

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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June 19, 2012
Start: 10:06 a.m.
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway
Committee Room, 14th Floor

B E F O R E:
JAMES VACCA
Chairperson

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Peter Koo
G. Oliver Koppell
Ydanis Rodriguez
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Eric Ulrich
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

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Deputy Commissioner for Traffic and Planning
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Edward Pincar
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John Rozankowski
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Manny Mauliclic
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2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Good morning,
3 everyone, I thank you all for coming. Is the
4 sound on? Yes, now it's on, okay. Good morning
5 all. I'm Council Member James Vacca, and I'm
6 Chair of the Transportation Committee of the New
7 York City Council.

8 Today we're here to discuss
9 something of critical importance to myself and
10 more than 7 million New Yorkers: Commuting
11 options outside of Manhattan. I want to thank the
12 MTA for sending representatives from both New York
13 City Transit and Metro-North to this hearing, and
14 I thank DOT and all advocacy groups for their
15 testimony as well.

16 Last year, the Center for an Urban
17 Future published a study that highlighted the
18 changing nature of commuting patterns in New York.
19 More workers are commuting from Brooklyn to
20 Queens, from the Bronx to Westchester, from Staten
21 Island to New Jersey or Brooklyn than ever before,
22 and yet our city's transit infrastructure has not
23 kept pace. We all know the City was hit hard by
24 the recession and the Manhattan Central Business
25 District faced staggering job losses, but the four

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2 other outer boroughs, so to speak, all experienced
3 job gains during the recession. In addition, the
4 number of commuters who travel to work within
5 their home borough or to a neighboring borough or
6 county has been increasing at a faster rate than
7 the number of commuters who travel into the
8 Manhattan core. This has made the need for better
9 transit options in the boroughs even more urgent.
10 As our city decentralizes its job growth, our
11 transit infrastructure must be adapted to meet our
12 changing needs and support job growth all across
13 our city.

14 We all heard talk about transit-
15 orientated development, but we could also stand to
16 have a conversation or two about development-
17 orientated traffic transit. Connecting workers to
18 their jobs via public transit is what New Yorkers
19 and their employers have come to expect.
20 Companies popping up in neighborhoods underserved
21 by transit, even companies that pay well and are
22 experiencing success, must hire from a much
23 smaller pool of workers, often favoring workers
24 who do not drive--workers who do drive if they are
25 not well-served by transit.

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2 Now the Bloomberg Administration
3 expects New York City's population to top 10
4 million people by 2020. We're well on our way.
5 If we do not do more to strengthen and improve our
6 transit system, more New Yorkers will turn to
7 cars. There is some evidence that this may be
8 already happening, especially among workers who
9 are commuting to work within their home borough or
10 to a neighboring borough. Ideally, we would
11 better connect neighborhoods like those
12 experiencing significant economic growth to the
13 subway system, but that's a long-term project
14 requiring billions of dollars that nobody has at
15 this point. The more inexpensive way is to move
16 people between these neighborhoods via an
17 extensive bus system.

18 I want to ask, and we always seek,
19 that agencies working together can accomplish
20 goals. The MTA, for example, and DOT working
21 together to create an aboveground network that
22 moves people as quickly as the subway system using
23 SBS routes is a good option. These bus routes,
24 which really started with the Bronx 12 in my
25 district, have growing ridership and are

1 significantly faster than local or limited bus--
2 limited stopping buses. These buses would not be
3 able to cut through the gridlock if it weren't for
4 extensive use of technology. Off-board fare
5 collection, signal prioritization for buses,
6 dedicated bus lanes, and camera enforcement of bus
7 lanes are all important parts of the SBS network
8 and they require MTA and DOT working together to
9 get the job done.
10

11 The MTA is currently operating SBS
12 lines on Fordham Road, Pelham Parkway in the
13 Bronx, Hylan Boulevard on Staten Island, First and
14 Second Avenue in Manhattan, and, of course, 34th
15 Street. SBS routes are in the planning phases for
16 Webster Avenue in the Bronx and Nostrand Avenue in
17 Brooklyn.

18 As the system continues to expand,
19 the MTA and DOT should take a hard look at the
20 feasibility of creating transfer points between
21 some of these SBS lines as well as future SBS
22 lines. Right now, they all operate in isolation
23 and none of them serve areas of the city
24 experiencing rapid economic growth. If we can get
25 SBS into the neighborhoods experiencing rapid

1
2 economic growth like Maspeth, Queens, for example,
3 we can make commuting times more reliable for
4 those workers and their employers. And we are
5 giving employers a wider range of workers to hire
6 from. It makes sense for employer and employee.

7 In order for the SBS network to
8 truly be effective at convincing workers to leave
9 their cars, and especially to decrease commute
10 times for workers in neighborhoods vastly
11 underserved by transit, the routes need to
12 intersect. Transfer points are a key part of our
13 subway system, without them the subway network
14 wouldn't be nearly as useful as it is. A complete
15 SBS network must operate in a similar way.

16 In addition to the SBS bus network,
17 I've been working with the MTA and DOT so that we
18 can find a solution to express bus problems.
19 Right now, many of these buses really cannot be
20 called express--they get stuck in the same traffic
21 as everybody else coming in and out of Manhattan.
22 When commuters cannot rely on these buses to get
23 them in and out of the city in time for work, they
24 turn to their cars, and that's exactly what we
25 want to avoid.

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2 One of the major advantages of the
3 bus network is that it's always adaptable. If we
4 need to change or add a route to service a new
5 economic hub or housing development, it's
6 possible, at a much lower cost and with much
7 greater speed than adding a subway line. More
8 workers are commuting to jobs outside of Manhattan
9 than ever before, and, as policy makers, we must
10 acknowledge that and adapt the bus network to meet
11 those needs so that workers of all types have
12 access to safe, reliable, and fast public transit.
13 The economic future of our city depends on that,
14 and I know the MTA and DOT, by virtue of their
15 being here, are willing to work with us on that
16 issue.

17 Adapting the bus network is a
18 relatively short-term solution; expanding Metro-
19 North stations in the East Bronx through the Penn
20 Station Access Project is a medium-term one, and,
21 as the proposed stations would serve my district,
22 of course, it's a high priority for me.
23 Currently, trains and Amtrak line already run
24 right through the East Bronx and parts of Queens.
25 Decades ago, the MTA talked about building

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2 stations to service neighborhoods in those areas--
3 the tracks are there--and building these stations
4 at an estimated cost of \$400 million would connect
5 suburban workers to jobs, not only in the Bronx,
6 Manhattan, and Queens, but would also connect New
7 Yorkers to jobs in Westchester County and
8 Connecticut. Right now, a record number of
9 workers commute daily from the Bronx to
10 Westchester and Connecticut. Workers on the west
11 side of the Bronx can take the Harlem line to jobs
12 in Westchester, but no comparable option exists in
13 the East Bronx. Commuters traveling from the East
14 Bronx to work in Westchester have no viable choice
15 but to take their cars and sit in traffic on the
16 Hutchison River Parkway, which is backed up every
17 day. These neighborhoods are transit starved and
18 this service would provide these constituents with
19 reliable service to jobs both in Manhattan and
20 points north. So I'd like to hear an update from
21 the MTA on those efforts as their testimony is
22 given today.

23 So without further to say--I've
24 said a lot so if I have further to say, I should
25 kick myself, I think--but I welcome you all here.

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2 I'm joined by my colleagues Council Member Debbie
3 Rose to my extreme right, and Council Member Peter
4 Koo from Queens. I thank the staff for all their
5 work in putting this together and helping me do
6 it.

7 So let me introduce our first
8 panel. Let me ask also that you please put your
9 phones on vibrate, I'm sure that that was
10 announced before, so that we do not have
11 interruptions. Our first panel is Bruce Schaller,
12 New York City DOT; Ed Pincar, New York City DOT;
13 Lois Tandler, MTA New York City Transit; and Peter
14 Cafiero, New York City Transit MTA. Okay? Who
15 would like to lead off?

16 BRUCE SCHALLER: I will lead off.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Would you like
18 to? Sure. Thank you, introduce yourself for the
19 record though.

20 BRUCE SCHALLER: Sure. Good
21 morning, Chairman Vacca and Members of the
22 Transportation Committee. I am Bruce Schaller and
23 I'm the Deputy Commissioner for Traffic Design--
24 Traffic and Planning at the New York City
25 Department of Transportation. With me today--

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2 MALE VOICE: Hey, hang on, I don't
3 know if he's, I don't know if he's on.

4 BRUCE SCHALLER: --on my right is
5 Edward Pincar--

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [Interposing]
7 Sir, you need to turn the microphone.

8 [Off mic]

9 MALE VOICE: It's not on, yeah,
10 he's got to turn on the mic. He should start.

11 BRUCE SCHALLER: Would you check
12 it? Here, it's on now.

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Can you just
14 start again?

15 BRUCE SCHALLER: Sure.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I'm sorry.

17 BRUCE SCHALLER: Good morning,
18 Chairman Vacca and members of the Transportation
19 Committee. My name is Bruce Schaller and I'm the
20 Deputy Commissioner for Traffic and Planning at
21 New York City Transit--at New York City DOT,
22 excuse me, jumping ahead.. And with me today on
23 my right is Edward Pincar, DOT'S Director of
24 Intergovernmental Affairs, and on my left are
25 colleagues from New York City Transit, Peter

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2 Cafiero, the Chief of Operations Planning, and
3 Lois Tendler, Transit's Vice President of
4 Government and Community Relations.

5 So we both from DOT and New York
6 City Transit appreciate the opportunity to update
7 the Council this morning on the steps that we are
8 taking to improve and expand the bus service
9 throughout the city. Our two agencies are here
10 together, as you noted, because we have been real
11 partners in collectively designing and operating
12 more efficient, more reliable, and more convenient
13 bus service. I'd like to start our remarks this
14 morning by first providing an overview of the
15 approach we've taken to achieve these objectives,
16 which includes not only SBS, Select Bus Service,
17 but also targeted bus mobility improvements for
18 both local and express buses--so the whole family
19 of bus service here. We believe that these
20 improvements will make buses a more attractive
21 choice for New Yorkers and make bus service a true
22 complement to the existing rail system.

23 The success of our joint program,
24 which, as you noted, Mr. Chairman, started in 2008
25 with the Bx12 on Fordham Road in the Bronx, can be

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2 measured by the significant increase in ridership
3 and decrease in travel times on all of the routes
4 receiving treatments. A key to this success is
5 carefully applying the elements of Bus Rapid
6 Transit, BRT, to the needs of New York City
7 neighborhoods. BRT is a cost-effective approach
8 used in cities around the world to improve travel
9 speeds and the overall efficiency of bus service.
10 BRT features include frequent service--and I'll be
11 talking about and Peter will be talking about each
12 of these in more detail--longer station spacing,
13 faster fare payment, transit signal priority, and
14 dedicated bus lanes. New York City's brand of BRT
15 is SBS, Select Bus Service.

16 In implementing SBS, our goal is
17 always to find the best set of BRT treatments for
18 each individual street and bus line since
19 different neighborhoods have different needs as
20 you go about our great city. We have installed
21 bus lanes in locations where it makes sense to
22 reserve street space for buses while maintaining,
23 also very important to us, obviously, the flow of
24 general traffic and meeting needs for curb access
25 for parking and loading in particular.

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2 We have upgraded the designs of our
3 bus lanes, using more offset lanes, where the lane
4 is next to the curb lane, so that we maintain the
5 parking along the curb, and also by using high
6 visibility red paint and larger signs to make sure
7 that the rules of the road are clear to all. As
8 authorized by the State Legislature in 2010, we
9 also use automated camera enforcement of these
10 lanes to make sure that they stay clear for buses
11 and buses can speed along and provide good
12 service.

13 But bus lanes are certainly not our
14 only tool to enhance bus service. Another example
15 is the deployment of Transit Signal Priority, or
16 TSP. TSP allows buses to stop at fewer red
17 lights, resulting in a 5% to 10% improvement in
18 travel times. TSP also improves travel time for
19 other vehicles by optimizing the overall traffic
20 signal coordination, so this is truly a win-win
21 for both the bus rider and for drivers generally.
22 TSP is currently operating on Victory Boulevard on
23 Staten Island, on Fordham Road in the Bronx, and
24 on 34th Street in Manhattan. Our agencies are
25 currently installing and testing the equipment on

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2 the M15 SBS route on First and Second Avenue in
3 Manhattan. Widespread implementation of TSP is
4 and will be made possible by my agency's
5 investment in Advanced Solid State Traffic
6 Controllers, which control the traffic signals at
7 each intersection, and the new ones will
8 communicate in real time with our Traffic
9 Management Center in Queens. This system can, for
10 example, hold the green a little longer and, thus,
11 allow a bus to proceed through an intersection
12 before the traffic signal turns red.

