As we indicated  
14 in our annual FHV License Review, released on March  
15 1st, additional FHV licenses are not needed at this  
16 time due to various factors, including the ongoing  
17 litigation. Anyone interested in obtaining a FHV  
18 license, however, can still do so provided that it's  
19 a wheelchair accessible vehicle. Another concern  
20 brought up was how these new vehicles would impact  
21 traffic congestion. Despite the new Green Rides EVs,  
22 we are still 10 percent below the 120,000 FHVs that  
23 were licensed by the TLC when they extended the pause  
24 in 2019. DOT has told us that traffic speeds are  
25 about the same as they were prior to the pandemic. As

2 I stated earlier, most of these new EV drivers ceased  
3 leasing gas-powered vehicles. They continue to work  
4 for Uber and Lyft, but it is not in the interest of  
5 the rideshare fleets to hire even more drivers. They  
6 end up having to pay drivers more due to our driver  
7 pay formula. There is no profit in it for them.

8 Although we're not seeing significant increases in  
9 congestion due to TLC vehicles, our industry, like  
10 the rest of the city, faces congestion pricing. This  
11 Administration has been clear on our support for the  
12 State's congestion pricing plan, but there is more  
13 that can be done to help drivers and the industry in  
14 the post-pandemic recovery. We need to consider the  
15 economic needs of drivers in order to get congestion  
16 pricing right. Even as we have increased  
17 sustainability through Green Rides, we have also  
18 continued to increase accessibility. January saw a 33  
19 percent increase in wheelchair accessible FHV trips  
20 compared to the previous year. We now have nearly  
21 10,000 accessible taxis and FHV's, the most in the  
22 agency's history. We will never stop improving  
23 accessibility. TLC is continuing to work to make  
24 taxis more accessible. We are currently in the  
25 process of drafting proposed rules which make it



2 easier and more economical for taxi operators to  
3 transition to wheelchair accessible vehicles. We  
4 expect to introduce these rules soon, and we look  
5 forward to hearing the thoughts from the industry and  
6 the public.

7           As this marks the 10th anniversary of  
8 Vision Zero. The Taxi and Limousine Commission is a  
9 committed Vision Zero agency. Per mile driven, our  
10 drivers remain the safest in the city. Last year,  
11 over 117,000 drivers completed our required refresher  
12 course, which has a Vision Zero-focused curriculum.  
13 This year's Vision Zero Honor Roll ceremony will be  
14 our biggest yet. For the first time, we'll be  
15 honoring the city's safest drivers at Gracie Mansion,  
16 and we will be inviting all of you to attend.

17           Now getting to our budget. For Fiscal  
18 Year '25, our total expense budget for Fiscal Year  
19 '25 is 59.5 million, 44.4 million is for personal  
20 services, funding that supports 555 heads, and  
21 another 15.1 million in other-than-personal services,  
22 funding allocated to support agency operations. We  
23 are proud to have helped the Mayor and the City by  
24 identifying and contributing to cost-saving measures  
25 that will benefit residents of New York City. We

2 found efficiencies in basic maintenance and support  
3 services, and I'm happy to report that we will not be  
4 impacted operationally. We also thank the Mayor for  
5 giving TLC the funding to support 100 new TLC  
6 officers who will help keep the riding public and our  
7 roadways safer. These officers are critical to TLC's  
8 mission and provide a great public service. They make  
9 sure TLC vehicles are safe, drivers are safe, and the  
10 riding public is protected from all types of illegal  
11 activity. We are also pleased to report that in  
12 Fiscal Year '23, 71.3 percent of our eligible  
13 procurements were awarded to M/WBE firms, and so far  
14 in Fiscal Year '24, we are at 82.8 percent M/WBE  
15 utilization rate. In total, the TLC projects a 25  
16 increase in the total value of procurements awarded  
17 to M/WBE firms from Fiscal Year '23 to Fiscal Year  
18 '24. We are also on our way to awarding our first  
19 procurement to a Native American firm as part of our  
20 TLC Connect project.

21 Thank you again, Council Members, for  
22 giving us the opportunity to update you. I am now  
23 happy to take any questions and look forward to  
24 providing you with further information.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Commissioner,  
3 in your testimony, just for a point of clarification,  
4 when you talk about Fiscal Year '23, the 71.3  
5 percent, is this the number of contracts or value?

6 COMMISSIONER DO: It's value. In Fiscal  
7 Year '23, Council Member, first, let me step back and  
8 say that our M/WBE numbers have exceeded our goal  
9 over the last few years. We're very excited to  
10 support our small and local businesses especially  
11 minority-owned local businesses. The 71.3 percent  
12 number represents about 2 million dollars, and then  
13 this year so far, we're at 1.5 million, but we hope  
14 to reach 2.5 million, which is about the 82 percent  
15 number that I just mentioned in my..

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And the 1.5  
17 million is out of how much?

18 COMMISSIONER DO: Out of our expendable  
19 budget, about 15 million.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And what kind  
21 of contracts are they getting?

22 COMMISSIONER DO: Yeah, so they're  
23 typically for TLC Connect, which is one of our  
24 biggest projects that we're undergoing. It's a

2 capital project to bring our legacy mainframe system  
3 from the last century to this century.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So 1.5 out of  
5 15.

6 COMMISSIONER DO: Yeah, and that's what  
7 qualifies under the M/WBE numbers that we are  
8 addressing so there are a variety of different costs  
9 but, out of that, only 1.5 million qualifies towards  
10 our goal, which is 80 percent in this Fiscal Year.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So the dollar  
12 amount on the goal that you're saying is 1.5?

13 COMMISSIONER DO: Yeah, our goal is, what  
14 is our goal?

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Or is it 2.5?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILTON: 2.5 is what  
17 we're projecting to spend by the end of the year.  
18 We've utilized 1.5 thus far, but looking at our  
19 contracts that are coming down the pipe, we know that  
20 we're going to be about 2.5 by year end.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But what's the  
22 goal in itself in dollars?

23 COMMISSIONER DO: It's 30 percent of what  
24 is expendable so there's a variety of different  
25 contracts that don't have to count by our numbers,

2 right, and by Local Law 129, and if we look at this  
3 by the definitions of what is expendable and what has  
4 to count towards our M/WBE goal, we're meeting it at  
5 82 percent, and so not all 15 million has to count  
6 towards the goal because of a variety of different  
7 factors. For example, like a firm or a lease or  
8 requirement contracts or like a sole source.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But does the  
10 agency even attempt to go beyond the goal?

11 COMMISSIONER DO: Yeah. Our City's goal is  
12 30 percent. Our agency's goal is 40 percent, and  
13 we're meeting that or we are exceeding it at 82.3  
14 percent.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And when you  
16 look at diversity in diversity, like which groups are  
17 the least utilized?

18 COMMISSIONER DO: Yeah, like I said in my  
19 testimony, Council Member, we're very proud for the  
20 first time ever we will be contracting to a Native  
21 American firm, something that the TLC has never done  
22 before, but we're also very proud of the fact that 59  
23 percent of our allowable dollars contribute towards  
24 female M/WBEs and, in reality, we're trying to ensure  
25 that that our numbers will be greater than the

2 previous years. For example, last year, our black  
3 female M/WBEs was 25 percent. When we finalize one  
4 more contract...

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Are the  
6 females minority or is W?

7 COMMISSIONER DO: It's both Caucasian,  
8 Hispanic, Asian, and black females.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, so not  
10 all of that is MW because you're saying MW so it's  
11 throwing me off. I'm just trying to follow you.

12 COMMISSIONER DO: Minority- and women-  
13 owned businesses.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: 54 percent is  
15 female.

16 COMMISSIONER DO: 59 percent.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: 59 percent,  
18 okay.

19 COMMISSIONER DO: And 41 percent goes to  
20 male M/WBEs.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So you don't  
22 break into the M, B, E's, the females, you just keep  
23 if they're like a black or a Latina, you keep them in  
24 the W category or do they get counted also in the M?

2 COMMISSIONER DO: I can break that down a  
3 little bit more. Of the 59 percent, 10 percent are  
4 Hispanic, 29 percent are Asian, and then black  
5 females, 11 percent.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And then what  
7 is the breakdown in terms of the categories for your  
8 MBE category?

9 COMMISSIONER DO: So our MBE category is  
10 this year 41 percent of all contracts are going to  
11 black males.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And then what  
13 about the other categories?

14 COMMISSIONER DO: It's 0 percent right  
15 now.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, got it,  
17 but this is, again, only the 1.5 of the 15.

18 COMMISSIONER DO: Yeah, look, a lot of our  
19 OTPS budget goes towards rent or towards utilities or  
20 some of the other things that just do not qualify  
21 towards the M/WBE goal, and our budget overall,  
22 compared to, let's say, the last agency, is very  
23 small in comparison, right? It's only 15 million  
24 dollars. They have much larger expendable budgets.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm going to  
3 take a moment to talk about new inspectors. The  
4 Preliminary Plan included 5.4 million dollars for 54  
5 inspectors at TLC. Your agency was one of the few  
6 agencies to receive new funding in the Fiscal 2025  
7 Preliminary Plan. Can you explain why the agency  
8 requested and needed additional inspectors?

9 COMMISSIONER DO: Yeah, thank you so much  
10 for that question, Council Member. Our inspector  
11 class has dropped precipitously since the global  
12 pandemic. We used to have 200 officers strong both on  
13 the safety and emissions side and on the TLC  
14 enforcement side, and that has dropped to 50 percent  
15 or about 100 and in order to continue to keep our  
16 priorities of keeping our roadway safe of both  
17 drivers and unlicensed activity, we worked with OMB  
18 and the Mayor to improve quality-of-life issues  
19 including this and so, as our outer borough residents  
20 see issues along Broadway or along Flatbush, we can  
21 look at that illegal activity and tamp them down. We  
22 can't be in all five boroughs all the time, and so  
23 these officers are going to help us achieve our  
24 goals.



2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What's the  
3 current budgeted an actual inspectorial headcount at  
4 TLC?

5 COMMISSIONER DO: Yeah. The current  
6 headcount at the enforcement team is 171, and there's  
7 about 84 vacancies currently.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How do you  
9 anticipate these additional inspectors will be  
10 deployed through the end of Fiscal '24 and Fiscal  
11 '25?

12 COMMISSIONER DO: The first step, Council  
13 Member, is that we have to graduate our cadet class,  
14 and so what we're doing currently is going through  
15 our DCAS lists, evaluating them for psych and  
16 medical, and then there's going to be about a six-  
17 week to two-month process where we have them go  
18 through the academy, and so it's going to take a  
19 little bit of time and then we also have to approve  
20 them for our special patrolman which is a license  
21 that goes through NYPD and approved by them, and so  
22 it's going to take a little bit of time, but during  
23 their training process, they're going to be deployed  
24 to help with NYPD traffic mitigation efforts through  
25 events during the summer, like the U.S. Open and

2 other events until they're fully graduated, hopefully  
3 by the end of summer or early fall.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How does the  
5 agency plan to fill the 84 vacancies it currently has  
6 in addition to 54 new positions?