13 We're also working to install TSP
14 to benefit routes beyond our SBS corridors.
15 Current efforts in this regard are focused on
16 routes that access busy commercial and employment
17 centers, such as St. George in Staten Island,
18 Flushing, and Jamaica in Queens. As we install
19 ASTCs at all signalized intersections in New York
20 City, which we're in the process of, we will have
21 the ability then to activate TSP along still more
22 corridors citywide.

23 In addition to bus lanes and TSP,
24 DOT is making other physical changes to streets to
25 enhance the bus customer experience. We are

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2 constructing bus stations which extend out from
3 the curb at key locations where we have parking
4 along the curb, to provide additional space for
5 amenities, such as shelters and benches, and to
6 increase pedestrian space to make the street safer
7 and more pleasant for all. SBS stations, both the
8 ones that extend from the curb and all the others
9 on the sidewalk, also have off-board fare
10 collection machines where customers pre-pay at
11 machines on the sidewalk, thus allowing them to
12 board a bus through any door, keeping a receipt as
13 proof of payment. Working with New York City
14 Transit, we have undertaken an unprecedented level
15 of community outreach in designing and
16 implementing the bus improvements we are
17 describing, and this is just as important as any
18 other part of our overall program efforts. For
19 each SBS project, we form a Community Advisory
20 Committee and hold open house meetings and public
21 workshops, as well as work with Community Boards
22 and merchant and neighborhood groups. By
23 utilizing this comprehensive outreach and public
24 engagement process, we are able to learn
25 exponentially more about the specific needs of

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2 each community, what the best tools are to solve
3 the issues facing transit riders in the corridor,
4 while also meeting the needs relating to parking
5 and general traffic. As we work with communities,
6 we continue to develop improved treatments, and
7 better ways to engage local elected officials,
8 residents, businesses, and other stakeholders.
9 Conversely, the community learns in more detail
10 what we can offer and provide, and, thus, is
11 better able to advise us on their needs and
12 priorities. Our experience is that by utilizing
13 this robust public engagement process, we're able
14 to focus on the specific problems and unique needs
15 of each corridor, and our agencies and the
16 communities we serve, and the larger public very
17 much as well as the specific riders are very much
18 the beneficiaries.

19 So before my colleague, Peter
20 Cafiero, discusses our first set of SBS routes in
21 more detail than I have, I'd like to mention that
22 DOT and New York City Transit have also begun to
23 plan for the next set of SBS routes. In 2009, our
24 agencies held seven interactive and well attended
25 public workshops and conducted an online survey to

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2 educate communities about BRT elements and then
3 solicit feedback on where the public would like to
4 see future SBS routes. Through this BRT Phase II
5 planning study, DOT and New York City Transit have
6 identified 16 potential future corridors for BRT
7 treatments. To date, we have started looking at
8 improvements to three corridors identified in the
9 study: On Webster Avenue in the Bronx, as you
10 mentioned, Mr. Chairman; Utica Avenue in Brooklyn;
11 and on providing better bus service at LaGuardia
12 Airport. Moving forward with these and other
13 projects from the Phase II study, we will continue
14 to tailor improvement to bus service in ways that
15 matter to bus riders by applying the right
16 improvements on each corridor, and by continuing
17 our robust public outreach efforts.

18 As we move forward with our current
19 and planned bus improvement projects, we expect
20 that this problem-solving focus, public engagement
21 process, and the agencies' continued collaboration
22 will lead to even greater improvements for New
23 Yorkers taking the bus.

24 And now Peter from New York City
25 Transit will discuss the projects specifically,

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2 and at the conclusion of his testimony, we'll be
3 happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank
4 you.

5 PETER CAFIERO: Thank you, Deputy
6 Commissioner Schaller, and thank you, Chairman
7 Vacca and Members of the Committee.

8 As the Deputy Commissioner just
9 discussed, New York City Transit has been working
10 very closely for the last several years with the
11 Department of Transportation to make significant
12 improvements to the bus operations throughout the
13 city. Select Bus Services, or SBS, is now up and
14 running on three corridors in the city--the Bronx
15 12 that was mentioned earlier, and the M15 and M34
16 in Manhattan. These are the first three routes of
17 five corridors originally identified jointly by
18 New York City Transit and New York City DOT
19 following an extensive public input process. Over
20 100 corridors were initially identified and
21 screened down to 15 using various criteria
22 regarding feasibility and ridership potential.

23 Ultimately, five corridors were
24 selected for priority implementation. New York
25 City Transit and DOT are currently working on

1
2 implementing SBS on the two remaining of the five
3 original routes, an additional sixth route, and we
4 are undertaking, as Bruce mentioned, an
5 Alternatives Analysis for service to LaGuardia
6 Airport, which could yield additional corridors.

7 To date, the results of our SBS
8 program have been very encouraging: Bus ridership
9 on all three routes has significantly increased at
10 a time when bus ridership on similar corridors has
11 been decreasing. For example, on Fordham Road in
12 the Bronx, bus speeds have increased on the Bx12
13 SBS by 20%, ridership in the corridor as a whole
14 increased by 10%, and a survey conducted by New
15 York City Transit found that 98% of riders were
16 satisfied or very satisfied with the new service.
17 Since the start of SBS on the M15 in October of
18 2010, bus speeds on First and Second Avenues in
19 Manhattan have increased by up to 18% and
20 ridership has gone up 9% during the first year of
21 operation. The M15 corridor now has an average
22 weekday ridership of 55,000 people, which makes it
23 the bus route in the city with the highest
24 ridership for a single bus route. We look forward
25 to realizing similar improvements with the 34th

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2 Street SBS, which commenced in this past November
3 with bus lanes, faster fare payment, and real time
4 travel information. In fact, early evaluations
5 show about a 10% decrease in travel time and
6 continuing increase in ridership on this route.

7 On First and Second Avenue, we are
8 constructing the bus stations that the Deputy
9 Commissioner described, we often call them bus
10 bulbs, but they're not where you grow new buses,
11 they are the growing of the sidewalk out to meet
12 the bus lane on the street for easier boarding and
13 easier operation of the bus, those are being
14 constructed right now on the M15. Later this
15 year, we expect to start construction of these bus
16 bulbs for 34th Street, on the SBS there as well.
17 In addition, we've added real time Bus Time, which
18 is the real time bus information location
19 information which currently is in all buses in
20 Staten Island, and one bus route in Brooklyn,
21 we've added that to the M34 SBS, and we are in the
22 process of rolling that out citywide.

23 On 34th Street, we're working in
24 partnership with DOT to upgrade the existing bus
25 lanes to allow for better curb access for

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2 businesses and residents, which was important
3 result of the outreach we had there, and it will
4 also help keep the bus lane clear. Bus lanes are
5 also being added to the Pelham Parkway section of
6 the Bx12 SBS route as part of the City's
7 reconstruction of that roadway.

8 DOT and New York City Transit are
9 currently proceeding with three additional SBS
10 corridors. We'll be starting SBS service on Hylan
11 Boulevard in Staten Island on September 2nd, 2012.
12 Working closely with community stakeholders in
13 Staten Island, DOT and New York City Transit
14 developed a comprehensive project to improve
15 safety and mobility for drivers, transit riders,
16 and pedestrians on Staten Island's South Shore.
17 This corridor is unique of the ones that we've
18 looked at in that, in addition to several local
19 bus services, it has a number of high volume, high
20 ridership express buses operating in the corridor.
21 In designing the S79 SBS, we were keenly aware
22 that any SBS implementation had to work with, and
23 ideally improve, the operation of the express bus
24 routes, as well as the local bus services on Hylan
25 Boulevard. Thus, this project includes

1
2 streamlined service and fewer stops for the S79,
3 pedestrian safety enhancements, left turn lanes at
4 major intersections, and bus lanes that will
5 benefit the 32,000 bus riders who travel via Hylan
6 Boulevard on the S78, S79, and eight different
7 express bus routes. Transit Signal Priority will
8 also be implemented on this corridor in 2013.

9 In Brooklyn, we have worked closely
10 with residents and businesses to bring SBS along
11 the Nostrand Avenue, Rogers Avenue bus corridor,
12 which currently serves over 39,000 weekday riders.
13 Construction will begin later this year, and this
14 project will be launched in 2013 with bus bulbs to
15 ease boarding at bus stops and expand pedestrian
16 space. The corridor will also feature the offset
17 bus lanes, which usually the lanes one lane out
18 from the curb, traffic signal prioritization, and
19 an improved loading access plan for commercial
20 areas that was developed in consultation with
21 local businesses.

22 In the Bronx, building on the
23 success of the Bx12 on Fordham Road, we are in the
24 early stages of developing the borough's second
25 SBS route along Webster Avenue so that we will

1
2 have a north-south corridor the complements the
3 east-west of the Bx12. Webster Avenue is a major
4 residential and commercial corridor serving 22,000
5 daily riders currently. This project will work in
6 tandem with community development occurring along
7 the corridor.

8 While SBS is our most visible
9 program to improve bus service in New York City,
10 not every street is appropriate for SBS, but bus
11 priority features can still have a significant
12 role when applied in a targeted manner. For
13 example, DOT and New York City Transit work
14 closely with residents and businesses in Queens on
15 localized transit improvements for downtown
16 Jamaica, where over 47 bus routes converge and
17 connect with four subway lines.

18 Working together, our agencies are
19 focused on a holistic approach to improving bus
20 service throughout New York City and really
21 providing an integrated network with the subway
22 system as well to provide that inter-borough and
23 intra-borough travel. And providing our bus
24 customers with speedier, more reliable, and more
25 convenient service while assuring that the safety

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2 and needs of pedestrians, drivers, and business
3 are also accommodated.

4 At this time, we are happy to
5 answer any questions the committee might have.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.
7 Sorry. Did you want to speak, Ms. Tendler, or no?

8 LOIS TENDLER: No.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. I'd like
10 to note that we're joined by Council Member Oliver
11 Koppell. Okay. Let me start with some
12 questioning.

13 I thank you very much for your
14 testimony, and the SBS routes, I think, represent
15 a significant way to get people to where they want
16 to go quicker via mass transits, so I'm encouraged
17 by much of what you said.

18 One aspect of this hearing today
19 that I wanted to focus on was the reality that
20 many people in the boroughs outside Manhattan are
21 going to suburban places as their place of work
22 every day and I was wondering if you had any
23 coordination with suburban bus lines, for example.
24 I'm thinking in Westchester County, the B line bus
25 gets people to New Rochelle and job areas where

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2 people are now going to work every day, but taking
3 their cars because they often have no other way of
4 doing it. So what are we doing in so much as
5 that's concerned?

6

PETER CAFIERO: Well, first of all,
7 we have, as I'm sure you know, complete fare
8 integration with both the bus service in Nassau
9 County and in Westchester County, so MetroCard and
10 free transfers to the subways and to the other bus
11 lines is all built in and has been for a number of
12 years. And actually, when that went in in the
13 late nineties, there was a significant increase in
14 ridership on routes between the Bronx and
15 Westchester County and between Queens and Nassau
16 following that.

17

We do coordinate with Westchester
18 County, we meet with them on a regular basis. In
19 fact, as they were developing their versions of
20 BRT, they consulted with us because we had already
21 implemented the Bronx 12 and they were very
22 interested in that. And we work with them
23 particularly around Fordham, which is a hub for,
24 not just Westchester bus and our buses, but also
25 Metro-North, which I know you'll talk about later.

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2 So I think there is a level of coordination and
3 intersection between those companies.

4 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I would like
5 you to look at that, I know you have the
6 relationship, but many times people are taking
7 their cars to get to the bus stop in many
8 neighborhoods that are kind of far flung, or
9 they're taking their cars and going to where they
10 work because they don't have accessibility of
11 buses. So are we looking at relationships where
12 those buses could be brought nearer to where
13 people live? I'm thinking again in my district,
14 the B line stops at Pelham Bay train station, but
15 it does not go anywhere near, for example, Throgs
16 Neck or other areas, those people basically get in
17 cars and go on the New England Thruway and go to
18 work or get on the Hutch, and there's not
19 availability of service.

20 PETER CAFIERO: Well there are many
21 trips throughout the city that require a transfer
22 to get from one point to another point, there's no
23 bus system or any transit system that can connect
24 every point that people may want to go, and so I
25 think it's--the systems develop that there are

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2 these key points, like Pelham Bay, Fordham, some
3 of the other ends of the subway routes, where
4 there are transfer points and the fare integration
5 has really helped that. Beyond that, in terms of
6 Westchester service, without them here, I couldn't
7 really speak to what they might be looking at.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: No, it's just a
9 point that I know the MetroCard can be used, but
10 if it matters--if it means that a person's going
11 to take three buses, that person is likely to get
12 into a car, and sometimes you transfer three
13 times, there's so much time involved in your trip
14 that the incentive is what we don't want to
15 provide, we want are then providing an incentive
16 for people to get in their cars. So that's why I
17 say that if you have that relationship already, I
18 don't remember any modification in these lines for
19 years, I don't remember any modification. Things
20 have changed, the economic conditions have
21 changed. If you look, for example, at how many
22 people in the Bronx work in White Plains, work in
23 Stamford or areas near Connecticut, these have
24 become job centers in the past 20 years. So we
25 haven't adapted as we should, so that's why I ask

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2 that we look at--we have the relationships but do
3 we have an updating of what the reality is, that's
4 my question.

5 PETER CAFIERO: Well I think the
6 destinations you just talked about would be a long
7 trip by any bus, and so you see, and you'll talk
8 to people later in the next panel about Metro-
9 North clearly connecting the New York City transit
10 system into the commuter rail system to go further
11 north has been very productive and we certainly
12 see a lot of activity at points where that happens
13 right now. So beyond that, in terms of what
14 Westchester might do, I think they would need to
15 be here to address that further.

16 But we do have a relationship with
17 them and worked out on various issues that have
18 come up. And we do cross the border a little bit
19 where we need to on both Westchester and Nassau,
20 just as they cross the border to connect in the
21 subways. We have worked to get into--if there's a
22 shopping center right on the border, those sorts
23 of things, we've worked to not have something that
24 would not make sense with us ending just short of
25 where people wanted to go.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Have you found
3 that people working in their own boroughs now, as
4 they are increasingly, have also a difficult
5 navigation? How do you get from one part of the
6 Bronx to another--East Bronx to West Bronx, how do
7 you get from one part of Queens to another? Are
8 those issues that you've looked at from a
9 transportation point of view, from a transit point
10 of view, since people are working more and more in
11 their own boroughs, not going into Manhattan? And
12 one objective of this hearing is to see how we can
13 get them there quicker.

14 PETER CAFIERO: Well first, just to
15 maybe amplify or clarify some of the statistics,
16 while the percentage of increase in some of these
17 intra-borough, intra-county, and inter-borough,
18 inter-county trips has increased greater than the
19 percentage of people going to Manhattan, in many
20 cases it's starting from a smaller base. So you
21 still have the growth going to Manhattan has, in
22 pure numbers of people, has still been
23 significant, in some cases greater than what's the
24 inter-borough. That doesn't mean we should ignore
25 it, but just we can't ignore the trips to

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Manhattan as well.

Historically, if you look at the census data for any of the counties in this region, trips within the county are either the number one or number two destinations, so people generally have always stayed in their--either in their home county or gone to Manhattan, which shows you the draw of Manhattan throughout the region. So there always been a number of intra-county, intra-borough trips. We have an existing bus network that really blankets the city and provides, at least for the historic development, an excellent connectivity.

The two things that we've been focused on, and continue to focus on, are, one, the fact that bus service, as traffic congestion increases, has gotten slower. And that's the focus of these SBS corridors where we can to have a major corridor that functions faster and becomes really integrated with the subway network as an extension of that network and a complement to that network. And the other that we would like to look at, and have in the past, as new developments happen that are off of the grid, so to speak, of

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2 the existing network and make sure that we serve
3 those. So we certainly have served new shopping
4 centers that are developed. And other employment
5 centers around the city, we've improved over the
6 last 20 years service into the airports and
7 between the boroughs and, of course, as you know,
8 we've had very constrained funding in the last few
9 years, but we certainly continue to look at where
10 there are new areas that need service, and when
11 opportunities are available, we would work to try
12 to do that.

13 BRUCE SCHALLER: Right, and let me
14 just add, I think if you look at the current SBS
15 projects that we have in the phase II plan, you
16 see a number of really good examples, Mr.
17 Chairman, that really get to your point in terms
18 of connecting within a borough to major and
19 growing employment centers. So east-west Fordham
20 Road is the obvious example there; if you look at
21 the improvements we've made in downtown Jamaica
22 where, really, the congestion is for routes going
23 into downtown Jamaica, many of those people are
24 going to work, as well as they may be connecting
25 to the subway of LIRR. The LaGuardia study that

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2 we have ongoing is for, we expect much of the
3 ridership, much of the current bus ridership, and
4 certainly much of the ridership in an SBS route,
5 would be for employees who work at the airport and
6 who oftentimes live in upper Manhattan, within the
7 Bronx, and could really greatly benefit from
8 improved, more reliable, faster service to
9 LaGuardia and Livingston Street, which I don't
10 think either of us had mentioned, but we put a bus
11 lane--improved lanes on Livingston Street in
12 downtown Brooklyn, heavily used corridor going
13 into another major employment center.

14 So all of these are examples of how
15 the current program is, I think, working to serve,
16 again, a lot of the travels to Manhattan, but
17 really working to serve work and other trip--
18 shopping and other trips that are within the
19 borough or between boroughs, for example,
20 Manhattan into Queens, the Bronx into Queens, and
21 as we strengthen the network for SBS, it's very
22 complementary to the subway so if the subway is
23 serving part of the trip, that would generally be
24 faster than taking a bus, and then the bus for the
25 piece that there's no subway alternative. And if

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2 you look at our SBS routes, none of them overlap,
3 none of them are replicating or trying to
4 replicate when it makes sense to be spending our
5 effort replicating this existing rail service, but
6 are adding to that network of rapid transit
7 throughout the city.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I did want to
9 raise the issue too of express buses, and I wanted
10 to learn from you what are we doing to get express
11 buses to be a little more express in nature? I
12 know we have heavy traffic in Manhattan, but we
13 have a lot of frustration among people on the
14 express buses who say that, especially coming
15 home, they are just sitting in the same traffic as
16 everyone else and they're going nowhere. So I
17 wanted to hear from you, what are we doing about
18 maximizing express buses as a realistic
19 alternative for people.

20 PETER CAFIERO: Do you want to
21 start or--

22 BRUCE SCHALLER: [Interposing]
23 Sure, I'll start and I'll talk about the traffic
24 and Peter can talk about the transit service
25 aspect of it. So just in thinking about express

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2 bus service, I think is helpful to kind of think
3 about it in three baskets: There is the Manhattan
4 piece of it, which is probably the most, in many
5 cases, is the most congested part of the trip, and
6 then there's often a highway--there's a highway
7 piece to the trip and then there's the part of the
8 trip on local streets in the outer boroughs. And
9 so just to take each of those, a number of our,
10 both SBS and bus priority projects in Manhattan,
11 will very much benefit express bus riders. So
12 34th Street, as we put that in, about half of the
13 30,000 or so riders on 34th Street are in express
14 buses, it's a major east-west corridor for express
15 buses and will very much benefit them.

16 As you know, we have an existing
17 two-lane, two bus lane facility on Madison Avenue--
18 -also heavily traveled by both local and express
19 buses--and we will be taking a project to the
20 Community Board in the next couple months to
21 improve, sort of, how we think the left side of
22 Madison Avenue can work and improve the bus
23 service, improve the loading situation, improve
24 for left turns. I'd be happy to share some
25 details with that with you about that as well that

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2 will help the operation on Madison Avenue, I think
3 for all vehicles, certainly for buses. And then
4 we've been looking at Fifth Avenue as well and
5 look at very heavily congested corridor, very
6 heavy express bus, as well as local buses,
7 generally slow speeds, heart of midtown, and we've
8 been looking at what we can do for buses on Fifth
9 Avenue as well.

10 As you get outside of Manhattan, we
11 have the state, generally state highway system,
12 HOV lanes on the Gowanus, Staten Island
13 Expressway, Long Island Expressway, which for
14 those users very much speed express buses. We put
15 Hylan in on Staten Island, so you'll have the SBS,
16 which will benefit express bus riders as well
17 going up Hylan on to the Verrazano and then be
18 able to use the Gowanus lane coming up. And then
19 as we, again, as we continue to look around the
20 city, as we continue to roll out transit signal
21 priority, we'll also be able to look at where that
22 might benefit both local and express bus riders on
23 major arterial streets in the outer boroughs. Do
24 you want to add to this?

25 PETER CAFIERO: Yeah, I think you

1 touched most of what we're doing. I wanted to
2 emphasize what I think we've tried a few times
3 here to emphasize. The SBS gets a lot of
4 attention, it's the full length of the route, we
5 try to do treatments on the full length of the
6 route, it's a major effort to get that in. But
7 there's often, you know, one single chokepoint on
8 a street somewhere on a route that can make all
9 the difference fixing that for the operation of
10 maybe multiple routes that go through that. One
11 example that we work with early on is the
12 technology was still developing was a priority for
13 a signal at 34th and 7th Avenue in Manhattan, a
14 number of express buses had to make that left
15 turn, were getting stopped at that light, and we
16 worked, really, to adapt, I think it was E-ZPass
17 technology at the time, to just get that signal to
18 change when the bus was there. As we now develop
19 a citywide system for traffic and transit
20 priority, as that rolls out, we'll be in a better
21 position to do that at many locations where
22 there's a need to do that.

24 I'm personally excited about Hylan
25 Boulevard and what it'll do for the express bus.

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2 As we make it better for buses in the corridor,
3 everybody is going to gain in that corridor.

4 There are other parts of the
5 express bus route path which are problems that are
6 outside of the scope of what we can deal with,
7 certainly the various chokepoints on the highways
8 and coming in from New Jersey for the--the Staten
9 Island routes that come through New Jersey are
10 coming up the Gowanus, those are issues we need to
11 work with the state, but there's often larger
12 issues there. Fifth Madison, we're definitely
13 looking forward to any improvements there, not
14 just, in that case, I would say, yes, for the
15 express buses, but it's also a significant local
16 bus market in Manhattan as well. So again,
17 another one where two different markets can win
18 from the same investment.

19 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Can you just
20 tell me a little bit about Fifth Avenue? What are
21 you looking at off--

22 [Crosstalk]

23 BRUCE SCHALLER: [Interposing]
24 Sure, so we're looking at a range of things, right
25 now we're doing the traffic analysis. We've

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2 collected data, we're looking at different
3 treatments that we might apply, which ones would
4 work, which ones would be most productive to
5 apply. I think, just to refer to what I was
6 saying earlier, it's been, really, the whole SBS
7 program, our bus program has very much been a
8 learning process for us as agencies and learning
9 how to better work with communities, learning what
10 treatments work where, we've sort of had to invent
11 this program on-the-fly. You don't see, if you
12 look around the country, you don't see a
13 comparable program run, fact people, as Peter
14 mentioned, come to us to say how are you solving
15 these problems. And so I think Fifth Avenue is a
16 good example of where we're in that, very much in
17 that problem solving and perhaps invention mode,
18 and so it's too early to say exactly what we want
19 to do there, but it's something that we're looking
20 at, we want to see what we can do for buses, and
21 we'll be very happy to sit with you--we've had
22 some discussions as we move this work forward.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes, we have
24 had discussions and I thank you, and I know the
25 MTA is working on that also and I thank them. So

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LOIS TENDLER: I just wanted to

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add--

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --it's

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complicated. Yes, Lois?

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LOIS TENDLER: --I just wanted to

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add from the operational end, as Peter was talking

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about, analyzing each express bus route and to see

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where the chokepoints are, we also use our

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dispatchers and managerial forces, our road

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control people to, A, identifying the first

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instance where they see chokepoints and we work

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with the schedule of the buses, make sure they

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have enough recovery time and, you know, to get

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them to be reliable and come when they're going to

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come. We're also, by the end of 2013, going to

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have Bus Time on all buses, it's on all the Staten

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Island buses, as Peter said, now, including the

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Staten Island express buses.

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And when you were talking about the

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evening rush hour and how frustrating that is for

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your constituents, Bus Time is a great advantage

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because it tells people when the next bus is going

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to be there, when to expect their bus. Before you

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2 run out of your office to catch a bus, you can
3 check and see whether it's going to be there. So
4 it's another way to make the commute a little
5 better for our customers.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: For the record,
7 this is Lois Tendler from the MTA. And I did have
8 a very good meeting with the MTA last weekend, as
9 Lois said, there are improvements coming. So I
10 thank you for your work because I know it's not
11 easy, I mean, we all see the traffic in Manhattan
12 every day and I know that getting the buses out of
13 Manhattan is difficult, and then when you take in
14 the highway situation, as you said, it becomes a
15 double problem that we have, but we have to
16 address it because these express buses represent a
17 hope of more people using transit and that's what
18 we want.

19 So, okay, I want to acknowledge
20 we're joined by Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez,
21 who has joined us, and Council Member Vincent
22 Ignizio is here, Council Member Eric Ulrich has
23 joined us. Our first question is Council Member
24 Peter Koo.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you, Mr.