7 COMMISSIONER DO: So it's going to be  
8 actually 100 additional enforcement officers overall,  
9 and so we have...

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: That's on top  
11 of the 84 vacancies?

12 COMMISSIONER DO: No, it's just the 100  
13 total, and so we're using existing vacancies as well,  
14 and so there's 54 new vacancies, 46 of which are  
15 coming from existing vacancies, which are already in  
16 our budget, but what we're doing right now is we're  
17 going through the list and we're exhausting that  
18 list, right, and through our evaluations we have  
19 about a cadet class of about 50 to 60 individuals and  
20 we anticipate to graduate 40 and so then we will have  
21 another class come this summer as well to fill the  
22 whole entire class by hopefully by the end of the  
23 Calendar Year.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Pivoting to  
25 the Medallion Relief Program funding, what is the

2 remaining balance of the Medallion Relief Program in  
3 Fiscal '24, and what do you anticipate the balance to  
4 be as we move into Fiscal '25?

5 COMMISSIONER DO: Let me, if I may, just  
6 talk a little bit about the successes of the program.  
7 Thanks to your help, Council Member, we have achieved  
8 over 450 million dollars of debt relief to over 2,300  
9 medallions, over 1,900 individual owner drivers, and  
10 so that is a big win and, as you can see in our  
11 budget, Council Member, is that there was 15 million  
12 and then 50 from the federal government, and then 60  
13 from our local government over the last two budgets.  
14 We have depleted that, and we have helped as many  
15 drivers who wanted to participate in this program and  
16 who qualified for this program, and so this program  
17 will continue until April 30th, but we haven't seen  
18 any more additional closings week over week, and so  
19 we're saying this program is incredibly successful  
20 and most of the budget now is with pursuit for the  
21 reserve fund, and the reserve fund, Council Member,  
22 is basically for drivers or owners who default, it  
23 draws from that fund instead of having the individual  
24 medallion owner to have what we call a personal  
25 guarantee or a loan that goes after their assets,

2 right, and so this is a huge relief for many drivers  
3 that the big lenders are not going after personal  
4 assets but are drawing down the fund, and the fund  
5 currently is about 46 or so million.

6 I wanted to touch on commuter vans as  
7 well. As you know, I've been a long advocate for the  
8 commuter van industry, which has long helped fill  
9 gaps in the city's transportation networks and under-  
10 served areas like Southeast Queens. The industry has  
11 faced serious challenges in recent years. First, I  
12 know your very first hearing last year, we spoke  
13 about the street hail. At the time, we had a  
14 resolution, and I just wanted to know if you are  
15 still in support of legalizing the street hail for  
16 commuter vans.

17 COMMISSIONER DO: Yeah. Council Member,  
18 thank you so much for that question, and it's  
19 something that I have been working with our advocates  
20 on and ensuring that we come to an outcome that is  
21 fair for our commuter van industry, and what we have  
22 done and we've worked with all of our advocates and I  
23 have said that I have supported the Street Hail bill  
24 in the state, but this is something that we have all  
25 collectively worked on, and we need to ensure that it

2 does not impact the yellow taxis below 110th and  
3 96th, and I believe that with all the advocates, both  
4 Hector, Leroy, we have agreed that that the street  
5 hails will remain in the outer boroughs.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
7 that. Can you talk about how in this budget, we're  
8 working to help ensure the survival of the commuter  
9 van industry.

10 COMMISSIONER DO: Yeah, I think that the  
11 biggest thing and where we have more opportunity to  
12 help is in our advocacy, right, and so at the State  
13 level, I have been supportive of what is in the  
14 current budget bill at the State which allows for a  
15 captive insurance program. This is something that  
16 we've been working on with the commuter van industry  
17 and our DFS advocates and our partners at the State  
18 level to ensure that there is an outcome that is  
19 supporting commuter vans, and so it's in the budget  
20 bill now and it's something that that we support.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.  
22 Pivoting to Vision Zero and TLC. In the first four  
23 months of Fiscal '24, TLC issued 3,442 Vision Zero  
24 summonses and 6,844 patrol summonses to drivers. Both  
25 of these indicators are down significantly compared

2 to the same period last year. To what degree is the  
3 reduction in summonses a result of headcount or  
4 staffing?

5 COMMISSIONER DO: Yeah, like I said,  
6 Council Member, Vision Zero is something that is one  
7 of our top priorities at the TLC. This is something  
8 that we work on on a regular basis to ensure our  
9 roadways are safe, drivers are safe, and that they  
10 change their behavior, and so street summonses is not  
11 the only way we approach this, right, and I want to,  
12 again, thank the Mayor for putting in 100 new heads  
13 to the TLC so that we can work on our enforcement and  
14 build up our enforcement team to where it once was at  
15 the pre-pandemic levels, but I also rely on our  
16 pedestrians, on our bicyclists, on all of our roadway  
17 users to help us out and, while summonses are down  
18 because of staffing issues, we also have more  
19 summonses on the consumer complaint site. Actually,  
20 it's increased from 11,000 to 17,000 because drivers,  
21 pedestrians, bicyclists, and other roadway users are  
22 helping us, and we prosecute them through the fullest  
23 extent of our authority within the prosecution unit  
24 here at the TLC.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How do you  
3 anticipate the new class of inspectors to impact  
4 these indicators, and do you anticipate any  
5 additional revenue from fines or fees as a result of  
6 the increased enforcement?

7 COMMISSIONER DO: I can't tell today if  
8 there's going to be increase in revenue. What I know  
9 is that there's going to continue to be a help on  
10 increasing our ability to be in more places, to  
11 change driver behavior, to keep our fleet of TLC  
12 drivers safer than ever before and to ensure that per  
13 mile driven, they remain the safest, and so I can't  
14 project the budget numbers and revenue numbers today,  
15 but what I know is that if we summons our drivers,  
16 they do change their behavior, and part of these  
17 numbers is also probably a change in driver behavior  
18 as well.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I want to  
20 touch on congestion pricing.

21 COMMISSIONER DO: Sure.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Has the  
23 Commission done any sort of analysis on the impacts  
24 of congestion pricing on the city's for-hire vehicle  
25 drivers? If so, what have you determined?

2 COMMISSIONER DO: Yeah, so most of the  
3 work on congestion pricing is done at the State  
4 level, Council Member, and it's something that we  
5 look at and we not only look at the environmental  
6 study but also what TMRB and its report released and  
7 also what is currently going on in the public realm  
8 where the MTA is holding the public hearings. We  
9 haven't specifically had a study personally through  
10 the TLC, but we work with the MTA and our partners at  
11 the DOT on a regular basis to share information. What  
12 I can say is that through the advocacy of the for-  
13 hire vehicle industry, it has transformed what we  
14 thought would be something that would kill the  
15 industry to what is more, I think, a little bit more  
16 palatable, and what I mean by that is now it's going  
17 from a per-entry cost to a per trip cost, where it  
18 can be passed on to the passenger who is using the  
19 for-hire vehicle and so through collective  
20 organization, organizing with our driver groups, they  
21 have been able to succeed there.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Do you have  
23 any resources in a Preliminary Plan to support  
24 studying the impacts?



2 COMMISSIONER DO: We do not have resources  
3 but, again, Council Member, we continue to work with  
4 the MTA and our DOT partners to ensure that the  
5 impact on congestion pricing is minimal on our  
6 regulated industries.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I would think  
8 that, as the Chair for the Commission, one of the  
9 responsibilities is not only enforcement, but  
10 ensuring the health and well-being of the industry  
11 and understanding that congestion pricing may or may  
12 not have a certain impact on the industry. I think  
13 it's important that the agency has its own data  
14 versus relying on the state just to understand,  
15 because there may be additional needs you may find  
16 that may down the line be something to be considered,  
17 because when we think about the fact that the City  
18 has already invested in the Medallion Recovery, which  
19 was quite some, in terms of funding dollar amounts,  
20 but what could this lead to, how is it impacting, how  
21 can the Commission support the drivers? I think that  
22 having a study would be helpful.

23 COMMISSIONER DO: I got it, Council  
24 Member, and it's something that we don't just leave  
25 it out there. We're active participants in data

2 sharing and using our data and leveraging our  
3 platforms to ensure that whatever outcome that comes  
4 out of it has a lot of our input in it, and we're  
5 advocating for the industry because, like I told you  
6 before at a previous hearing, the TLC-regulated  
7 industries has contributed over 2 billion to the MTA  
8 through the existing MTA congestion surcharges,  
9 right, and so this is something that we have to be  
10 very careful on, that we have to examine, and that's  
11 why we're in the room helping make some of the  
12 decisions. That's how we got to, instead of a per-  
13 entry cost, which would have been devastating..

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So TLC is in  
15 the room.

16 COMMISSIONER DO: We're talking to our  
17 partners at the state level and DOT, yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. Council  
19 Member Restler.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Good to see you.  
21 Thanks so much, Chair, for joining us today.

22 Just a couple questions on my end. First,  
23 I've been very concerned about the increase in auto  
24 insurance rates.

25 COMMISSIONER DO: Yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I think, by what  
3 I read, they're up about 25, 26 percent nationally  
4 with rates in New York City some of the highest in  
5 the nation as you know well. It's hurting everyday  
6 New Yorkers. I'm especially concerned though about  
7 taxi and FHV drivers that are really struggling to  
8 keep up with the costs. What's the TLC doing to bring  
9 down these costs?

10 COMMISSIONER DO: We don't directly  
11 regulate insurance, but we do work with the state DFS  
12 to ensure that whatever rates these companies are  
13 charging, it's actuarially sound rates and, for a lot  
14 of these companies, right, for one company in  
15 particular, it has been I think a very difficult  
16 place because they have artificially been at very low  
17 rates, and I get it, these costs are skyrocketing for  
18 individual drivers and it's something that we have to  
19 examine, but what we do especially on the high-volume  
20 side and even on the yellow side is that we look at  
21 the meter rate affair and that we look at driver pay  
22 and we do studies to ensure that insurance and other  
23 costs are contemplated in the minimum driver pay  
24 standards that we put out, but it is a struggle with  
25

2 higher inflation rates. It is impacting all across  
3 the industry...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: In your review of  
5 the actuarial rates that Uber and Lyft and others are  
6 charging, have you found any issues?

7 COMMISSIONER DO: Excuse me.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Are you finding  
9 any issues in your review of the actuarial rates in  
10 your conversations with DFS?

11 COMMISSIONER DO: I think this is a little  
12 bit counterintuitive to what you're thinking, right,  
13 because you're saying that the rates are high. We're  
14 saying the rates are artificially low.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And the impact of  
16 the artificially low rates is that?

17 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: So  
18 when drivers let's say go for a claim, that company  
19 might not pay out the claim...

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Got it.

21 COMMISSIONER DO: And that's why Uber  
22 recently sued two of the insurance companies that  
23 that ensure the industry.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'm very strongly  
25 supportive of the driver minimum pay, happy to hear

2 that you're incorporating the impacts of these higher  
3 insurance costs in your ongoing analysis. We just  
4 want to make sure that drivers have the resources  
5 that they need to be able to cover these  
6 extraordinary costs and, if there's anything that the  
7 TLC can do in partnership with the Council from an  
8 advocacy standpoint to try to limit these major  
9 increases, we would really welcome it.

10 COMMISSIONER DO: We're partnering with  
11 the (INAUDIBLE) soon to do a new driver pay study so  
12 that should come out in the next 9 to 12 months or  
13 so.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And do any of the  
15 regulatory actions of the TLC impact these rates?

16 COMMISSIONER DO: We have not changed our  
17 rules around insurance rates for a very long time. I  
18 think it's been over a decade or so.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: One final  
20 question for me is, in the November Plan, we saw  
21 there was additional revenue from an increase in the  
22 vehicle license renewals. Always nice to find new  
23 revenue. These renewals are anticipated to generate  
24 about 1.1 million in revenue across the Plan. How did  
25 TLC determine this amount of additional revenue, and

2 do you believe that there will be consistent trend in  
3 license renewals to maintain this revenue in the  
4 outyears.

5 COMMISSIONER DO: Actually, our revenue  
6 projection for Fiscal Year '24 was about 64 million  
7 dollars, and it actually goes down in Fiscal Year '25  
8 to about 60.5 million and so where we see, I think,  
9 renewal periods for both medallions and FHV's happen  
10 every two years and so some years it might be lower  
11 than other years, and it just depends but, in  
12 general, if revenue is higher, we'll reflect it in  
13 the plan, but I just can't say 100 percent for sure  
14 that every licensee, every vehicle, every base is  
15 going to renew and so we have to be very conservative  
16 and then we work on expanding that as it comes  
17 closer.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Fair. I do just  
19 want to commend you on the Medallion Relief work that  
20 you and your agency has been doing. It's been  
21 impressive, and my sense is it's been a really  
22 tremendous victory for drivers across the city so  
23 thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER DO: Thank you for your help  
25 on that as well.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: Thank you,  
3 Council Member. Thank you, Chair and TLC.

4 COMMISSIONER DO: All right. Thank you so  
5 much, Chair. I appreciate it. I'll see you soon.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: All right.  
7 Thank you.

8 We'll have DDC. They can come straight  
9 up.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: Thank you. As  
11 an accommodation, we're going to turn to public  
12 testimony in a moment.

13 Each panelist will be given two minutes  
14 to speak. For panelists testifying in person, please  
15 come up as your name is called. During your  
16 testimony, you must remain on topic and maintain  
17 decorum.

18 Witnesses are not permitted to record  
19 themselves or the Committee. A recording of this  
20 hearing will be available online.

21 Our first panel will be Jean Ryan,  
22 Michael Ring, Kathleen Collins, and Tashia Lerebours.  
23 You can begin when ready.

24 Jean Ryan, please.

2 JEAN RYAN: Hi, I'm Jean Ryan, President  
3 of Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York, DIA  
4 for short. I emailed longer written testimony to the  
5 Council. The MTA is still in the dark ages with  
6 Access-A-Ride. So many people are not being picked up  
7 on time or at all and must keep calling to get a ride  
8 or they arrive an hour early to their appointments.  
9 We have been promised improvements for so many years  
10 that it makes me wonder if things will ever be  
11 different. The DOT needs to step it up and do more  
12 pedestrian ramps and fix sidewalks, especially ones  
13 with holes in them or ones that are lifted up because  
14 they are impassable for people with mobility  
15 disabilities and dangerous for blind people and  
16 people with low vision. Also, yesterday, I toured two  
17 demonstration outdoor dining examples, and one of  
18 them was inaccessible and did not have a ramp so I  
19 was not impressed with that one. The TLC has  
20 problems. We do not have enough wheelchair accessible  
21 yellow taxis or for-hire vehicles. Our wait times for  
22 Uber and Lyft are two to three times as much as for  
23 ambulatory people. Over time, wait times should have  
24 gone down, but the TLC has not mandated it. We need  
25 100 percent wheelchair accessibility for the industry



2 to be fair. Blind people are left behind. Drivers  
3 often do not speak English and will not secure our  
4 wheelchairs or ourselves with seatbelts. This is  
5 unsafe. They don't even have the proper straps, and  
6 it's really concerning because anytime we get into a  
7 for-hire vehicle, we never know if we're going to be  
8 strapped in correctly and it's very concerning. It's  
9 dangerous. One more thing, design and construction  
10 needs to put a ramp in front of 80 Center Street.  
11 This important building with the district attorney,  
12 marriage bureau, courts, grand juries, and the Family  
13 Justice Center needs to be safely accessible. What  
14 justice is there for people with disabilities who put  
15 their lives in danger trying to get into 80 Center?  
16 Thank you.

17 MICHAEL RING: Hi, my name is Michael  
18 Ring. I'm here today representing Disabled in Action  
19 of Greater New York. I'm one of the board members.  
20 I'm really going to keep my comments brief. This is  
21 not the first time I've been to a hearing just like  
22 this with the DOT and the TLC and the MTA. There's an  
23 important city agency that should also be here, the  
24 enforcement agency, the NYPD. Cars are parking in bus  
25 stops. You have all these great plans that are even

2 being implemented but, without proper enforcement,  
3 it's just a plan so maybe next time around the NYPD  
4 could be here. Thank you.

5 TASHIA LEREBOURS: Hello, good afternoon.  
6 My name is Tashia Lerebours. I'm a Transportation and  
7 Voting Community Organizer for Center for  
8 Independence of the Disabled. While the MTA relies on  
9 the 79 percent satisfaction rate, other riders who  
10 use broker service have to deal with issues such as  
11 drivers, vehicles, and license plates not matching  
12 what is posted on the MyMTA app. That's if the MyMTA  
13 app is working properly. Some drivers do not match  
14 the driver's license picture on the windshield. On  
15 some occasions, passengers get different drivers and  
16 cars that are listed in the app. While the MTA boasts  
17 about the success of the MyMTA app, they do not pay  
18 enough attention to the problems with it. Consumers  
19 need to know who their drivers are for their safety.  
20 For example, the victim of a brutal assault, December  
21 of last year, who was unable to identify her Access-  
22 A-Ride drivers. Another issue is with broker service  
23 and blue and white vehicles. Drivers who are making  
24 phone calls while they are driving or video calls and  
25 they're so caught up in their conversation they do

2 not notice some passengers, they get a bit anxious.  
3 Another issue for me, drivers who use a YouTube or  
4 TikTok or any form of social media while driving.  
5 That's something of great importance to me. Thank  
6 you.

7 KATHLEEN COLLINS: Good afternoon. My name  
8 is Kathleen Collins, and I'm also on the Board of  
9 Disabled in Action. I brought a pair of dice with me  
10 here today which represent the gamble that New  
11 Yorkers with disabilities encounter every day  
12 traveling around New York City, and I am serious.  
13 With Access-A-Ride, taxi cabs, and for-hire vehicles,  
14 we do not know if they will pick us up, drive us  
15 safely and, in the case of those who use wheelchairs,  
16 whether they will secure us properly, and provide us  
17 with a seat belt and shoulder belt, even though not  
18 doing so is a Vehicle and Traffic Code 1229-C  
19 violation, and nothing's been done about this. I've  
20 been testifying about this to the MTA since 2019,  
21 before the pandemic, and I've even told the  
22 Commissioner of the Taxi and Limousine, nothing's  
23 done. We need those inspectors and they need to be  
24 inspecting those vehicles. Another thing is, further,  
25 we do not know whether we will be able to communicate

2 with the drivers and whether the drivers will come to  
3 us and assist us in the vehicle and help us  
4 disembark. These problems we encounter on a daily  
5 basis. When traveling the streets of New York City,  
6 we do not know whether we will be able to safely  
7 cross from one street to another, since many times we  
8 encounter poorly maintained sidewalks and curb ramps  
9 and, in some instances, there's no curb ramp  
10 available. So, too, with respect to accessible  
11 pedestrian signals, many times there is no APS  
12 available and, when there is an APS, there are times  
13 when they do not operate correctly. Significantly,  
14 even in the 21st century, we still encounter bus  
15 stops that are not accessible. This is not acceptable  
16 and illegal. We need better coordination among city  
17 agencies and state agencies with respect to  
18 transportation to ensure that our city is accessible  
19 to all, and I know you get this, Chair Brooks-Powers,  
20 because I thought that was very great what you said  
21 about having five places in a place that's been  
22 underserved for so many years and five in another  
23 community, and I said that's exactly what we are  
24 dealing with, the disabled. We have to constantly  
25 sue. Why do we have to constantly sue the City for

2 sidewalks, for APSS? That law was back in, 1973, we  
3 had the Rehab Act, where you get funding, the city  
4 gets funding, and none of this has ever been done,  
5 and then we have the ADA in 1990, 30 years ago, and  
6 we're still doing the same round robin. This is  
7 ridiculous. I pay taxes, a lot of taxes. I am a  
8 lawyer. I pay a lot of damn taxes, and yet I am not  
9 being served, and really we need people to represent  
10 us that look like us, I hate to say it, because it  
11 seems that you don't get it, nobody at the City  
12 Council seems to get it, and we represent everybody,  
13 the core section, we don't discriminate, we are  
14 everyone, and all our members need, we are in those  
15 communities, and you just forget about us and I'm  
16 really upset. Now we have to go out between the hours  
17 of 4 and 7 p.m. when it's practically impossible to  
18 get around New York City with a disability so thank  
19 you and thank you for listening.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you all  
21 and thank you for your patience today and testifying.  
22 I would love offline to have a different conversation  
23 in terms of potential legislation that we could be  
24 able to explore with your perspective taken into  
25 account. I know that the Commissioner for the Mayor's

2 Office for People with Disabilities, Commissioner  
3 Curry, often says it as well, like without us, you  
4 cannot talk about legislation that's pertaining to us  
5 and I agree with that and so we'd love to center your  
6 voice, your perspective and legislation that this  
7 Committee can be able to champion on behalf of the  
8 community. Thank you so much. Thank you.

9 Now we will have DDC for real this time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: For the next  
11 portion of this hearing, we will hear witnesses from  
12 the Department of Design and Construction,  
13 Commissioner Thomas Foley, Executive Deputy  
14 Commissioner Magalie Austin, and Deputy Commissioner  
15 and Chief Financial Officer Rachel Laiserin.

16 I will now administer the oath. Please  
17 raise your right hands.

18 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
19 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this  
20 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member  
21 questions?

22 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: I do.

23 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LAISERIN: I do.

24 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: I  
25 do.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. You  
3 may begin when ready.

4 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Good afternoon, Chair  
5 Brooks-Powers, Council Member Lincoln Restler, and  
6 the Committee. I'm Thomas Foley, Commissioner of New  
7 York City's Department of Design and Construction,  
8 and I'm pleased to appear before you today. I am  
9 joined by Executive Deputy Commissioner Magalie  
10 Austin on my left, Deputy Commissioner and Chief  
11 Financial Officer Rachel Laiserin on my right along  
12 with other members of our DDC leadership team. I'm  
13 proud to represent a workforce of over 1,200  
14 engineers and architects that literally build the  
15 city and reflect our diversity with over 60 languages  
16 spoken amongst our staff.