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2 Chair. Today we have this hearing, the topic is
3 addressing public transit needs outside of
4 Manhattan, so I thought most of the discussion
5 would be about Queens or Bronx or Staten Island.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: No, it is,
7 Council Member, it just it often relates to
8 Manhattan.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: But we're not,
10 I think we just concentrate too much time on
11 Manhattan. So I want to bring this subject back
12 to Queens.

13 [Crosstalk]

14 FEMALE VOICE: --outer boroughs.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah. You
16 know, in downtown Flushing we have a lot of buses,
17 but somehow the buses are always, you know, when
18 they finish the trip, they're all stationed in
19 downtown Flushing [off mic] Roosevelt Avenue, 30th
20 Avenue, 39th, they're blocking all the stores for
21 business, and I think we have to move these buses
22 to a bus depot. Right next to us, is there's a
23 city field, there's a bus depot there, how come
24 you don't bring all the buses there? When it's
25 time to come, they just go to Main Street or go to

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Roosevelt Avenue to pick up the passengers.

PETER CAFIERO: Well it looks like there's a lot of buses 'cause there are a lot of buses that are coming and it's the largest bus to subway transfer in the city. And I don't have to tell you that there's just a lot of very crowded bus routes there, very heavily used bus routes. That means they have a lot of buses, frequently the buses come in, they have to have a certain amount of time, we call recovery time, some of that's contractual with the drivers to give them, understandably, give them a break. But more importantly, it's to allow us to provide reliable service leaving Flushing, heading out to ensure that that stays reliable, even if there's a minor disruption in service coming in.

So we really need to have those buses there to provide that outbound service. To take them away from Flushing would mean that the buses wouldn't be in Flushing when we needed them to load up and leave.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Because in Jamaica you have a [off mic], Jackson Heights, you have a bus depot there, buses can station there

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and when it's time to go to Flushing, just, I mean, five minutes before, just drive the bus to arrange a pick up and--

PETER CAFIERO: [Interposing] But you would still see the same--

[Crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: --but right now--

PETER CAFIERO: --in Flushing.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: --there are too much congestion in downtown Flushing. I give you one example, St. George Church on Main Street. In front of the church, there's buses and on the side, on both sides, the church is surrounded by three sides of--with buses idling there, creating a lot of air pollution. It's not that they station there just to pick up passenger, they stay there like 10, 15 minutes waiting for the next route. So I'm talking about these kind of things. And on Roosevelt Avenue, they have buses in front of my business like 10, 15 minutes, they just idle there and blocking people to see the signs on a lot of business. This is not the way to do business in downtown Flushing, you don't do this

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2 in Manhattan, why do it flushing? You don't do
3 this in Jamaica, you have a bus depot.

4 PETER CAFIERO: In Jamaica, the
5 same buses are--

6 [Crosstalk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: [Interposing]
8 Or in Jackson Heights, you have a bus depot, but
9 somehow in Flushing, with so many buses, you don't
10 have a bus depot.

11 LOIS TENDLER: [Interposing] Excuse
12 me, what you're referring to in Jackson Heights
13 was an intermodal facility built in conjunction
14 with the rehabilitation of the 74th Street
15 Roosevelt Station and that was done maybe 12, 14
16 years ago. We have looked at places to stage
17 buses in Flushing, the Lipman [phonetic] Arcade
18 was one place we looked at, there was never a
19 joint meeting of the minds between the relevant
20 jurisdictions that would have to come up with the
21 property to make the space to put buses off
22 street. That being said, buses come into Flushing
23 and buses--buses come into Flushing packed with
24 people and leave packed with people. To take them
25 even--what you're saying, Councilman, five minutes

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2 away and traffic is not five minutes, you would be
3 adding to pollution by driving them back and forth
4 off the beginning and the end of their route.

5 The reason all the buses are there
6 is because there are customers who fill them up.
7 I suppose that if collectively EDC, DOT, New York
8 City Transit, et cetera, found a proximate piece
9 of property that could be offsite terminal for
10 buses, if you will, that would be something we
11 would be interested in, but barring that, the
12 reason buses are there is because the customers
13 are there.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Well I think
15 it's not fair for businesses and even for
16 churches, religious groups, to have buses staging
17 there all day long, 24 hours a day. For St.
18 George Church, they can't even have a wedding, you
19 know, the limousine, there's no place to park a
20 limousine. You know, all the buses are there on
21 three sides of the building.

22 PETER CAFIERO: Well we've been
23 working to try to improve downtown Flushing and
24 it's a very congested area and it's difficult to
25 find space. There was the property, you know, for

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2 years talked about an off-street terminal and that
3 was redeveloped for other purposes so but it's,
4 you know, by others. So there's really no space
5 there, but there are lot of--the customers for
6 those businesses are coming in on the buses, so
7 and it's important to continue to maintain the
8 transit service. But we will continue to look at
9 it with DOT to, you know, we'll--and if you have
10 specific suggestions, we'd be happy to look at
11 them.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Right now, the
13 Mayor is talking about developing Willets Point so
14 maybe we can develop a bus depot there. There's a
15 lot of land there and it's really close by
16 Flushing. So I think that we have to do something
17 in the future, I mean, not immediately. This is a
18 very high priority for the downtown business
19 people because we don't want all the buses
20 stationed right in front of our stores, you know?

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Would perhaps
22 Councilman Koo's office reaching out to you with
23 some brainstorming, would that be helpful?
24 Because perhaps there is a location which the
25 Councilman--he did mention Willets Point, is that

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something you have looked at or is that too far?

LOIS TENDLER: That's too far--

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Too far.

LOIS TENDLER: --we would not be taking buses that are there to serve our Flushing customers and staging them somewhere out of the neighborhood.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I have one more question. When you design the bus routes, is it possible for you to make the buses just go straight, north-south or east-west only? Because when buses making turns, they tie up the traffic, you end up--they're waiting for ten minutes, and if you're driving behind a bus because they couldn't turn and the entire--the traffic will back up like two blocks and then when it's time for them to turn, the pedestrians walk, so you will have to wait like two or three signal lights for the bus to turn around, especially in crowded streets in Flushing. So make sure they just go straight, go Main Street only and don't turn to side streets and weaving in and out.

PETER CAFIERO: Well we've--was it about two years ago?

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I mean, yeah,
3 we can design routes like that.

4 PETER CAFIERO: Right, about two
5 years ago, the City--I mean, the City's been
6 working a lot longer on this because there are no
7 easy solutions, it's been a lot of back and forth,
8 but the--particularly the intersection of Main and
9 Roosevelt, basically the solution there was to
10 greatly reduce or eliminate most of the turning
11 movements at that intersection. To do that, we
12 actually had to extend our bus routes farther to
13 turn around, which was actually at a time when we
14 were--and the severe budget crisis was an added
15 expense for us to do that. So that alleviated
16 some of the issues right at that location, it, in
17 some cases, relocated the problem to other
18 intersections.

19 So we continue to adjust, we have
20 in the next week or two, I think, the Q48 route
21 coming in from the west is going to alter its path
22 to free up some curb space on the south side of
23 Roosevelt because all those blocks are congested.
24 And so we continue to try to, at the moment, try
25 to tweak things to make modest improvements where

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2 we can, but I think all collectively recognize
3 that it's--we have not identified a perfect
4 solution out there, that the volume of pedestrians
5 and transit users and transit--our customers
6 become pedestrians when they get off the vehicle,
7 subway users and auto vehicles in a space in a
8 neighborhood with very narrow streets doesn't--and
9 very intensive usage, retail usage along those
10 streets has not left us with a lot of options.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So are you
12 planning on any SBS routes in, you know, Queens or
13 in Flushing area?

14 PETER CAFIERO: Not--

15 [Crosstalk]

16 PETER CAFIERO: The immediate--the
17 short answer is no, it's not in the ones that
18 we're actively working on now, however, in the
19 phase II, the study identified some routes--there
20 are certainly significant routes in both Flushing
21 and Jamaica that are subway feeders that would be
22 logical for SBS kind of treatment.

23 The Q44 route, which is a route
24 from Jamaica to Flushing into the Bronx, and that
25 actually fits in with the Chairman's theme for

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2 this meeting, has been growing dramatically and we
3 are actually putting higher capacity buses on that
4 route in the next few months, and we have
5 continued to add service to that route as that
6 route has grown. So we are making improvements to
7 the service, but as the ridership continues to
8 grow on those services.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Okay. I have
10 one last question. What about this SBS route to
11 LaGuardia, can you give me some details where this
12 run, the run through Queens or Manhattan or...?

13 PETER CAFIERO: I think it's a
14 little premature on the routing to give--you know,
15 we don't have a final recommendation yet, but
16 we're looking at routes from Queens, Manhattan,
17 and the Bronx, all three boroughs connecting in
18 where they can with the subways as well to extend
19 the reach even further. But there's currently two
20 major routes that serve LaGuardia, there's several
21 others, but the primary ones are the Q33, which is
22 an MTA bus company route from Jackson Heights, and
23 the M60, which is coming across from Harlem and
24 Western, you know, Astoria and the subway
25 connection. So those are the two major routes so

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2 that's where a lot of the focus has been to try to
3 improve those lines. But we are, in fact, looking
4 as well to see if this--what we can do with the
5 Bronx pending having the financial resources.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: All right,
7 thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
9 Council Member Koo. Council Member Rose.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Good morning,
11 how are you? As you might guess, my questions are
12 going to regard to Staten Island. I'd like to
13 know what your criteria is for determining an SBS
14 route.

15 BRUCE SCHALLER: Sure, do you want
16 me to answer that? So we look on this as very
17 much a joint effort between the two agencies. We
18 look at where there's support from the community,
19 we look at where there's already heavy ridership
20 that we think the treatments and our sort of
21 toolbox can be effective, and we look at what the
22 streets or the avenues are through that corridor
23 and what kind of changes we can make with traffic,
24 what the opportunities are really to speed the
25 buses along that corridor. So all of these things

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2 we look at holistically, we look at what the
3 opportunities are in terms of as the city changes,
4 one of the advantages to looking at one of the--
5 reasons to look at Webster Avenue in the Bronx is
6 that there's a rezoning in the northern part of
7 that corridor which will lead to growth, and so
8 that's something that we've talked with City
9 Planning about and want to, sort of, pave the way
10 for having improved transit service there.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Are there any
12 plans to have any additional SBS routes on Staten
13 Island, other than the Hylan Boulevard one?

14 PETER CAFIERO: And the first six
15 or so, the S79 is the only Staten Island one.
16 There were in phase II identified routes in all
17 five boroughs, so I don't offhand remember, but
18 you can--

19 BRUCE SCHALLER: Yeah.

20 PETER CAFIERO: --what I'm talking
21 about the other--

22 BRUCE SCHALLER: I'll pull out--

23 PETER CAFIERO: --talk about, you
24 can look at that list. We also, as you know, have
25 just done a major study on the North Shore

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2 corridor as well, which would be, you know,
3 there's no funding identified for it, but if that
4 ever happened, that would be a true--

5 [Crosstalk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [Interposing]
7 Yeah, the major SBS but that's not going to happen
8 anytime soon.

9 BRUCE SCHALLER: Yeah, and just in
10 terms of in the phase II report, the North Shore
11 we highlighted 'cause there was this ongoing
12 study, and then we were also looking at
13 possibilities on the SIE. And so I think from a
14 SBS standpoint, those three--Hylan Boulevard,
15 which we will be implementing this fall, SIE in
16 the North Shore.

17 And then the other thing I also
18 just want to mention is the first TSP that we put
19 in any place in the city--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Staten
21 Island.

22 BRUCE SCHALLER: --was Victory
23 Boulevard, we're extending that, we will have the
24 opportunities as we make the upgrades to our
25 signal equipment to be doing more of that. So I

1
2 think a lot of the opportunity, this is very much,
3 as we--we're emphasizing this is very much a
4 problem solving exercise. SBS is a good set of
5 solutions in some places, other, you know, sort of
6 the same toolbox, but a more selected group is
7 appropriate in other areas, and so, depending on
8 what the needs are, we'll apply whatever the kind
9 of solution set is appropriate.

10 PETER CAFIERO: And we think that
11 signal priority will be a key in Staten Island,
12 that Staten Island, you don't--you have a lot of
13 areas where the traffic is pretty free-flowing,
14 but other areas where it gets very congested, and
15 so we can look at these spot solutions, certainly
16 as the routes converge coming in towards St.
17 George would be something that I think we might
18 want to take more of a look at over time. The SBS
19 corridor, that's actually Hylan Boulevard but then
20 it goes over to the Staten Island--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Verrazano.

22 PETER CAFIERO: --Hall and so
23 around the area of the mall we're actually
24 including some bus lanes there where it gets
25 congested around the mall. So there are those

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opportunities to have this spot solutions where you don't necessarily have the whole street.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So the TSP is going to be expanded to all of the bus routes on Staten Island?

BRUCE SCHALLER: So it's part of the Hylan plan, and as we look at additional routes and corridors, we'll have the capability on the DOT side, there's Planning involved, you have to do a study of the traffic and how the signals work, and then there's equipment on board the bus, so you have to sort of bring all those things together to implement. Though we'll be in much better position to do more TSP because we have this integrated system where, from a DOT, from the City side, we'll have the hardware that we need for it and the other pieces then, it'll be less of a lift than the initial routes, which required installation of new equipment at each intersection than--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [Interposing]
And do we have a timeline for that?

BRUCE SCHALLER: --is currently the case.

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PETER CAFIERO: Well Victory

Boulevard extension--

[Crosstalk]

BRUCE SCHALLER: [Interposing] Will

be--

PETER CAFIERO: --the first one.

BRUCE SCHALLER: --right, will be

later this year, and then we'll be looking at what other routes and what funding is available for other parts of Staten Island as well and throughout the city.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay. And with my Civil Rights Committee, the Staten Island rapid transit only has four ADA accessible stations, are there plans to make all of them ADA?

LOIS TENDLER: I don't believe there are plans to make them all ADA, I will have to get back to you, Councilwoman, on what the ADA future is for sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay. And on Staten Island, it's very difficult for people to get the cards, MetroCards, refilled, in fact, we only have like two locations. Are there plans to extend or make that a bit more accessible maybe by

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2 providing a, like a frequent rider's card where
3 you could just press the card into a scanner?

4 [Off mic]

5 LOIS TENDLER: Yeah, there are
6 fare--you can add--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [Interposing]
8 Or a refillable MetroCard, right.

9 LOIS TENDLER: --you could refill
10 your MetroCard, we have a machine in St. George
11 and we have machines at the Alton Real Transit
12 Center. I understand, Staten Island doesn't have
13 subways so they don't have machines--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [Interposing]
15 Exactly, and not everybody travels to the ferry
16 terminal.

17 LOIS TENDLER: We have, as you
18 said, we have merchants who sell cards, you said
19 there were only two on Staten Island, is that--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [Interposing]
21 Two locations where you can refill--

22 LOIS TENDLER: [Interposing] Oh,
23 you mean how you referred to Eltingville, okay.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Right.

25 LOIS TENDLER: We have a network of

1
2 outside merchants who sell cards. We also have a
3 MetroCard van and bus, I don't know if we've been
4 out to visit you, but it's a tight schedule though
5 'cause we only have two vehicles. But we're happy
6 to work with your office on a regular basis trying
7 to schedule the bus to--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [Interposing]
9 Have you entertained having them refillable by
10 Internet?

11 LOIS TENDLER: We do, there's a EZ
12 Ride, which is a credit card automatic refill, so
13 it works like E-ZPass, you give them a credit
14 card, when you dip down below a certain, you know,
15 value on your card, they automatically refill it.
16 And you can sign up for EZ Ride on our website or,
17 I suspect, by calling 5-1-1.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And, as you
19 know, many of our riders need to take express
20 buses into Manhattan and it costs upwards of \$50 a
21 week. Is there any discussion about some sort of,
22 like, maybe frequent or discounted fare kind of
23 card for people who express bus seems to be the
24 only option for them?

25 PETER CAFIERO: Well the fare

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2 policy is an MTA decision, so I don't think any of
3 us--

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: It is, okay.

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PETER CAFIERO: --could correctly
answer that.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay. And
today, you know, I'm having a press conference
about fare beaters, and Staten Island's sort of
taken some steps to address that issue. Is MTA
taking any steps to address fare beating in the
other boroughs or the other outer boroughs?

LOIS TENDLER: We appreciate the
issue, and we're in the process, I think you know,
Councilwoman, putting together a comprehensive
citywide approach to tackling the problem, we're
just not there yet.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Oh, okay.
And then my last question is, you know, my
constituents really like the QR and the texting,
you know, at the bus stops to see the status of
the bus. Are there plans to expand that program?

LOIS TENDLER: It'll be in all
buses in all boroughs by the end of 2013, we're in
the process of--next up is the Bronx, so we're

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working on installing it on all Bronx routes now.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And this is just really absolutely last. Absolute last.

[Laughter]

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: This is the last after the last last.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Yes, I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You've had a lot of lasts here, Councilwoman.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I'm following the Peter Koo School of Last Questions--

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I noticed, I noticed.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: It's an outer borough thing, it's an outer borough thing. You know, I just--

[background noise]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: --I just want to... All right, only 8% of Staten Islanders use public transportation, is there any plan to incentivize getting Staten Islanders on the buses and making it so that it's worth their while to do so?

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Good question,

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8%?

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PETER CAFIERO: Well as--

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [Interposing]

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Thank you, Chair.

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[Crosstalk]

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PETER CAFIERO: --I think obviously

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we--

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Good question.

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PETER CAFIERO: --our goal is to

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get more people throughout the city to use public

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transit, and over time, I think the numbers in

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Staten Island have continued to grow. I think we

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have a higher market share going to Manhattan,

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where it's somewhat insane to take any other means

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to go, but we certainly as, I guess the theme of

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this hearing is, have over the years have enhanced

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the service across the bridge into Brooklyn, the

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local service, and will continue to look at ways

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within Staten Island to focus on some of the newer

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developments and newer regional centers there. We

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were able to get service into Bricktown Mall on

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the south end of the island and continue to look

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at the other areas. Obviously, again, we've been

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2 in very constrained financial situation but that
3 doesn't mean we don't think and plan for the
4 future so...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I can't say
6 anything else, thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: No, no, you
8 can't. No, but I do want to say that that figure
9 is astonishing that only 8% of Staten Islanders
10 use public transit, that is an astonishing figure.
11 So I think we have our work cut out for us.
12 Council Member Ulrich.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: How much
14 time do I got?

15 [Crosstalk]

16 LOIS TENDLER: That's the scary--

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I, you know--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Come on,
19 Lois.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Do you mind?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: I'm just
22 kidding.

23 [Off mic]

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I made a
25 mistake, it's Council Member Ignizio is next.

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COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yeah, I
can't wait for Eric, he'll take forever.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I know you're
gunning for that microphone.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: He is
older, wiser--

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COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: And
grayer.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: --but not
as good looking. All right--

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COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO:

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[Interposing] I'm going to stick with Staten
Island hour, if we can, and thank you all for
being here. You know, the 8% number is based on
the old chicken and the egg scenario, it's service
which necessitates the need for service and then
you have more ridership, but you can't get the
ridership without the service, and the, you know,
sometimes they're reluctant to provide service
unless they have a base, they know people will use
it.

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I just want to start off with
setting the stage of I have a difficult scenario,
Mr. Chairman, because I have what's called a

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2 developing district, so you would never say we're
3 not going to fund the subways this year, you would
4 say, though, that we're not going to add
5 additional service to developing communities and,
6 thereby, they never get the service that they
7 rightfully pay for, which is what the rest of the
8 city pays for in terms of tax dollars or capital
9 dollars which are spent. When we talk about
10 multibillion dollar plans, we're always talking
11 about where? We're always talking about Manhattan
12 and that's why I appreciate this hearing, we're
13 talking about East Side access, we're talking up
14 in the seven area extension, we're talking about
15 Second Avenue, we're talking about going to
16 Secaucus, New Jersey, to Giants stadium, but we
17 never really get to servicing the rest of the
18 needs of the communities that I represent and
19 that's something that I wanted to address here
20 today.

21 What we did in terms of our express
22 buses are really, really necessary, what we did,
23 we noticed extremely long commute times and the
24 bus would take a tour around Staten Island, it'd
25 be 40 minutes to get on the bus, you would take a

1
2 tour around Staten Island, and then it would go to
3 Manhattan. But one time thing I want to applaud
4 President Prendergast and applaud the New York
5 City Transit for working with us, is we created
6 the X22 Limited, which is limited stops and it's
7 an advanced and enhanced ride to Manhattan which
8 has saved commuters about 30 minutes on their
9 commute, which is major. That's sort of the thing
10 that I want to investigate or look into more with
11 you all. Like the X19 is one that I had
12 mentioned, and my other colleagues that utilize
13 the express bus is you can save your commuters a
14 lot of time if you're willing to sit down with the
15 New York City Transit and negotiate without
16 enhanced money options, ways of reducing the
17 commute. Is that still available? Can we still
18 sit down and talk about additional limited routes?

19 LOIS TENDLER: Yes, the short
20 answer is yes, anytime, we're happy to talk about
21 any suggestions you or any of your colleagues
22 have. You know, as we worked long and hard on
23 that, Councilman, and as you know, it was not just
24 chicken and egg, but it was like winners and
25 losers and trying to balance out--

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COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yeah.

LOIS TENDLER: --who was going to be the winner saving 30 minutes time, as to who might be the losers getting on a bus they can no longer fit on--

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Right.

LOIS TENDLER: --because we did it as a zero sum, we didn't add any money.

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yeah.

LOIS TENDLER: That and we're still in that position, zero sum. But that being said, we're happy to chat with you or anyone about--

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Okay.

LOIS TENDLER: --things like we did with X22.

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Okay. And you know, see if I can get an update on this, you know we have an absolute falling down Nassau train station, which is the MTA had a meeting when I had more hair and it was darker in 2007, said--I'm sorry, 1997, said they would issue a design build contract which would begin in 1999 and it would be done by 2003, and here it is almost 2013 and there's still a dilapidated, falling down Nassau

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2 station. I know we passed a five-year capital
3 plan recently and I know our colleagues in the
4 state, quite frankly, I don't think do enough with
5 regards to our infrastructure needs in the city,
6 can you enlighten me as to what's going on with
7 the Arthur Kill Road Station?

8 LOIS TENDLER: Okay. As you know,
9 the plan had been, continues to be to shutter
10 Atlantic and Nassau stations, both lightly used
11 and dilapidated, and replaced with a new Arthur
12 Kill station--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yes,
14 ma'am.

15 LOIS TENDLER: --that was in the
16 unfunded part of our capital plan, in March the
17 legislature approved the plan amendments so that
18 job is now funded. We have a letter from you,
19 Councilman, I am just waiting to firm up some
20 dates for you, but it's all good news.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Oh, great,
22 okay. See, Mr. Chairman, you never know, you come
23 to a hearing and you get a train station. That's
24 great news.

25 One of my concerns, I was in a

1
2 different part of the city, I was in the Bronx
3 yesterday and one of my concern was--and this is
4 probably a DOT question--was in the SBS lane, it
5 was, I guess, originally painted a beautiful shade
6 of red and, quite frankly, now it looks like
7 almost graffiti on the floor with it all scraped
8 up and it just doesn't look nice. My concern is
9 we're getting this on Hylan Boulevard and my
10 concern is the same thing would apply, that you
11 would end up starting with a new, pristine--

12 MALE VOICE: Right.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: --nice red
14 lane that says bus and it looks good and then two,
15 three, four years later, it just looks like street
16 graffiti, for lack of a better word.

17 BRUCE SCHALLER: Right. That's a
18 very good question and it's also our concern, and
19 I know Transit's concern as well, that we want to
20 keep that red lane--the terra, the pretty terra
21 cotta looking its best.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO:
23 [Interposing] It did look nice, but it looked
24 faded and--

25 BRUCE SCHALLER: So this is one

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2 area that we really have learned a lot, and what
3 we've learned is there's a spectrum of how long
4 the red paint lasts depending on the pavement.
5 Red paint does worse on old concrete and that's
6 what you have on Fordham Road is you have
7 concrete's been there years and years and years
8 and you put the red paint and it doesn't have the
9 adhesion that we'd like to see. Red paint does
10 best and lasts longest when we put it on fresh
11 asphalt and so about--well a portion of the red
12 lane that's going down on Hylan will be on fresh
13 asphalt, we are doing--we are repaving where we're
14 doing the red. We are also, to sort of tackle
15 this problem more broadly is we did a study with
16 Penn State to test a variety, we did a outreach to
17 the industry that manufactures this type of
18 product and we tested each of the alternatives to
19 come up with the best combinations, depending on
20 the surface that we're dealing with, and so we'll
21 be looking to, sort of, take the results from that
22 and apply them going forward to hopefully have the
23 red paint last longer on different surfaces.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO:

25 [Interposing] Now is there a maintenance program

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2 though to come after the initial put down of this
3 paint, that they would come back and, I don't
4 know, repaint it, fix it, make it look--

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 BRUCE SCHALLER: [Interposing]

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Right, and so we--

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 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: --nice

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again or--

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 BRUCE SCHALLER: --right, so we're

10

looking to establish a maintenance cycle on this,

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this becomes a funding issue in terms of having

12

the funding to do that.