17 This remains a time of growth and change  
18 for DDC. The agency is moving ahead with major  
19 projects, including borough-based jails, coastal  
20 resiliency, citywide green infrastructure, ped ramp  
21 program, all while continue to pursue our traditional  
22 responsibilities of building infrastructure and  
23 public buildings. At the same time, we continue to  
24 make tremendous progress, demonstrating the success  
25 of design build, which helps us to maximize public

2 investments by planning, designing, and building  
3 better for the city of New York. Some of our progress  
4 is reflected on our just released strategic blueprint  
5 update, which we handed out earlier, and we continue  
6 to work with the Mayor's Capital Process Task Force  
7 to achieve additional reforms that are included in  
8 their task force own recommendations. As the city's  
9 primary capital construction manager, DDC builds on  
10 behalf of more than 20 city agencies plus numerous  
11 museums, cultural organization and other non-for-  
12 profits that receive funding from the City sources.  
13 The January Capital Plan contains over 4.96 billion  
14 in new plan investments for Fiscal Year '25, which  
15 includes expenditures for our core infrastructure and  
16 buildings program, coastal resiliency, and green  
17 infrastructure. This figure also includes 1.53  
18 billion for infrastructure division projects, 879  
19 million for our public buildings and support  
20 portfolio, 2.5 billion for the borough-based jails.  
21 Capital spending for DDC varies year-to-year and is  
22 dedicated by the agencies that sponsor our projects  
23 and the capital funding we receive for them. We  
24 advise sponsors about scope, costs, and project  
25 delivery tools, but ultimately priorities are policy



2 driven. DDC's Fiscal Year 2025 operating budget is  
3 172 million. This includes 122 million for personal  
4 service and 51 million for other-than-personal  
5 services. Our budgeted headcount is 1,183. Our  
6 operating budget includes 133 million in IFA funding  
7 and 39 million in city tax funding. In public  
8 buildings, we have 20 projects in initiation phase,  
9 86 in active design, 50 in procurement, and 104 in  
10 construction, total value of over 16 billion  
11 including BBJ. On the infrastructure side, we have 15  
12 project initiation phase, 120 projects in design, 50  
13 in procurement, 100 in active construction with a  
14 total value exceeding 11 billion. As in the case with  
15 many city government agencies we have seen, we have  
16 been actively recruiting to fill vacant positions.  
17 Over the last year, in addition to attending DCAS  
18 hiring fairs, DDC has hosted three hiring halls and  
19 attended seven campus career fairs. I'm pleased to  
20 report because of these efforts, we were able to hire  
21 153 applicants this Fiscal Year and a total of 312  
22 new hires since the fall of 2022. I'm very pleased to  
23 provide an update on our growing portfolio of design  
24 build projects. As I've stated previously, design  
25 build and other forms of alternative delivery outside

2 the lowest bidding contracting model represents the  
3 City's best opportunity to reform the capital  
4 construction process. Our process is detailed in our  
5 latest blueprint. Since launching our design build  
6 program in 2020 for projects outside of BBJ, DDC has  
7 awarded nine contracts totaling over 570 million in  
8 value. This includes the Shirley Chisholm Rec Center  
9 in Brooklyn, 141-million-dollar project that we can  
10 expect to be complete by the end of 2025, two years  
11 faster than would have been possible using  
12 traditional lowest bidder contracting. We're seeing  
13 similar time savings and other design build projects  
14 as well, including the 92 million Mary Cali Dalton  
15 Center in Staten Island where we broke ground last  
16 month with Mayor Adams. We also recently began our  
17 first design build infrastructure project, which  
18 includes installation of new water main, pedestrian  
19 safety improvements on an eight-block stretch on  
20 Lexington Avenue in Midtown. We've also been using  
21 design build very successfully to upgrade ped ramps  
22 across the city and, in this calendar year, DDC will  
23 expand its design build program to build raised  
24 crosswalks citywide and new public restrooms for New  
25 York City parks. There are a lot more that we can do

2 to save taxpayer money and complete projects faster.

3 One thing we're seeking in Albany is the ability to

4 use progressive design build. With progressive design

5 build, the city can award a contract for street and

6 underground infrastructure where the team can

7 investigate existing conditions before the design is

8 finalized. Another essential delivery tool,

9 construction manager build, what we call CM build,

10 consolidates building renovation work under a

11 construction management firm that procures various

12 subcontractors and trays under open book contracting

13 in a single chain of command. CM build is used every

14 day with success by EDC and by the New York public

15 library and Brooklyn public library when they're not

16 sending work to DDC. Our new blueprint also updates

17 details and other strategies to improve project

18 delivery, including a critical one I'd like to bring

19 your attention to, advanced capital planning. We call

20 ACP. ACP will work with sponsor agencies to assess

21 their entire portfolio of public buildings and

22 develop efficient forward-looking strategies to

23 manage their capital needs. In 2023, DDC built and

24 launched the first phase of the new ACP Data Portal

25 to compile key information on New York City's public

2 buildings with a single easy-to-use interface. We  
3 have also started a pilot program with Queens and  
4 public library systems, and we'll expand the ACP  
5 Program to additional sponsor agencies. We've further  
6 partnered with Mayor's Office of Operations to  
7 analyze best practices and asset management and in  
8 capital planning, efforts that will inform future  
9 phases of the program. Additional reforms reflected  
10 in the blueprint include continued use of the  
11 expanded work allowance to allow construction to  
12 continue while waiting for registered change orders,  
13 use value engineering to allow our contractors to  
14 propose design and construction alternatives that  
15 save the city money, including over 10 million  
16 dollars so far on the Eastside Coastal Resiliency,  
17 requiring that subcontractors be paid monthly, which  
18 boosts many of our small M/WBE vendors. DDC recently  
19 testified at length about its M/WBE program before  
20 this same Committee, and I'd like to highlight some  
21 of those former testimony today. DDC remains one of  
22 the leading agencies for contract awards to M/WBEs  
23 and, in the latest annual M/WBE Program Compliance  
24 Report for Fiscal Year 2023, DDC achieved a 25.2  
25 percent utilization rate with over 370 million

2 dollars in contract awards to M/WBEs. Note that our  
3 alternative delivery program, including design build,  
4 is not subject to local law reporting. However, we  
5 have set ambitious goals and achieve them of over 30  
6 percent in both design and 30 percent in construction  
7 for our design build contracts. The City's first  
8 design build project to combine parking and community  
9 space in Kew Gardens had an M/WBE participation  
10 exceeding 37 percent in design and 44 percent in  
11 construction. Another element that we're bringing to  
12 our design build contract is aiming to hire local  
13 M/WBEs. For example, in July, we had a construction  
14 career and an M/WBE Expo for the Brownsville Girls  
15 Empowerment Center and Community Hub. We're building  
16 in Brooklyn and held a similar event in Rockaway. We  
17 have another event in the works in Staten Island, and  
18 we're committing to a Meet the Primes event for each  
19 alternative delivery project and new building in our  
20 portfolio. We're also happy to announce that each of  
21 the upcoming design build contracts will have a  
22 disaggregated M/WBE goal to address the disparity  
23 within the disparity, 10 percent black, 10 percent  
24 Hispanic, 10 percent other, something we have been  
25 doing for years under our design bid build program.

2 We continue to be creative in our procurement  
3 process. Currently half of the 20 firms that provide  
4 architectural design services for the City's next  
5 generation of public buildings are certified M/WBEs,  
6 6 of the 15 firms providing construction management  
7 services are M/WBEs and, most notably, 68 percent of  
8 the 31 firms providing what we call resident  
9 engineering inspection services, which encompasses  
10 day-to-day oversight of our infrastructure work and  
11 four of the five firms providing special inspection  
12 are M/WBEs. We also recognize significant success in  
13 an M/WBE pre-qualified list, PQL, for our general  
14 construction procurements between a half a million  
15 and 3 million dollars. That means that all  
16 procurements valued between 500,000 and 3 million  
17 will be procured only to vendors of this pre-  
18 qualified list, which now includes 16 approved M/WBE  
19 firms. We are very proud of the success we've had  
20 with the city's first Mayoral agency mentorship  
21 program. Due to a success in a new state law, we're  
22 delighted to transition the program to the Mayor's  
23 Office of M/WBE, who will be taking the reins  
24 officially on April 1st. During our time managing  
25 this program, we placed 13 firms on various projects,

2 helping to train and grow them so eventually they can  
3 become primes themselves. In 2023, we awarded our  
4 first contract under the mentoring program and also  
5 accepted 29 new firms to add to the already approved  
6 49 approved firms. We recognize that there is more  
7 work to be done in this area, and we'll continue to  
8 work with the Mayor's Office of M/WBE and our  
9 additional partners in this area.

10 This is a unique time for capital  
11 projects and for DDC. We continue to look inward to  
12 see how we can improve our processes and will be  
13 creative to meet our goals on both project delivery  
14 and M/WBE engagement, but we do need assistance from  
15 the Council and in Albany to add more project  
16 delivery tools which have been a game changer in a  
17 very short period of time. We look forward to  
18 continued collaboration with this Committee, and I'm  
19 happy to address any questions you may have. Thank  
20 you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,  
22 Commissioner. I am going to yield to Council Member  
23 Restler.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so  
25 much, Chair. I really appreciate it, and I want to

2 just say first and foremost, Commissioner Foley, I  
3 think you know this well, but I have a tremendous  
4 respect for you and think that you are just  
5 especially well-positioned to lead this agency. Over  
6 many years of having worked in different positions  
7 within DDC, you understand every element of it. You  
8 were hands on, you were responsive, you were  
9 thoughtful and you're effective. It wasn't too long  
10 ago, in the Cory Johnson/de Blasio era, when DDC was  
11 like the number one punching bag in all of city  
12 government, and that has changed and you deserve a  
13 lot of the credit for that and your team deserves a  
14 lot of the credit for that. You knew there was a but  
15 coming, but I just wanted to start with saying that  
16 because I really believe it and I have a lot of  
17 respect for you personally and the work of your  
18 agency.

19 I am strongly supportive of the borough-  
20 based jail plan, as you know and as we've talked  
21 about over many years. This is an urgent and  
22 necessary plan for us to close Rikers Island. I do,  
23 however, have a series of concerns about how things  
24 have been going. The demolition process has been, I  
25 think to be diplomatic, severely disruptive for my



2 community, and there are at least a dozen buildings  
3 that have experienced constant shaking from  
4 vibrations, cracks in walls, things falling off  
5 shelves for months. We've had AHV permits that  
6 started going from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. every weekday,  
7 Saturday work, work on federal holidays. We have  
8 barely had a moment of reprieve. When I've talked to  
9 the Department of Buildings, it's been pretty darn  
10 clear that City Hall will not accommodate or  
11 cooperate with any restriction in hours. That is  
12 unfortunate, and people are really fed up, and  
13 they're really frustrated, and we're at the beginning  
14 of a six year or so process to get this facility  
15 built. That's a lot of really challenging experiences  
16 to be in immediate proximity to that kind of  
17 construction site. Firstly, why has the demolition  
18 gone so poorly, and where are we at now in the  
19 process and how can you assure me and my constituents  
20 that it's going to go better quickly?