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 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Right, but

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I'd rather not have the paint at all than have the

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paint put down, have it get dug up over the years,

16

and it look like, as I said, street graffiti where

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it just doesn't look--it looks unsightly. So I

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mean, that's my concern that I have to put to you,

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that if it, you know, then just put white bus lane

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markings and don't paint the whole thing red if

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ultimately it's going to look terrible in two,

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three years time and without the funding of a

23

maintenance item that you guys say you don't have

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the funding for.

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 BRUCE SCHALLER: Sure, that's

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2 something that we can look at. I think there's a
3 huge value to having the red paint as we
4 inaugurate the SBS service, we've seen--and
5 frankly, this was a surprise to us when we first
6 implemented the red paint, we saw drivers staying
7 out of that lane much better than we've seen in
8 any other bus lane--

9 [Crosstalk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO:

11 [Interposing] Yeah, but with all due respect, your
12 drivers or the goal there, the SBS buses, they
13 come, they go, and they park their cars and they
14 go back to their communities. So there's a value
15 to having it so that people don't go into it.
16 There's a negative impact, an unsightly, aesthetic
17 impact, to a community that has to live with that
18 for years to come, as my colleague, Chairman Vacca
19 has to in his community and throughout communities
20 around the city when they fade and look unsightly.
21 So that's a concern of mine on the--listen, I've
22 been somewhat of a critic of the original proposal
23 of SBS that I told you guys wouldn't work,
24 ultimately, I was right, it didn't work, you had
25 to come back with this one, and my concern is we

1
2 don't put the SBS on Hylan Boulevard--that we put
3 the SBS on Hylan Boulevard, we put the red paint
4 down, and then a couple years from now, people are
5 going to say, what is the City doing, this looks
6 terrible, we spent so much time and money cleaning
7 graffiti up off buildings and now we have it on
8 our streets put there by our own City. So I think
9 there has to be a maintenance program, and if
10 there's not, then I don't want a red lane in my
11 district.

12 BRUCE SCHALLER: Right, well we
13 will certainly continue to look to how best to
14 extend the life and maintain it. I think we get a
15 lot of benefit by sort of having the visibility
16 there at the beginning and kind of retraining
17 drivers as to what this is about. And also we
18 very much do appreciate your support for the
19 project that we have now and that we'll be
20 implementing later in the fall, it's been very
21 important to--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Okay.
23 Thank you.

24 BRUCE SCHALLER: --moving this
25 project forward.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Thank you
3 very much. Mr. Chairman, I think this is
4 something that this Council ought take up, be it
5 in BNT, budget negotiating, be it in through the
6 Finance Committee or through your Committee that,
7 ultimately, we have to work with New York City
8 Transit, at DOT, MTA, whoever we have to to ensure
9 that we don't create a system whereby we have
10 streets that are somewhat painted originally and
11 then the maintenance is never there and we have
12 unsightly road conditions. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I agree. Thank
14 you, Council Member. Council Member Ulrich, now
15 you can go.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: We've been
18 joined by Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer, by the
19 way. Thank you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: To my
21 right.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: For once.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: To my left.
25 Okay.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Definitely.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: He is--yes,
okay, go ahead, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: We're
having fun.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: In the
middle of two extremes.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Oh, here we
go. Anyway, thank you very much. I'm sorry,
Chairman, that I was late and I missed some of the
testimony, I did have an opportunity though to
read the testimony by our distinguished panel.

I have a question about BRT, bus
rapid transit, it's on Fordham Road in the Bronx,
it's in Staten Island, it's on 34th Street in
Manhattan, why don't we have it in Queens? Why
don't we have BRT on Woodhaven Cross Bay
Boulevard, the most congested corridor in Queens
County, where it takes you an hour to get from
Queens Boulevard down to the Bell Parkway?

PETER CAFIERO: Oh, initially,
there were a number of routes in Queens that were
identified and I don't know, Woodhaven was not on
the first one so--

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[Crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH:

[Interposing] It's not, no, Merrick Boulevard was the first. It was shot down.

PETER CAFIERO: --looked at and those are the heaviest corridors in Queens, so those were at the top of the list, and the community, for various reasons, and did not want us to pursue that so we deferred those.

Woodhaven, we can certainly take a look at--

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH:

[Interposing] Well Woodhaven is part of the congested corridor study--

PETER CAFIERO: Right, right.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: --DOT has identified it as--

BRUCE SCHALLER: [Interposing] Yeah, let me, and I believe it's on the list for the phase II.

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH:

[Interposing] And I read it online what you've--

[Crosstalk]

BRUCE SCHALLER: Right, so we did,

1
2 just to expand on Peter's answer, so from the
3 study some years back, we then, instead of doing
4 Merrick, we looked at downtown Jamaica, and I'm
5 sure you're aware, we made changes, especially on
6 Archer and Jamaica Avenues, that work will be
7 completed over the next couple of months. The
8 feedback we got from the community and we very
9 much took to heart was the real congestion
10 problem, the real slow bus, where the buses were
11 being stuck in traffic was in downtown Jamaica
12 more than as you moved out on the major avenues,
13 major streets coming in.

14 In terms of the phase II study,
15 we've been looking at Woodhaven as part of the
16 congested corridor study, we very much have that
17 on our list of corridors that we'd like to look at
18 from an SBS standpoint. We also have a study
19 underway looking at LaGuardia access that would
20 benefit people going to LaGuardia from all over
21 the city, including the neighborhoods immediately
22 nearby LaGuardia as well as people working at
23 LaGuardia. And so those are two areas, we're very
24 much looking at Queens, I think, as--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH:

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2 [Interposing] Really been looking for four years,
3 that's the problem.

4 BRUCE SCHALLER: --as we've worked
5 through this and really--

6 [Crosstalk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH:

8 [Interposing] For a while now.

9 BRUCE SCHALLER: --and really, as
10 your colleagues from Staten Island reflected,
11 we've gone through a development process with the
12 community, kind of what works in different parts
13 of the city, and I think we got to the right place
14 in Jamaica, I think we will get to the right place
15 with respect to LaGuardia, we need to come back
16 and look at Woodhaven. We very much would welcome
17 your help in starting that conversation and seeing
18 what we might--

19 [Crosstalk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH:

21 [Interposing] I've offered my help for three
22 years, DOT has done a number of public
23 presentations about the congested corridor study
24 in various communities throughout the, you know,
25 throughout the stretch of the corridor, but it

1
2 just seems like I've been in office for three
3 years, my constituents are still sitting in
4 traffic, they can't even coordinate the lights,
5 never mind TSP, which would definitely be on
6 Woodhaven Cross Bay Boulevard, they can't even
7 coordinate the lights that are there right now,
8 it's just a traffic nightmare. And DOT, by its
9 own admission, has said that it is the most
10 congested corridor in Queens County and I just
11 have a, you know, a sore spot here when I read
12 about all the progress you're making on Hylan
13 Boulevard, on Fordham Road, on 34th Street in
14 Manhattan, but Queens is getting the shaft. It's
15 so easy, and it's not a question of funding, your
16 agency, you know, at our Finance hearing, you
17 know, is receiving hundreds of millions of dollars
18 to do all these wonderful experimental things and
19 all the people in my district are asking for is to
20 cut, you know, 15 to 20 minutes off their commute
21 home at nighttime, whether they're in cars or
22 buses, the buses are stuck in traffic too because
23 there are trucks that are using Woodhaven and
24 Cross Bay Boulevard as an alternate route to the
25 Van Wyck Expressway, for instance, for deliveries,

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2 they're not supposed to be doing that, but there's
3 no enforcement. It's a real problem. It's a real
4 problem for people in my district, for people that
5 live in Councilwoman Crowley's district, for
6 people that live in Karen Koslowitz's district
7 because they all utilize Woodhaven Boulevard.
8 Whether they're on an express bus, a local bus,
9 sitting in a car and in the early morning and at
10 late at night, it's a nightmare and it takes
11 longer for people to actually traverse along
12 Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevard than it does for
13 them when they actually get on the LIE to go on
14 the BQE because the LIE has a dedicated bus lane,
15 you know, and a zipper barrier that allows people
16 in the HRV lane.

17 So it seems that DOT is very
18 concerned about highways and about other boroughs,
19 but when it comes to Queens, you're leaving people
20 sitting in traffic and it's not fair. And to say
21 that, you know, with no disrespect to you, that
22 you're looking at it, you've been looking at it
23 for three years, you know, we're living it. So
24 you're looking at it and the people in my district
25 are living it. Let's get BRT and TPS and all

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2 these things going in Queens County and let's
3 bring it to Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevard.

4 BRUCE SCHALLER: Right, absolutely.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. All
7 right, we have no further questions, I would like
8 to thank this panel for your presentation and your
9 questions--your answers to the questions. Many
10 questions still remain, but we thank you, of
11 course.

12 Our next panel, please, will--I'm
13 sorry? I'm sorry. Thank you. Yes, please, I'm
14 just told the MTA will stay, and if DOT can please
15 have people stay to hear the other testimony, I
16 would appreciate that as well.

17 [Off mic]

18 Oh, okay. We have to take a five-
19 minute adjournment because we're going to have IT
20 come and set something up for one of our
21 presenters so we have to take a five-minute,
22 break, okay? Thank you.

23 [Off mic]

24 MALE VOICE: I'm sorry? They're
25 signed up.

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[Crosstalk]

MALE VOICE: --testify, but it's not going to be for a while. You have 15 people who signed up so they're--

[Crosstalk]

[Long pause]

MALE VOICE: 'Cause we've got Metro-North now who's going to talk about a lot of the Bronx stuff and then--

FEMALE VOICE: We'll talk offline--

[Crosstalk]

MALE VOICE: --here, you know, we've got Straphangers Campaign, you know, I mean, it's like, Transit Riders Council--

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Seats, we're now ready.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please. Find your seats.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Who else? There's two people. Oh, is that all? I thank you. The Committee will now reconvene. We were joined by Council Member Gale Brewer. I would now like to introduce Mr. William Wheeler, MTA, and

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he'll have a presentation.

WILLIAM WHEELER: Oh, good, I'm on.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Please introduce yourself and your exact title.

WILLIAM WHEELER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, my name is William Wheeler, I'm the Director of Planning at MTA.

Thank you for having me here, thank you for the pause. I wanted to get this map up because I think that understanding the Penn Station Access project for Metro-North means understanding the regional rail network and, hopefully, it'll be helpful as we go through and talk about the project.

So I really appreciate the opportunity to be here to talk about the project today. I think the most important thing to start out with is to indicate that the central part of MTA's mission, even at the very beginning when it was created, was to establish a unified transport policy for the region. And I think the Metro-North Access to Penn Station project is a good example of that because this is a project that will be sharing the regional rail network with the

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2 other railroads that provide access to and through
3 the New York Metropolitan area. And as I talk
4 more about the project, you'll appreciate the
5 inter-relationships. But that's exactly MTA's
6 job, one of its jobs, is to weigh the various uses
7 of the rail network, for example, and optimize the
8 rail network so that it meets the needs of all the
9 parts of the region.

10 We want transit to be a way of life
11 for our customers and for the regional residents
12 and in many cases, it is today like never before,
13 they're using the transit system and many parts of
14 our system are at historic ridership highs. This
15 is quite extraordinary and I'll come back to this
16 later. With the completion of Long Island Rail
17 Road East Side Access project bringing Long Island
18 Rail Road into a new terminal near Grand Central,
19 MTA should, and is, evaluating how that multi-
20 billion dollar investment could leverage even
21 greater benefits. Specifically--excuse me--is
22 there an opportunity to create additional service
23 links into Penn Station for Metro-North customers
24 bound for the west side and also reverse
25 commuting, and I'll come back to that in a minute.

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2 That opportunity is being evaluated
3 by Metro-North and MTA today, and I'll come back
4 to the actual project in a minute, but I wanted to
5 talk for a little bit about Metro-North and about
6 their reverse peak and the service to the various
7 counties in the region, particularly the Bronx,
8 it's quite extraordinary. I've been in the region
9 since about 1972 and ridership from the Bronx to
10 particularly reverse commuting, is one of the
11 amazing, I think, developments in regional
12 transportation that I've seen while I've been
13 here.

14 Metro-North actually operates over
15 380 route miles, serving 121 different stations in
16 seven counties, so it really is a regional
17 network, but one of those counties and a very
18 important county, particularly in terms of
19 providing access to jobs and in reverse commuting,
20 is the Bronx. East of Hudson service consists of
21 the three lines--the Hudson, Harlem and New Haven
22 lines--all of which operate out of Grand Central
23 on the East Side of Manhattan and which serve 13
24 stations in the Bronx. In all, 235 Metro-North
25 trains serve the Bronx each weekday.