21 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Thank you, Council  
22 Member. Thank you for your kind words about, I do  
23 have, I think, the best agency in the city, and  
24 certainly the most diverse and effective senior  
25 staff, so I really appreciate your comments. The

2 reason that we're as effective as we are is because  
3 of the people that are surrounding me each and every  
4 day.

5 As far as the dismantle within Brooklyn,  
6 it has been challenging, and you and the community  
7 have been partners all along with us. We have a  
8 dedicated team full-time at the site. We have a  
9 dedicated community liaison, which is so critical for  
10 each and every one of our projects, especially for  
11 the vertical jails to be able to represent the  
12 community, to speak in the vernacular and with  
13 various languages and things like that. There's been  
14 a challenge with our dismantling contractor and  
15 delighted to report that the work, we're past the  
16 major hurdle as far as the actual facility is down. I  
17 was on site last night and there was clapping when it  
18 was coming down. I was busy taking the video of it.  
19 There was a lot of, certainly the dust suppression  
20 was there and all that stuff, but it was a great  
21 moment but it was also a time of reflection and, yes,  
22 we certainly could have done better with the  
23 dismantle, evaluations have been, worked on, during  
24 the time. There will obviously be a final evaluation  
25 that'll be submitted and we have had a number of

2 meetings with the firm, and this is something that  
3 will be permanently on their record for any time that  
4 they wish to do any other city work with DDC or with  
5 my colleagues in other agencies. This is something  
6 that will be permanently there for them to address so  
7 that way if something like this was to happen, that  
8 there are learning lessons and we're certainly  
9 incorporating that into that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'm very happy to  
11 hear that. I just have to tell you, there've been  
12 multiple meetings that I've personally attended that  
13 the contractors failed to show up at, and it's  
14 frustrating for me to not feel like the contractor  
15 that's been brought to the table to do the work is  
16 engaging in partnership in the way that you always  
17 do, and so that has been deeply frustrating and,  
18 every time, their response has been we're doing  
19 everything we can, there's nothing more that we can  
20 do. The vibrations, the noise, the severe disruptions  
21 that this has caused our community like, too bad. The  
22 dust, too bad. Recently there were some improvements  
23 in mitigating dust that we appreciate, but it took  
24 months and constant complaints for us to get there.  
25 Altogether, this is the biggest capital project, if

2 you combine the borough-based jail efforts happening  
3 in the City of New York. It's a huge undertaking. I  
4 know it's a critical priority for you. I just feel  
5 like we really got off on the wrong foot, and I would  
6 ask that in the future if we have situations where a  
7 contractor isn't meeting, certainly my expectations,  
8 that we have a more hands-on response from DDC to try  
9 to whip that situation into shape because the  
10 community around the jail in Brooklyn has been more  
11 supportive of the Borough-Based Jail Plan than any of  
12 the other communities in the city around the proposed  
13 planned jails, and we lost all the goodwill that we  
14 had over the last few months and I don't know how  
15 we're going to restore it but we've got years of work  
16 ahead and it's just been an incredibly frustrating  
17 situation and I really, because I have as much  
18 respect for you as I've articulated, I'm really  
19 counting and asking that you and your team do more  
20 and be more hands-on to address issues as they arise  
21 moving forward.

22 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Understood, and there  
23 was I know that it was, certainly on-site within my  
24 office, that we had a number of meetings with the  
25 vendor and their subcontracts, expressed concerns. We

2 were very forceful and disappointed, but we also knew  
3 that at the time I couldn't go through a process of  
4 getting another vendor on site. It would be too  
5 disruptive to the project and frankly too disruptive  
6 to the community to leave a building that was half  
7 dismantled, but we looked at all options. It was  
8 something that was literally under the microscope on  
9 my and my teams. We have a dedicated team for this,  
10 and I do think and I know that we will be turning, on  
11 and on and, literally turning the page with  
12 (INAUDIBLE). I know we have a number of really,  
13 really responsive and amazing meetings with the  
14 community when it comes to the design, and thank you  
15 for your help and coordinating those. Those have been  
16 really, I think moving forward those are the  
17 benchmarks for the other facilities of how well you  
18 know that the teams have been discussing and really  
19 valuable input from the community so we're looking to  
20 obviously continue that, and I'm always available.  
21 You know that.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I do.

23 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: And we're certainly,  
24 we'll be improving what from a standpoint in  
25 Brooklyn.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I appreciate  
3 that. The percent design completion in Brooklyn, are  
4 we at a 100 percent now?

5 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: We are not, but  
6 still, we're still working on it. I will get back to  
7 your office with where we are.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: We have a call  
9 next week, and should we expect a resolution on the  
10 sally port plans by that time?

11 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: I know that teams are  
12 looking, and I know we have a scheduled meeting with  
13 you and that's something that we honestly have to go  
14 over, I have to go over internally with OMB and with  
15 City Hall, but we'll have those conversations next  
16 week.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I appreciate it.  
18 I just have to say on the record, our community was  
19 broadly supportive of this, but we thought it was  
20 critically important that there be a second tunnel,  
21 and there'd be an additional space for the sally port  
22 so that we do not have detainees being transferred in  
23 the street, and that is incredibly, I think it's  
24 dehumanizing and disrespectful to the people who were  
25 being transferred from PD to DOC custody in the

2 street. It's also a security risk as this jail's been  
3 in our community my whole life and much longer. When  
4 people break away from PD control, it can lead to  
5 major security lockdowns and different challenges. We  
6 think that there should be a secure process for doing  
7 this. We were promised this in the borough-based jail  
8 agreement from just four or five years ago. It was  
9 undone. We think we've come up with a reasonable  
10 solution to solve for it. In the scheme of a multi-  
11 billion-dollar project, this is a modest rounding  
12 error that is an important community concern so I  
13 really hope in the sense of partnership that you've  
14 articulated again today and that I know some people  
15 in the Administration believe that this is something  
16 that can be addressed. It will be very challenging  
17 for us to go to our community to discuss the design  
18 and construction of the new jail if this issue has  
19 not been resolved and resolved favorably.

20 Just a couple other questions on the  
21 Brooklyn and, you want me to go, you want me to go  
22 back to you? You want me to wrap it up?

23 Very briefly on, is the lack of outdoor  
24 space something that's continuing to be considered in  
25 the design of the jail?

2 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: I know that the  
3 Administration is looking into that, but I don't have  
4 an answer for you today on that.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Is there any  
6 update you can share on therapeutic beds? The  
7 Administration cut the number of therapeutic beds by  
8 half despite a majority of people at Rikers having a  
9 serious mental health designation.

10 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: I know that there's  
11 also efforts that are happening outside the borough-  
12 based jails that the Administration is spearheading,  
13 and I know that Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice,  
14 CHS, or others are looking into that as well.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I appreciate  
16 that, but beds in the jails, having 20 percent of  
17 them be designed for people with mental health needs  
18 is wholly inadequate when 55 percent of the people in  
19 the system have serious mental health needs, and I  
20 realize this is not your policy decision, but when we  
21 ask the Department of Correction, they say you have  
22 to ask DDC, and so the next time I think we're just  
23 going to need to bring everyone into one panel so  
24 that people can't finger point to one another.



2 I have a few questions just more broadly  
3 on the borough-based jails. We know there have been  
4 consistent delays due to COVID and other things.  
5 Could you give us a sense of timing on where we are  
6 on the other three jails? What are the next key  
7 milestones for progress for them moving forward?

8 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Sure. With regards to  
9 the next two facilities in Queens and in the Bronx,  
10 those are currently negotiating with the selected  
11 teams, and we're hoping to have public hearing late  
12 this spring for those. That'll be in May and June.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Just to give a  
14 context, when was Brooklyn at that same stage in the  
15 process?

16 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LAISERIN: It was  
17 last year.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Last year, what  
19 month, approximate or season?

20 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LAISERIN: I think  
21 the NTP, it started in July.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: July, so we're  
23 about a year and a half behind Brooklyn and Queens  
24 and the Bronx. Is that accurate? 15 months?

2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LAISERIN: Right  
3 now, we're just about one year behind.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: One year behind.

5 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: I was going to say  
6 about a year.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: A year, and the  
8 anticipated completion date in Brooklyn right now is?

9 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: 2030. Sorry, 2029 in  
10 Brooklyn.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So 2030 for  
12 Queens and the Bronx.

13 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Correct.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Correct.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And for  
17 Manhattan, we're not there yet.

18 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: We're not. We had  
19 shortlisted two teams and we released our RFP for  
20 them and then we'll be having the conversations,  
21 obviously, about budget and schedule with them as  
22 well.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So just to be  
24 clear, the stated policy of this Administration is  
25 that even if Mayor Adams is re-elected, it's the next

2 Mayor that will be responsible for closing Rutgers  
3 Island.

4 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Honestly, I'm an  
5 engineer. We design and build so our first facility  
6 will be completed in 2029. The other three facilities  
7 will not be done prior to 2029.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'm making a  
9 political point, and you're an engineer. The current  
10 cost estimate for each of the facilities.

11 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Right now, for  
12 Brooklyn, we have a registered contract for 2.9  
13 billion dollars, and the other contracts are  
14 currently in negotiations.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay. Chair,  
16 thank you for being so generous with the time. I  
17 greatly appreciate it.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No problem.  
19 Thank you.

20 Let's start with DDC Plus. In the 2022  
21 Strategic Blueprint, DDC mentioned the possibility of  
22 forming a DDC authority, which the report argues  
23 would allow the agency to improve the overall  
24 function of the agency. Is the Administration in  
25 favor of this proposal?

2 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Has DDC spoken  
4 with any representatives from the State, Governor's  
5 Office, Senate, or Assembly to begin the process of  
6 creating this authority?

7 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Can you talk  
9 about how you think DDC would benefit from becoming  
10 an authority? By how much, for example, does DDC  
11 expect becoming an authority would reduce the City's  
12 capital cost per project?

13 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: There would be a  
14 significant savings of having, we're the primary  
15 builders for the City of New York and, as you're  
16 certainly well aware, we work with 28 sponsor  
17 agencies, and the reason for that is to help out with  
18 project delivery, to do things better, faster, and  
19 cheaper. We think that there would be millions of  
20 dollars in savings for the City if DDC was to become  
21 an authority. If I may note, it's all about delivery.  
22 Everybody internally is still, 68 percent of my team  
23 is DC37 members so there's no impact on union  
24 membership, there's no impact on retirement, the City

2 employees, what have you, so this is all about us  
3 just being able to be better, cheaper, and faster.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And how would  
5 it impact the timeline of future projects?

6 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: It would shorten them  
7 because, by being an authority, I'd have other tools  
8 at my disposal that I do not have right now that EDC  
9 has and Port Authority and others, any other major  
10 capital public works throughout the country. I'm  
11 literally the only one that doesn't have these tools  
12 and, as being an authority, it would really take, as  
13 I would say, take a chainsaw to the bureaucracy.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Could DDC reap  
15 similar benefits through changes in policy by the  
16 City's Procurement Policy Board?

17 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: If DDC were in  
19 authority, what levers would exist to ensure that DDC  
20 remains accountable to the City?

21 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: It would be very  
22 similar to the SCA, and I know that the SCA is  
23 accountable. The bill was literally copy and pasted  
24 from that. Obviously, some changes that the Law  
25 Department and others in OMB had worked on. We

2 wouldn't have our own funding. It would still come  
3 through the capital agencies themselves and, again,  
4 we wouldn't be carrying debt. We would still be under  
5 the Law Department, the Comptroller's Office, what  
6 have you. The safeguards are all there but, again, it  
7 would allow us to build better, faster, and cheaper.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Just shifting  
9 over to M/WBES, as you know, Commissioner, this is  
10 very important topic in which I'm extremely  
11 passionate about. What is DDC's goal for the percent  
12 of contracts awarded to M/WBES?

13 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Our goal on a  
14 vertical public buildings project is 30 percent. Our  
15 goals in a design build procurement, regardless of  
16 that is on the horizontal or the vertical, is 30  
17 percent design, 30 percent in construction. We've  
18 already incorporated disparity within the disparity  
19 on all of design build projects, 10 percent black, 10  
20 percent Hispanic, and 10 percent other and, then on  
21 the infrastructure projects, under Local Law 1, we  
22 then do the analysis with the SBS websites and with  
23 their program in order to determine, depending on the  
24 scope of the project, what the goals are set for that  
25 particular project.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Who are the  
3 M/WBEs that DDC works with most frequently?

4 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: We  
5 actually work with a wide variety of M/WBEs. In terms  
6 of professional services, we have, like the  
7 Commissioner said, 68 percent of our REIs, the  
8 resident engineering firms, are M/WBEs and, in terms  
9 of our construction managers, like we work with  
10 McKissick and McKissick, we work with Armand, which  
11 is a black-owned-woman construction management firm.  
12 I don't know them all offhand, but we work with a  
13 wide variety. Our goal is always to really bring new  
14 M/WBE firms in to build their capacity.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And what is  
16 the average size of a contract to an M/WBE firm and  
17 what is the average for a non-M/WBE firm?

18 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: Can  
19 we get back to you on that? I don't have the  
20 information with me right now, but we will get back  
21 to you on that. That's the average for M/WBE and non-  
22 M/WBE?

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Is someone  
24 able to get it today or you need more time?

2 EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUSTIN: I'm  
3 going to text now.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. Shifting  
5 to design build, design build bill, as you said  
6 countless times, Commissioner, has been seen as a way  
7 to complete projects quicker and at a lower cost by  
8 streamlining the existing process. What are some of  
9 the benefits and drawbacks of design build that you  
10 have encountered and how does design build compare to  
11 the CM build, are there certain projects that work  
12 better with design build versus the CM Build model?

13 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Sure. Design build  
14 has transformed how we as a city capital agency can  
15 deliver since we were given the authority of doing  
16 this in 2019. At the time, there were only two other  
17 cities that were not authorized to do this, us and  
18 Philadelphia, so we're really excited with the  
19 challenge. We have a dedicated team for design build.  
20 The projects that we've assigned, we have over 12 in  
21 the portfolio for the design build. They have been  
22 making really amazing strides from a schedule  
23 standpoint. It has fostered collaboration,  
24 innovation. It has reduced the contractor claims, has  
25 reduced contractor change orders, and it has brought



2 more people to the table. It has allowed us to set up  
3 our goals at 30 percent design, 30 percent  
4 construction, and then it also allowed us to set  
5 disaggregated goals, at 10 percent black, 10 percent  
6 Hispanic, and 10 percent other so it has brought more  
7 people to the table, it has opened up the process so  
8 we know who's actually bidding upon these that, it  
9 allows us to have a number of meetings with the  
10 community and within the industry of meeting the  
11 primes, getting more people involved, signed up  
12 through SBS, more people involved and signed up  
13 through PASSPort, and so we expect that to grow. We  
14 expect the design build program to grow, but we're  
15 using it very efficiently and effectively. It has to  
16 be the right project. It has to be a new build. In  
17 the vertical world, we don't want to rely on it  
18 heavily in a dense urban environment of Lower  
19 Manhattan, Downtown Brooklyn where there's tons of  
20 unknown utilities so we really want to be specific  
21 when we're using it, and we have our SWAT team of  
22 engineers and architects at DDC that evaluate each  
23 and every project when it comes through to determine  
24 what type of delivery would be effective, and I'll  
25 just note that we're not, even though we currently

2 have 33 billion in design and construction, we are  
3 not authorized to use CM build. We're only authorized  
4 to use CM build when things hit the fan during an  
5 emergency and, right now, we're involved with about  
6 seven emergency contracts. We were obviously using  
7 very, very effectively during the pandemic but, in  
8 our everyday lives, we cannot use CM build, and I  
9 think that and I'm sure most would agree, that every  
10 day is an emergency in New York and we should have  
11 these tools, and so we've been up in Albany in the  
12 last three sessions fighting for alternate delivery  
13 which includes CM build and progressive design build.  
14 We have not been successful yet. Fingers crossed in  
15 this session that we will have authorization to use  
16 CM build, progressive design build. We should be  
17 treated as professionals, should be held accountable.  
18 Give us the tools and, if I'm not successful, then  
19 get somebody else as Commissioner, but the time is  
20 now.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: My last  
22 question, Commissioner, is still in alignment with  
23 design build. Design build has been reauthorized  
24 through 2027. One part is during that time, what  
25 projects will benefit from not having to go through

2 the traditional route of design bid build but also,  
3 in light of a lot of capital projects being pushed  
4 out as far as 2033, how will DDC determine which  
5 projects should go forward with design build as well,  
6 and do you have some examples of what those projects  
7 are and where they are located?

8 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Sure. We have our  
9 SWAT team of engineers and architects that evaluate  
10 each project that comes in. We do have a listing of  
11 projects, what we would call, on the conveyor belt,  
12 one of which we just released is the Roy Wilkins  
13 Recreational Center. We also have our bathroom...

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Have you  
15 picked who's doing Roy Wilkins yet?

16 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Yes, we're fully  
17 funded for Roy Wilkins, and we have our statement of  
18 qualifications that's out on the street, basically,  
19 the procurement is out. We also have one out for what  
20 we call the bathroom bundle that we're working with  
21 the Parks Department on.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: (INAUDIBLE)

23 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: And you have one of  
24 those as well, one of those in your in your District,  
25 so we're really excited about those two. We've also

2 identified some that are in the infrastructure world  
3 but, again, these are projects that allow us to pivot  
4 quickly so we could drive that innovation, the  
5 collaboration, and it's so important to be able to  
6 move quickly on these things. Technology is advancing  
7 so quickly so we need to be able to incorporate these  
8 designs with the contractor at the table having one  
9 team deliver for DDC and for the city of New York.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,  
11 Commissioner. Thank you to your team for taking part  
12 in today's Preliminary Budget hearing.

13 We'll now move to public testimony. Thank  
14 you.

15 COMMISSIONER FOLEY: Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: For public  
17 testimony, each panelist will be given two minutes to  
18 speak.

19 For panelists testifying in person,  
20 please come to the dais as your name is called and  
21 wait for your turn to speak.

22 For panelists who are testifying  
23 remotely, once your name is called, a Member of our  
24 Staff will unmute you and the Sergeant-at-Arms will  
25 give you the go ahead to begin. Please wait for the

2 Sergeant to announce that you may begin before  
3 delivering your testimony.

4 During your testimony, you must remain on  
5 topic and maintain decorum. Witnesses are not  
6 permitted to record themselves or the Committee. A  
7 recording of this hearing will be available online.

8 Our first panel will be Emerita Torres,  
9 Rosa Chang, Lisa Daglian and Leroy Morrison.

10 Emerita Torres, please begin when you are  
11 ready.

12 EMERITA TORRES: Good afternoon. Thank you  
13 to the Committee for having me. My name is Emerita  
14 Torres. I lead the Policy Research and Advocacy  
15 Department for the Community Service Society of New  
16 York. We are dedicated to improving the lives of low-  
17 income New Yorkers and championing a more equitable  
18 city and state. My testimony today will focus on the  
19 state of transit hardship amongst New Yorkers and how  
20 we can alleviate that by leveraging the Fair Fares  
21 program to its full potential. Since 2014, CSS's  
22 annual survey of low-income New Yorkers, The Unheard  
23 Third, it's the longest running survey of low-income  
24 New Yorkers in the nation where we ask people about  
25 transit hardship. In 2023, approximately one in five

2 New Yorkers reported that they have struggled to pay  
3 mass transit. Among those in poverty so those, for  
4 example, a family of four that earns under 31,000 a  
5 year and those in near poverty defined as those  
6 earning between 31,000 and 62,000, the rate was  
7 higher at 30 percent. Even among New Yorkers who are  
8 not considered low income, i.e. those with incomes  
9 200 to even 400 percent of the federal poverty line,  
10 14 percent said that they struggle to pay for subway  
11 and bus fares. It's important to unpack what transit  
12 hardship looks like for these individuals. It means  
13 they can't attend classes, they don't have the luxury  
14 of hailing an Uber or using another app or paying  
15 thousands of dollars to afford a car. New Yorkers  
16 every day are missing opportunities for taking full  
17 advantage of what our city has to offer, and the  
18 legacy of historical and current marginalization  
19 ensures that these are New Yorkers, largely people of  
20 color, who are trying desperately to find a foothold  
21 in our city, but we have a great solution for this,  
22 and that is in the Fair Fares program which makes  
23 transit more affordable. As you heard this morning,  
24 the program has an estimated 320,000 enrollees. This  
25 program has been a gamechanger for them, but they

2 represent only a third of the almost 1 million New  
3 Yorkers who are not eligible. If I can have...

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: If you could  
5 wrap it up and just submit the rest in written  
6 (INAUDIBLE) Thank you.

7 EMERITA TORRES: So first recommendation,  
8 the eligibility threshold needs to be moved up to 200  
9 percent of federal poverty. That's in our report that  
10 was just released today. Second, there needs to be  
11 greater awareness of the Fair Fares program. We need  
12 more coordination between the MTA and the city to  
13 ensure that we're reaching New Yorkers who don't know  
14 about this program at all. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so  
16 much.