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2 From its inception in 1983--and
3 it's interesting to note Metro-North is actually
4 one of the younger railroads in the United States,
5 developed in 1983, after the Conrail and the New
6 York Central dissipated its operation, so it's
7 relatively recent, and yet it's done some
8 extraordinary things with its ridership, I'll talk
9 about in a minute. Metro-North has identified the
10 need to provide more service to the Bronx,
11 particularly to provide residents access to jobs
12 in places like White Plains, Stamford, and
13 Greenwich and in other northern suburbs. The
14 Bronx has long been recognized also as a
15 destination for those living in the northern
16 suburbs for employment at major medical centers
17 and universities, as well as entertainment,
18 dining, and shopping.

19 I want to pause for a minute on the
20 issue of employment. One of the fastest growing
21 sectors in the region and nationally is health
22 care. In fact, the two fastest are really health
23 care and education. And with the--earlier the
24 Chairman talked about travel between different
25 parts of boroughs and not growing as opposed to

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2 simply growing from the outer boroughs to
3 Manhattan. One of the major factors that
4 generates a lot of that travel is health care
5 employment, and I'm not just talking about
6 hospital complexes and medical facilities, but
7 elder care and other services that are directly
8 related to health care. As my generation, as our
9 generation is aging, the health care industry is
10 becoming more and more multidimensional, it's
11 branching out into the suburbs with satellite
12 offices, and those are employment opportunities,
13 and that is one of the factors the health care
14 industry that is generating so much of the travel
15 here today and the growth in travel in the New
16 York Metropolitan area and particularly from
17 borough to borough or within boroughs, not just
18 between the outer boroughs and Manhattan, as the
19 Chairman said a minute ago.

20 Metro-North has substantially
21 increased its services to this growing demand in
22 the reverse peak direction. For example, morning
23 reverse peak service from Fordham to Stamford on
24 the New Haven line has more than quadrupled since
25 1985, going from 3 trains to 13 trains. Fordham

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2 to White Plains nearly tripled from 5 trains to 14
3 trains.

4 And Metro-North has implemented
5 intermediate fares and services to support that
6 travel. An interesting example--I'll pause for
7 another minute--if you board a New Haven train in
8 the morning at Grand Central or if you board a
9 train to White Plains from Fordham, they're some
10 of the most heavily used services in the system,
11 it's just extraordinary, and the growth just
12 continues as there's more and more employment
13 opportunities in the northern suburbs. And,
14 again, it's not about the project or about the MTA
15 or about the subway, it's really about the
16 transportation as a means to an end. It's really
17 about connecting people to jobs and cultural
18 opportunities and so when we're talking about how
19 to do that, that's really the goal, that's really
20 the prize, can we connect more and more of the
21 region's residents to these opportunities.

22 To further enhance the riding
23 environment, Metro-North has invested more than
24 200 million since 2000 in rebuilding Bronx
25 stations and facilities. Most recently, it's

1 restored the historic Fordham Station building and
2 in the process of widening the northbound
3 platforms to accommodate growth in the reverse
4 peak that I just mentioned a minute ago. And the
5 response has been really terrific. Approximately
6 8.1 million rides were taken to and from Bronx
7 stations last year. That's a three-fold increase
8 since 1985. Of these riders, about two-thirds
9 travel between the Bronx and the northern suburban
10 counties. This is the largest reverse commute
11 market that we know of in the United States, and
12 it's grown 150% since 1990. So it's really quite
13 interesting, it's something that I've talked with
14 and some of my colleagues who plan and other
15 transit systems around the country, which are now
16 starting to experience that, but nothing like here
17 in New York. And I think one of the ways we're
18 taking advantage of it is the regional rail
19 network that I'll talk about more.

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21 So let me return to the idea of
22 Metro-North and access to Penn Station. We're
23 currently conducting an environmental assessment
24 to evaluate the introduction of the rail service
25 between Penn and the New Haven line, via Amtrak's

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2 Hell Gate branch--and let me just turn around and
3 follow this for a minute with my pointer. So
4 basically moving down from the New Haven line onto
5 the Hell Gate branch and then into Penn Station,
6 or down the Hudson line, the West Side of
7 Manhattan and into Penn. The interesting thing is
8 that these connections exist today, the tracks
9 exist today. Amtrak uses them on a regular basis,
10 the New England service uses the Hell Gate branch,
11 the Empire Service uses the branch down the Hudson
12 line and on the West Side of Manhattan.

13 As part of the project and the
14 planning, it's conceived of four stations being
15 constructed in the eastern Bronx and two on the
16 West Side of Manhattan. The four Bronx stations,
17 currently the concept is near Co-op City, near the
18 Morris Park Bronx Medical Center, which I'm very
19 familiar with, Parkchester, and Hunts Point were
20 all being served by New Haven trains. And the
21 interesting thing about these is that when you
22 look at it, they're on the far eastern edge of the
23 commuting territory, so it's a terrific
24 opportunity, if we can do it, to provide for these
25 connections to this area of the borough, both as

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2 destinations because, as I said earlier, places
3 like the medical complex, the Morris Park medical
4 complex, all the Albert Einstein and so forth,
5 growing very, very strongly, so that would be a
6 destination, or those stations being origins for
7 residents who live in the area to work either in
8 Manhattan on the West Side--and, as you know,
9 that's growing rapidly--or in the northern
10 suburbs, more reverse commute opportunities.

11 Both Manhattan stations on the West
12 Side would be served by the Hudson line and
13 accessible from the Riverdale station. One of the
14 two Manhattan stations could be constructed well
15 on West 125th Street, and the other between West
16 54th and West 57th, between 10th and 11th Avenues.
17 The physical feasibility of doing that is
18 something that's in the study right now, but
19 they're interesting opportunities and, as I say,
20 as you know, Amtrak operates down those lines
21 today.

22 So Penn Station access would
23 provide a number of benefits, just to resummairize,
24 to the residents and the businesses of the Eastern
25 Bronx. Rail access through new stations to

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2 underserved areas, faster commutes to Midtown,
3 direct connections to the northern suburbs and
4 jobs, and just supporting economic activity that's
5 already underway in many of these potential
6 station locations. And that's the whole idea:
7 Making connections, providing links and
8 opportunities to work, to generate commerce, to
9 connect with cultural opportunities.

10 Manhattan residents and businesses
11 would also experience numerous benefits. Easy
12 access is provided between the Upper West--would
13 be provided between the Upper West Side, West
14 Harlem, and the Hudson Valley, particularly the
15 station up at West 125th Street, which would
16 support economic development plans in West Harlem.

17 Lots of growth going on. One of
18 the things--let me just pause for--one of my jobs
19 at the MTA is to study the region and the growth
20 that's taking place, and New York, as you know,
21 even though we've been through a very tough
22 recession, it's rising, in some sectors at least,
23 it's rising faster than other parts of the country
24 and the growth is taking place in numerous areas
25 and so, again, one of the means to the end of

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connectivity is transportation, and that's what this is about.

Penn Station would benefit the-- Penn Station Access would benefit the entire region. Direct access would be provided to the West Side of Manhattan areas within Metro-North's East of Hudson territory for work and discretionary travel. Customers on the New Haven and Hudson lines going to Manhattan's West Side would experience travel time savings of up to a half-hour by eliminating the need for transfers. There would be increased regional connectivity easing transfers between Metro-North customers at Penn Station to use the Long Island Rail Road, New Jersey Transit, or Amtrak.

Penn Station, which I personally have been studying for many years, and which I'll refer to in my map, is an area that has over half a million customers a day moving through this station, that's one of the largest in the world, it's certainly the largest in North America. Hundreds and hundreds of train movements, and so as we look at ways to merge Metro-North with those train movements, it's really orchestrating the

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2 movement of all these different railroads and all
3 these different people into this station. But
4 tremendous opportunities for connectivity, if
5 we're able to succeed, because of all the other
6 services that are already provided to Penn.

7 One of the benefits to Bronx and
8 Manhattan and the region's residents and employers
9 would be accomplished by using the existing
10 infrastructure to provide cost effective
11 transportation improvements while minimizing
12 adverse social, economic, and environmental
13 effects.

14 Let me pause on that for a moment.
15 This is a project that doesn't require new
16 tunneling and new routes, essentially. We're
17 trying to take advantage of the existing network.
18 So what that provides in terms of benefits is it
19 provides for a straightforward environmental
20 process, but also the potential to have the costs
21 for the project lower than the mega project costs
22 that you're used to in the other projects--the
23 billions and billions of dollars. We don't have
24 really an estimate on the project yet, we're
25 working on various aspects of how to build that

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2 estimate, but the really irresistible thing about
3 it is that's using the existing network, so the
4 costs would be concentrated in stations and
5 rolling stock as opposed to in tunneling and
6 completely new rail rights of way.

7 So as part of the overall study,
8 we're also looking at--let me come back to this
9 again--the impact of these services on Penn
10 Station today. Penn has more 1,200 daily train
11 movements. One of the things that we are doing is
12 we're looking at and simulating the movement of
13 various trains into Penn Station with the new
14 service. Accounting for, of course, completion of
15 East Side Access, which will bring considerably
16 more service from the Long Island Rail Road part
17 of the region into the Grand Central area. Sort
18 of understanding the back and forth, the balancing
19 between all those services so as to understand how
20 we could take advantage of this opportunity and
21 serve Penn from the existing rail network.

22 It's quite complicated, there's
23 lots and lots of interested railroads in this. My
24 counterparts, who I deal with on a regular basis
25 at Amtrak and New Jersey Transit and Long Island

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2 Rail Road, all are very interested and, obviously,
3 am participating with us in this evaluation. But
4 the payoff, if we're successful, it would be an
5 extraordinary new set of connectivity
6 opportunities for the region.

7 So at this point, I'm going to
8 stop, leave the map up. Thank you for waiting
9 while we set this up, and I'd be happy to answer
10 questions.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. And
12 I'd like to mention we've been joined by Council
13 Member Garodnick.

14 The borough president in the Bronx,
15 Ruben Diaz, and I have made this a priority for
16 our borough. Let me talk to you about this last
17 paragraph where you talk about the key to the
18 possible timing of the implementation of Metro-
19 North service to Penn Station is the initiation of
20 LIRR service to Grand Central Terminal, which is
21 currently scheduled for 2019. So are we saying
22 that this is not feasible until 2019?

23 WILLIAM WHEELER: I think you
24 really can't implement this kind of--you can't
25 introduce this kind of new service into such a

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2 complex rail network without having an additional
3 dynamic through East Side Access. In fact, when
4 you look at the East Side Access documentation
5 that goes back more than 20 years actually, you'll
6 see that that was the first time that this idea
7 was actually introduced. In other words, when it
8 was assumed--not assumed, but when it was planned
9 that there would be relief to the regional rail
10 network into Grand Central, it was at that point
11 it created a platform to consider additional
12 access through the network into Penn Station from
13 the Metro-North network. We think--

14 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: But 2019 is--

15 WILLIAM WHEELER: Well, Mr.

16 Chairman--

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --even that
18 seems a question mark--

19 WILLIAM WHEELER: Yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --because I
21 know that these deadlines come and go--

22 WILLIAM WHEELER: Right.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --but this
24 seems to me to be too long for us to wait.

25 WILLIAM WHEELER: Well--

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2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing] I
3 hope you put it in context. Let me tell you how
4 people in the Bronx feel, people in the Bronx have
5 had these Metro-North stations in place all these
6 years and those trains never stopped in the East
7 Bronx and they passed us by--

8 WILLIAM WHEELER: Amtrak trains.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: The Amtrak
10 trains.

11 WILLIAM WHEELER: Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: They've passed
13 up by. So the stations have been there, the
14 tracks have been there, but all these years, if
15 you live in Co-op City, for example, you have to
16 get a bus to the train and then the train to
17 Manhattan when you have Metro-North right behind
18 your building in Co-op City. So therefore, there
19 is this resentment and now to be told 2019 at
20 least means that we in the Bronx really don't have
21 any hope for the foreseeable future? You know,
22 that's unacceptable to us.

23 WILLIAM WHEELER: Well when you
24 think about it, even though I've made the project
25 sound relatively simple, it'll take a number of

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2 years just to develop all the infrastructure
3 necessary--the stations, the rolling stock. And
4 remember that, going back to what you said a
5 minute ago, Amtrak, Amtrak runs a very steady
6 service through that area, as you pointed out, and
7 it's growing dramatically. In fact, some of the
8 Amtrak is at record levels for ridership on the
9 northeast corridor, they have never carried as
10 many people as they're carrying today. So one of
11 the components of the project is to knit this
12 service into the Amtrak right of way signal
13 systems, the physical right of way, if you will,
14 and that is a--it involves engineering, it
15 involves contracts, and lots of additional
16 activity that will take some time, along with
17 developing the rest of the facility.