17 LISA DAGLIAN: Hi. I'm Lisa Daglian, and  
18 I'm the Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens  
19 Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC, and thank you so  
20 much for your report. Thank you so much for your  
21 hearing today. It was interesting to hear what we  
22 heard and interesting to hear what we didn't hear.  
23 What a difference a year makes. Last year, we were  
24 scrambling for funding for the transit agency and  
25 this year we've heard that we've got five years of

2 funding, but that doesn't mean that everybody has  
3 five years of funding. People are still struggling to  
4 be able to pay to get on subways and buses and  
5 commuter rail, and we wholeheartedly agree that the  
6 federal poverty level should be raised to 200 percent  
7 and that Fair Fares should be extended to the  
8 commuter rails within New York City, and that's  
9 something that is part of the Fares Act that we're  
10 thrilled was included in the Senate One House along  
11 with CityTicket Weekly which we think should be  
12 funded with the Outer Borough Transportation Account,  
13 which we heard a little bit about this morning.  
14 Again, the other part of that funding is supposed to  
15 go for transit for the outer boroughs, some might say  
16 the better boroughs, to provide for discounts on the  
17 Long Island Railroad in Metro North. We haven't seen  
18 that proposal from the MTA yet, but we have a great  
19 one, CityTicket Weekly, and we also believe that  
20 seniors, disabled, and Medicare-eligible riders  
21 should be able to use their discounts in the morning  
22 peak on the commuter rails, which they currently are  
23 not able to do. We're strong supporter of bus lanes  
24 and bus ways and, in that vein, we also support the  
25 capital tracker of the Streets Plan because it's not



2 just a suggestion, it's the law, and hearing an  
3 update once a year might be challenging for DOT, but  
4 it's more challenging to guess what's happening and  
5 not understand the realities of what's coming our  
6 way, because honestly, buses in our city go slower  
7 than a chicken can run. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

9 LEROY MORRISON: Good afternoon, everyone  
10 here, Madam Chair, thank you so much for having us  
11 here. My name is Leroy Morrison. I'm the President of  
12 New York City Commuter Van Association. Commuter vans  
13 have been around for decades, and we need commuter  
14 vans back in the black and brown community,  
15 especially in the Rockaways. As you know, the time  
16 from Rockaway to Jamaica Center is an hour and 45  
17 minutes just to get back in JFK Airport. The people  
18 have to go to work, the people of color. We need  
19 commuter vans to be back on New York City streets so  
20 that we can bring the people straight from Rockaway  
21 into the airport instead going all the way to Jamaica  
22 Center so we need transportation (INAUDIBLE),  
23 especially people of color across New York City. When  
24 the city was in crisis, it's commuter vans. Now that  
25 we meet in difficult time, two and a half years,

2 affordable insurance, and the member over there was  
3 asking about insurance, please support the cap of  
4 insurance. That will provide low-cost insurance  
5 across New York City for all for-hire vehicles. We  
6 have that bill right now in the One House Budget in  
7 the Senate. We fight last year, and it's just for  
8 commuter van and the Governor veto it. This year, we  
9 came back in the One House Budget, so thanks for  
10 Senator Leroy Comrie, Assembly Member Anderson and  
11 Ms. Brooks-Powers over here to get all New Yorkers  
12 fair insurance, affordable across New York City and  
13 have commuter van back on the street because not  
14 everyone can afford Uber and Lyft and most of these  
15 seniors don't even know how to use the phone. They  
16 know how to come out and flag it down. Our fare is  
17 only 2 dollars, and we are part of New York City  
18 Transportation and keep us working for New York City.  
19 Thank you so much. And the TLC, the Chair, the TLC  
20 Commissioner, I want to say thanks to him for  
21 supporting us also too. We're in the struggle. We  
22 need your help. We need your support. We cannot pay  
23 60,000 dollars a year insurance so we want to bring  
24 back down the cost, and we need to let the Department  
25 of Financial Services know they need more volunteer

2 insurance company here and stop pricing out small  
3 insurance company and we're a small business. Thank  
4 you for having us here today. Thank you, Madam Chair.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.  
6 Thank you to each of you for coming out and  
7 testifying today. Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: Thank you. The  
9 next panel will be Amanda Berman.

10 You can begin when ready.

11 AMANDA BERMAN: Good afternoon, or should  
12 I say evening, Chair Brooks-Powers and Council Member  
13 Restler and Committee Staff, thank you all for your  
14 time today. My name is Amanda Berman. I am here on  
15 behalf of the Center for Justice Innovation, and I'm  
16 here to request that this Council reaffirm its  
17 commitment to our Driver Accountability Program in  
18 this upcoming Fiscal Year. For the past three  
19 decades, the Center has worked with communities and  
20 justice systems to advance equity, increase safety  
21 and help individuals and communities thrive, and  
22 safer streets are a necessary component of all of  
23 these things. In 2015, we launched the Driver  
24 Accountability Program, a diversion program for  
25 lower-level vehicular offenses, that come through our

2 criminal court and instead of relying on punitive  
3 responses such as jail or fines, our program  
4 encourages behavior change through self-reflection  
5 and collective norm setting in a facilitated group  
6 discussion and, thanks to the support of Council, we  
7 have served over 6,000 drivers, and we also have an  
8 established record of changing drivers beliefs and  
9 behaviors. In fact, a preliminary analysis that our  
10 team is currently in the midst of conducting  
11 indicates that participants who completed our program  
12 on specific driving-related offenses are less likely  
13 to come back on those same offenses on new arrests  
14 than a comparison group who didn't go through our  
15 program. In 2022, we launched an expansion of our  
16 program that we call Circles for Safe Streets, and  
17 that addresses cases where there have been crashes  
18 that result in fatalities or serious injuries, and it  
19 uses a restorative justice process to bring together  
20 the drivers and their victims. We run that program in  
21 partnership with Families for Safe Streets, which is  
22 an incredible advocacy organization, many of you are  
23 probably familiar with, that is comprised of members  
24 who have themselves been directly impacted. I'll wrap  
25 up if I can just have a moment. Thank you, Chair.

2 Collectively, these programs play a critical role in  
3 a holistic approach to street safety that reduces  
4 harms that are caused on our roads but also the harms  
5 that are caused by our systems that respond, and the  
6 demand for our program continues to grow, and it is  
7 more critical than ever that we sustain our  
8 operations, and so we respectfully ask for your  
9 continued support, and thank you so much for your  
10 time.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: Thank you.

13 We'll now move on to remote testimony on Zoom.

14 We'll begin with Brit Byrd, followed by  
15 Eric McClure.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts.

17 BRIT BYRD: Hello, my name is Brit Byrd,  
18 I'm Senior Planner for Brooklyn Borough President  
19 Antonio Reynoso, and I'm submitting this testimony on  
20 his behalf. Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers and  
21 Members of the Committee on Transportation and  
22 Infrastructure for holding this hearing today.

23 As Brooklyn Borough President, I have  
24 many transportation priorities for our great borough,  
25 all of which are aimed at ending car culture and

2 encouraging residents to use more efficient and  
3 sustainable modes of transportation, including  
4 walking, biking, and public transit. Critically, we  
5 need a robust financial commitment to the NYC Streets  
6 Plan, which the Administration all but abandoned in  
7 2023. DOT has completed only a fraction of the  
8 mandated bike lanes, bus lanes, and public plazas  
9 mandated by law, and announcements for new projects  
10 have slowed to a halt. Of the projects completed, the  
11 majority have been done in-house using expense funds  
12 and DOT headcount. The City should be bolstering this  
13 in-house capacity, but this Preliminary Budget  
14 proposes keeping vacancies unfilled and imposes PEGs  
15 on traffic and street operations, signaling that the  
16 Administration intends to keep DOT understaffed. DOT  
17 has talented and passionate personnel ready to  
18 implement life-saving streets projects across the  
19 city, and the budget needs to give them the resources  
20 to complete this work. As the coming implementation  
21 of congestion pricing will encourage more people to  
22 switch to public transportation, it is vital that we  
23 invest in critical infrastructure to speed up our  
24 buses, paratransit, and emergency vehicles, and keep  
25 pedestrians and cyclists safe. As Borough President,

2 I remain committed to Vision Zero. No one should die  
3 on New York City's streets. This Preliminary Budget  
4 does not agree. In addition to cutting in-house  
5 capacity, it includes cuts to Vision Zero education  
6 and outreach programming. While infrastructure and  
7 design are the foundation of Vision Zero, these cuts  
8 are emblematic of a complete disregard for the  
9 program's goal to reduce traffic violence. While I'm  
10 encouraged by City Hall's interest in sustainable  
11 delivery, the Administration should first fully  
12 support the existing freight mobility staff and  
13 initiatives within DOT and outlined in the Delivering  
14 Green Plan with EDC. The recent announcement of six  
15 waterfront shipping hubs is a step in the right  
16 direction, but I'm concerned by the absence and  
17 continued uncertainty surrounding the Red Hook  
18 Container Terminal.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time has expired. Thank  
20 you.

21 BRIT BYRD: (INAUDIBLE) infrastructure and  
22 receive renovations and upgrades as proposed in  
23 Delivering Green. DOT's Curb Management Action Plan  
24 is an exciting step towards using the City's valuable  
25 curb lands for more than just car storage, which

2 should be expanded in the coming years, and DOT  
3 should follow through on the local delivery hub and  
4 LockerNYC pilot programs to reduce the negative  
5 environmental and safety effects of truck deliveries.  
6 Open streets are a vital part of Brooklyn's public  
7 realm. Streets are not just where New Yorkers travel,  
8 they're where we rest, socialize, and relax. I will  
9 continue to advocate for funding and expansion of  
10 open streets and summer streets across the borough.  
11 Finally, I would like to discuss the future of the  
12 BQE. In February, the Federal Highway Administration  
13 rejected the Administration's application for federal  
14 funds to rebuild the triple cantilever in Brooklyn  
15 Heights. This proposal was a temporary fix that  
16 included too many lanes and ignored community needs  
17 along the entire BQE corridor. DOT should continue to  
18 work to secure funds from the federal government  
19 through the bipartisan infrastructure law to pursue a  
20 full redesign of the BQE corridor that centers racial  
21 justice, equity, and climate mitigation. Thank you  
22 for the opportunity to speak today. I look forward to  
23 working with the Council on this effort. Together we  
24 can transform our city streets, our freight network,  
25 and the BQE corridor.



2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: Thank you. Are  
3 there any questions?

4 We'll next hear from Eric McClure  
5 followed by Elizabeth Adams.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts.

7 ERIC MCCLURE: Thanks very much. Thank  
8 you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to testify  
9 today. Thanks for the Committee Staff for their work.  
10 My name is Eric McClure. I'm the Executive Director  
11 of StreetsPAC and, yes, a longtime dues-paying member  
12 of Transportation Alternatives. At the March 2023  
13 hearing of this Committee on the Fiscal 2024 budget,  
14 we testified about our deep concern regarding the  
15 City's failure to have met the 2022 benchmarks for  
16 the creation of physically separated bike lanes and  
17 bus lanes required by the City Streets Plan. We noted  
18 that those benchmarks were increasing in 2023,  
19 underscoring our worry. Unfortunately, our concern  
20 was prescient as the Administration failed again to  
21 reach the Streets Plan mandates, building about 32 of  
22 the 50 required bike lane miles, less than 20 percent  
23 of the prescribed 30 miles of separated bus lanes,  
24 and upgrading only a fraction of the 500 bus stops  
25 mandated. So while the Department of Transportation

2 reports it is back to pre-pandemic staffing levels  
3 and it's adequately funded, continued failure to meet  
4 legally required benchmarks indicates otherwise. That  
5 the vast majority of cycling deaths that have  
6 occurred on city streets over the past year happened  
7 on streets without protected bike lanes underscores  
8 the human cost of not doing better and, with the  
9 advent of congestion pricing around the corner, we  
10 should be doing everything we can to improve bus  
11 service, not leaving strap hangers stuck behind  
12 double parked SUVs. This isn't a case of DOT staff  
13 needed to work harder or smarter. It's a case of  
14 needing to give them the resources and tools to  
15 deliver on the Streets Plan. We gladly acknowledge  
16 that there has been progress, notably in redesigned  
17 intersections and expanded public space, but will  
18 note that Mayor Adams two years ago announced a  
19 historic five-year, 900-million-dollar commitment to  
20 "rapidly build out critical street safety and public  
21 transportation infrastructure." Given the number of  
22 projects in both realms that have been slow-walked or  
23 outright obstructed, we were heartened to hear  
24 Speaker Adams announced yesterday her intent to  
25 legislate the creation of the Streets Plan Tracker to

2 help hold the Administration accountable for the  
3 lackluster progress. We also need to ensure that  
4 investment is focusing on the equity gaps that  
5 persist in our transportation system and  
6 infrastructure. As we said at last year's hearing,  
7 the Streets Plan...

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you for your  
9 testimony. Your time has expired.

10 ERIC MCCLURE: I'll wrap up momentarily.  
11 Thank you. Our Streets Plan rightly focused on  
12 addressing equity by prioritizing upgrades in those  
13 areas of the city whose residents are predominantly  
14 people of color where incomes are lowest and where  
15 investment infrastructure has lagged the most. It's  
16 therefore critical that funding is sufficient to  
17 prioritize those efforts and the Street Plan targets  
18 are met. At the same time, we urge the Members of the  
19 City Council to be full and constructive partners in  
20 that work. We were disappointed to learn that only  
21 six Council Members responded to Commissioner  
22 Rodriguez's request for ideas on where to make street  
23 safety upgrades in their Districts. Yes, it is DOT's  
24 job to take the lead on that work, but we hear plenty  
25 of criticism from the Council about what DOT should

2 or shouldn't do, and a cold shoulder is an odd and  
3 unacceptable response to an invitation for input. We  
4 can assure you that we and our colleagues in advocacy  
5 would jump at such a chance to inform project  
6 priorities. Just to summarize, I'll submit written  
7 testimony but, turning back to the Administration,  
8 we're very concerned about the news that many Open  
9 Streets operators, volunteer groups, are not getting  
10 paid on a timely basis, reimbursed on a timely basis  
11 for their outlays. We need to make sure that that  
12 gets fixed. We support Speaker Adams's call to  
13 increase the eligibility for Fair Fares to 200  
14 percent of the poverty level and the call to apply it  
15 to commuter rail within the city. Lastly, we just  
16 want to circle back to two things that we called for  
17 last year, which is public funding of Citi Bike and  
18 a robust, safe, and secure public bike parking  
19 infrastructure. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,  
21 Eric. It's good to see you.

22 ERIC MCCLURE: You too, Chair. Thanks very  
23 much.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: Thank you.

3 We'll hear next from Elizabeth Adams followed by  
4 Natasha Elder.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm just going  
6 to ask everyone to please respect the two-minute rule  
7 as we want to make sure we can hear everybody. Thank  
8 you.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: The time will begin.

10 ELIZABETH ADAMS: Thank you, Chair Brooks-  
11 Powers and the Committee, for today's hearing. My  
12 name is Elizabeth Adams. I'm the Deputy Executive  
13 Director of Public Affairs at Transportation  
14 Alternatives. At a time when our city is facing  
15 hundreds of traffic fatalities a year and congestion  
16 is crowding our streets and polluting our air, it is  
17 critically important that we do not cut funding to  
18 our City's Transportation budget. I want to thank the  
19 Council Speaker for yesterday's announcement of  
20 legislation to create a capital tracker for Streets  
21 Plan projects in direct response to the Mayor's  
22 failure to meet legal mandates. We cannot continue to  
23 allow massive delays or stalled bike and bus  
24 projects, especially at a time when we need new Safe  
25 Streets projects but, as was noted, just five miles

2 of bus lanes were built last year out of the 30 miles  
3 required. This has a huge impact on people's daily  
4 lives. It makes it harder for people to get to work  
5 or to get home to see their kids, and New Yorkers are  
6 not feeling this time lost evenly. According to  
7 public data in Spatial Equity NYC, commuters from  
8 black majority districts spend 70 more minutes each  
9 week on the bus compared to those from majority white  
10 districts so every time that we fail to install a bus  
11 lane or we delay a project that has already been  
12 approved, it's New Yorkers who lose out and, as New  
13 York gets ready for the start of congestion pricing,  
14 it's more important than ever that we speed up  
15 projects for buses and bus lanes so that we are  
16 giving New Yorkers as many transit options as  
17 possible that work for them. I also want to note that  
18 the Streets Plan requirement for creating pedestrian  
19 space sunset at the end of 2023, and our most recent  
20 report found that many communities still failed to  
21 have even a single pedestrian plaza so we encourage  
22 the Council to extend this annual requirement so that  
23 every neighborhood has sufficient pedestrian  
24 community space for people to gather outside. In  
25 addition, as the City is rolling out daylighting at

2 intersections, we want to make sure that this is  
3 implemented as effectively as possible so we  
4 encourage DOT to do more than just paint over the  
5 daylight intersection but really prioritize hardened  
6 infrastructure that achieves multiple goals like rain  
7 gardens, bike storage, bioswales, and more. Lastly  
8 just want to urge the restoration of last year's 18  
9 percent budget cut to the...

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: We thank you for your  
11 testimony. Your time is expired.

12 ELIZABETH ADAMS: Important. Thank you.  
13 Sorry. Just critically important to safe streets  
14 around schools and then also echo the call to fully  
15 fund Open Streets programs and fund them on time so  
16 it's not left to volunteers. Thank you so much again.  
17 Take care.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: Thank you.

20 We'll hear next from Natasha Elder followed by  
21 Christopher Schuyler.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

23 NATASHA ELDER: Good evening. My name is  
24 Natasha Elder. I'm the Regional Director with NYPIRG  
25 representing our Fair Players campaign. Thank you,

2 Committee Chair Brooks-Powers and Members of the  
3 Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for  
4 the opportunity to testify today. We hear it time and  
5 time again that New Yorkers need and deserve fast and  
6 reliable and equitable service along with affordable  
7 fares. To summarize our full testimony, the New York  
8 City budget must recommit to the Department of  
9 Transportation Streets Plan and ensuring that the  
10 City is reaching policy benchmarks mandated in that  
11 plan. The City must also increase funding to Fair  
12 Fares to expand eligibility to include CUNY students  
13 and New Yorkers at 200 percent of the federal poverty  
14 level, and to increase outreach and promotion to help  
15 people learn about and how to apply for this benefit.  
16 Street design continues to be one of our most viable  
17 instruments for improving bus speeds. The Streets  
18 Plan law will do exactly that but, every year, the  
19 Mayor and DOT have failed to reach bus lane and  
20 busway targets, highlighting different barriers each  
21 time, from supply chain issues to COVID, staffing  
22 shortages, and hiring freezes. It is unacceptable  
23 that the Mayor's mid-year budget reductions last  
24 November and other named barriers will lead to more  
25 bus lane installation delays, which leave our buses



2 crawling through their routes at an average speed of  
3 merely 8 miles per hour. New York City must also do  
4 its part to expand fare discounts where it matters  
5 the most for college students and low-income New  
6 Yorkers. For college students, affording a MetroCard  
7 swipe or OMNYTap could be the difference between  
8 earning a degree or dropping out altogether. Proposed  
9 funding in the Executive Budget remains flat for the  
10 Fair Fares program for FY25, which is still lower  
11 than pre-pandemic levels. City Council has been a  
12 fierce advocate for this program, and we thank you  
13 and urge you to continue by increasing funding for  
14 these necessary expansions to both 200 percent of the  
15 federal poverty level and all CUNY students. Thank  
16 you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: We'll hear next  
20 from Christopher Schuyler.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

22 CHRISTOPHER SCHUYLER: Good evening, Chair  
23 Brooks-Powers, and thank you to all Committee Staff.  
24 I will submit written comments following my  
25 testimony. My name is Christopher Schuyler. I'm a

2 Managing Attorney with the Disability Justice Program  
3 at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. I want  
4 to talk about congestion pricing. I hope that the  
5 Council will push the MTA. Firstly, I do want to say  
6 that NYLPI supports congestion pricing, wants it to  
7 roll out on time. With that said, we want the MTA to  
8 broaden the disability exemption to ensure that all  
9 people with disabilities are exempt. As it stands,  
10 there are groups of people with disabilities who will  
11 have to pay the toll. We think that's not right given  
12 that through the MTA's history that they've made  
13 decisions to deprioritize subway accessibility  
14 projects, and now people with disabilities are left  
15 with only ground transportation options so we think  
16 that they need to be exempt. Additionally, we support  
17 the Fair Fares program and we want the increase to  
18 200 percent and want the MTA to up its levels of  
19 advertising the program, perhaps as far as HRA, what  
20 they can do to advertise the program, perhaps by  
21 checking if people who contact HRA, the MTA, are  
22 eligible for Fair Fares just at any time that they're  
23 contacted.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: We thank you for your  
25 testimony. Your time has expired.

2 CHRISTOPHER SCHUYLER: Yes, may I finish  
3 with...

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: If you could  
5 wrap up, please, and submit the rest of it in  
6 writing, I'd appreciate it.

7 CHRISTOPHER SCHUYLER: Yes. We second what  
8 our colleagues have said about the Streets Plan and,  
9 particularly with the accessibility components and  
10 bus stop upgrades, which are behind the schedule.  
11 Lastly, TLC. I didn't hear TLC mention that they are  
12 investigating how congestion pricing can improve any  
13 of its programs, particularly the Green Rides  
14 Initiative. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.  
15 Have a good night.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Christopher,  
17 if you did not finish, you could finish. I'm sorry. I  
18 didn't realize it was you. If you want to finish, go  
19 ahead. Sorry.

20 CHRISTOPHER SCHUYLER: Thank you. No  
21 worries. Yeah, I rushed through it to the end so that  
22 is it. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,  
24 Christopher.

25 CHRISTOPHER SCHUYLER: Bye-bye.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL MEALEY: If we have  
3 inadvertently missed anyone that is registered to  
4 testify today and has yet to have been called, please  
5 use the Zoom raise hand function if you are  
6 testifying remotely and you will be called in the  
7 order that your hand has been raised.

8 If you are testifying in person, please  
9 come to the dais.

10 Okay, seeing no one, I will now turn it  
11 over to Chair Brooks-Powers for closing remarks.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you to  
13 everyone who took time to come in today to testify  
14 and to testify virtually. Pretty long day, but much  
15 needed discussions happening today, and we look  
16 forward to continuing the conversations with each of  
17 these agencies as we move into the Executive Budget  
18 season. Thank you, and this meeting is now adjourned.

19 [GAVEL]

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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 12, 2024