18 So when you think about it, it's
19 several years from now, 2019, but when I think
20 about the projects that I've looked at, you know,
21 the mega projects, this is actually quite a--what
22 would I call it--this is quite unusual for a
23 project of this size to have those kinds--to have
24 that timetable be as short as it is. So even
25 though it is--and I realize there's lots of

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2 interest and I appreciate that, I think we have to
3 be realistic about the regional rail network and
4 being able to balance it out with all of these
5 different services.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Are we still
7 talking about \$400 million? Is that the cost?

8 WILLIAM WHEELER: No, I'm not here
9 to quote a cost, there might have been some
10 initial estimates several years ago in the study,
11 I think we still have to get through all of the
12 analysis to understand all the various components
13 to the project and then we'll put a cost to it.

14 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: So an analysis
15 is now in progress.

16 WILLIAM WHEELER: Right. Right,
17 and an environmental assessment due to be
18 completed end of next year, that includes the
19 simulation that I spoke to you about earlier, but
20 it's--one of the things that I've noticed in my
21 career in this region, and it's been over 30
22 years, is that I think it's prudent for everyone
23 to understand that we as people that work in the
24 transportation field should be giving you
25 thoughtful cost estimates, and for me to say it's

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2 going to cost this amount of money right now when
3 we're still in the analysis would not be
4 appropriate, it's much better to say these are the
5 components, we think it'll be a lot more
6 reasonable than the traditional mega project
7 because it requires--it doesn't require the new
8 tunnels and other very extraordinary components of
9 a traditional mega project, so it should be less
10 expensive, but then to end it there and say that
11 and we'll be coming out with a more firm estimate
12 when we complete our work.

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: So we have not
14 identified funding sources or anything like that.
15 We're not at that--

16 WILLIAM WHEELER: [Interposing]
17 What we've done is we've done the project in a way
18 that makes it eligible for a variety of different
19 federal funding sources. That takes a lot of
20 work, it takes a lot of consultation with the
21 federal funding agencies, particularly the federal
22 trans administration, so we've been very careful
23 to do that so we're able to line that up.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And you state
25 as a certainty that East Side Access must be

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finished before this can take place.

WILLIAM WHEELER: I would say the following because I'm more of a planner than anything else, is that to me, the best way to optimize this project and optimize the real regional rail network is to have the--is to be able to take advantage of East Side Access. So that's what I would say. That's a planner answer.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Can we do that without, can we have this service without?

WILLIAM WHEELER: I wouldn't want to speculate about that, I would say that--let me go back to what I said earlier about Penn Station, 1,200 train movements in a day, all right? And growing rapidly, all the railroads are growing rapidly, and really to put your best foot forward, you want to be able to take advantage of new links in the network like East Side Access.

So I'm sorry, I realize that's a complicated answer, Mr. Chairman--

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
No, it's not that complicated, I mean, it's just that I was hoping for a better timetable and I

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2 don't want you to leave here thinking that 2019 or
3 beyond is something that's acceptable to the
4 people I represent because--

5 WILLIAM WHEELER: [Interposing] No,
6 look, I absolutely--

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --it's not,
8 it's not.

9 WILLIAM WHEELER: --understand,
10 I've been through this a lot in my career with
11 lots of different projects and it's hard for
12 someone to stand down and look and say if only you
13 could stop, you're right there. So I understand
14 that, but it's actually a lot more complicated
15 than it looks.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Okay.
17 Thank you so much.

18 Okay. And next I would like to
19 introduce David Giles, Center for an Urban Future.

20 DAVID GILES: Should I just have a
21 seat here?

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes, please.

23 WILLIAM WHEELER: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, sir.
25 Thank you.

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2 DAVID GILES: So the first line on
3 my testimony is a mistake, it's not a commentary
4 on how long I thought this would last, it says
5 good afternoon. Is this on?

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes. Is your
7 mic on? No.

8 DAVID GILES: No, it's not.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Press the
10 button, introduce yourself for the record.

11 [Crosstalk]

12 MALE VOICE: --is on. You just
13 turned it back off. Press the [off mic]. Here
14 you go.

15 DAVID GILES: Hello? Okay. My
16 name is David Giles and I am the Research Director
17 at the Center for an Urban Future, an independent
18 policy institute that publishes studies about how
19 to grow and diversify New York's economy and
20 expand economic opportunity.

21 In February 2011, the Center
22 published a study which found that New York City's
23 public transit service has not kept pace with
24 recent job growth and commuter trends in Brooklyn,
25 the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island. Our report,

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2 titled, Behind the Curb, documented that a growing
3 number of New Yorkers are commuting to work
4 outside of the two Manhattan Central Business
5 Districts. We found that over the past two
6 decades, in every borough outside of Manhattan,
7 the number of workers who commute to jobs across
8 their own borough or to a neighboring borough or
9 county has been growing much faster than those who
10 make the more traditional trip into Midtown or
11 Downtown Manhattan. So for example, between 1990
12 and 2008, the number of Bronx residents who travel
13 to Queens or Westchester County for work grew by
14 38% and the number who travel inside the borough
15 jumped by 25%; in the same period, the number
16 commuting to Manhattan increased by just 13%. The
17 number of Staten Island residents who travel to
18 work in their own borough increased by 32% in that
19 time, while those going to Brooklyn or New Jersey
20 increased by 22%. During the same period, the
21 number of Staten Islander commuters were traveling
22 to Manhattan for work increased barely at all, 4%,
23 in those 18 years. The number of Brooklyn
24 residents crossing the border to Queens grew 32%
25 between 1990 and 2008, while the number going to

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Manhattan increased by 13% in the same period.

As we show in our report, these trends are evidence of a dramatically changed economic geography in New York. Hard as it is to believe, outer borough job centers like East Flatbush, Sunset Park, Morris Park, Hunts Point, JFK, Flushing, and Jamaica have been growing jobs at a faster pace than Manhattan's two CBDs. In fact, over the last ten years, Manhattan had a net loss of roughly 110,000 jobs, while each of the four other boroughs experienced positive job growth. Our report showed that the biggest reason for the boroughs have done so well over the last decade is their strength in two rapidly expanding sectors: Health care and education. Overall, between 2000 and 2009, New York City experienced an increase of almost 86,000 jobs in the health care industry and 32,000 jobs in education.

A vast majority of the health care jobs are located in the boroughs outside of Manhattan, at hundreds of rapidly growing outpatient clinics, doctors' offices, home health agencies, and hospitals. Many of the education sector jobs were also in the boroughs.

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2 Despite the fact that transit
3 ridership patterns have been shifting, with more
4 people working in the boroughs, the study found
5 that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and
6 New York City Department of Transportation have
7 not made the investments necessary to keep up with
8 these trends. And the biggest losers in all of
9 this have been the city's working poor. New
10 York's low income workers are enduring longer
11 commutes than ever and, in many cases, are cut off
12 from decent paying job opportunities because of
13 limited transit connectivity. Our report argues
14 that changes to the city's underperforming bus
15 system could improve the lives of the working
16 poor, while helping to sustain economic growth in
17 areas of the city that are poorly served by
18 transit.

19 New York's transit system wasn't
20 designed for commuter trips to jobs within and
21 between boroughs outside of Manhattan, and as a
22 result, the city's median commute times have been
23 rising steadily for decades. According to census
24 data released last year, New York's four outer
25 boroughs all lead the nation in median commute

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2 times. For transit riders, they range from 52
3 minutes each way in Brooklyn to a barely
4 comprehensible 69 minutes each way in Staten
5 Island.

6 For our report, we spoke to a
7 number of large outer borough employers who said
8 that a lack of sufficient transit hurts their
9 businesses. Among other things, it shrinks their
10 labor pool and causes more turnover as disgruntled
11 employees decide to leave rather than suffer
12 through two hour commutes each way. The chief
13 operating officer at SUNY Downstate Hospital in
14 East Flatbush Brooklyn even told us that a lack of
15 sufficient transit could cause the hospital to
16 rethink its plans for expansion. Kings County and
17 SUNY Downstate Hospitals are the second and fourth
18 largest employers in the borough, he told us, but
19 we get ignored.

20 Without question, the city should
21 look at a diverse number of solutions to this
22 problem, including expanded commuter rail,
23 improved subway service, and even bike lanes. But
24 if long commute times are ever going to be
25 alleviated, the city's bus system will have to

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2 play a big role as well. The report commends the
3 MTA and DOT for starting to implement some
4 promising changes, including new or proposed SBS
5 lines in every borough but Queens and an expanded
6 real time bus tracking program. But much more
7 needs to be done. In particular, the MTA has so
8 far been reluctant to break out of the existing
9 bus network to create an essentially new BRT
10 system that could attract more riders and increase
11 efficiency. As a minimum, the agency should be
12 looking for ways to link major outer borough job
13 centers. For example, with such dense clusters of
14 workers, an SBS line running from downtown
15 Flushing in Queens, to downtown Jamaica, or even
16 JFK airport, should be a no-brainer.

17 The MTA could also extend several
18 existing SBS routes. For example the B46, which
19 runs along Utica Avenue and Broadway in Brooklyn,
20 could be extended across the Williamsburg Bridge
21 to connect with the M15 at Allen Street; right
22 now, the bus terminates on the Brooklyn side of
23 the bridge, as does the proposed BRT service for
24 that route. Similarly, the M15 along First and
25 Second Avenues could be extended up Third Avenue

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2 in the Bronx to connect with the Bx12 on Fordham
3 Road. To paraphrase a transit expert in our
4 report, the way things are now, the borders
5 between the boroughs are like real political
6 borders, you can't get across them. But if New
7 York is going to sustain job growth in the
8 boroughs and retain a truly world-class transit
9 system, solutions like these will have to be found
10 and implemented.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. And
13 I thank you very much for your report. Your
14 report, of course, is the basis for this hearing,
15 and the work you did is significant. Let me ask
16 you something, did you--I'm sure you did, but I
17 have to ask this for the record--did you forward
18 your report to New York City DOT and to the MTA?

19 DAVID GILES: Yes, we did.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Did you receive
21 any response to any recommendations or any of your
22 initiative suggestions?

23 DAVID GILES: We talked to several
24 engineers in DOT in particular about some of these
25 ideas. You know, they've expressed some concern

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2 about, you know, these longer BRT routes, they say
3 they're harder to engineer, they're harder to
4 maintain and operate, but we've also talked to
5 other BRT experts and transit planners who, you
6 know, quite frankly, made themselves some of these
7 recommendations. We are not transit engineers or
8 transportation engineers, but we did rely on the
9 expertise of engineers for some of these
10 suggestions.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: My first remark
12 when I saw your proposed extension of the Bronx 12
13 into First or Second Avenue was that that would be
14 a very long route, so I don't know--

15 DAVID GILES: Right.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --I don't know
17 if that--first of all, I don't know if that is
18 something people would use because it's so long,
19 what would be the time involved. So I mean, I did
20 have some concerns, but on paper, the suggestion
21 sounds good, but hot to implement it and whether
22 it's feasible would be another--

23 DAVID GILES: [Interposing]
24 Obviously, that would be a big issue, and it's not
25 something I can really speak to about, you know,

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2 actually engineering that line. I can say that a
3 very prominent expert on BRT systems made that
4 very suggestion.

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. It's
6 something I'm going to talk to the MTA about.

7 DAVID GILES: Okay.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I mean, that's
9 one thing. Also, the B46 along Utica Avenue could
10 be extended across the Williamsburg Bridge? How
11 much of an extension is that? How--

12 DAVID GILES: [Interposing] It's
13 not very long.

14 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: It's not very
15 long?

16 DAVID GILES: No, it wouldn't be
17 long distance wise, but of course, getting the bus
18 over the bridge may present some complications.

19 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: What do you say
20 when I tell you the train usage in our city is up,
21 but bus usage is down? What does that portend or
22 what does that mean to you and what does the--what
23 should we as policymakers be concerned about when
24 I tell you that that's statistical?

25 DAVID GILES: It's really not that

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2 surprising, actually. You know, buses, unlike
3 trains, have to sit in traffic. When people are
4 commuting, not into downtown Manhattan, where all
5 the trains go, but into, you know, from one side
6 of Queens to the other, from one side of Staten
7 Island to the other, they typically take their
8 cars. More people taking cars means more
9 congestion, which also leads to slower buses. And
10 if the buses are too slow, then people just aren't
11 going to take them.

12 In our report, for instance, we
13 interviewed a number of employees at a
14 manufacturer in College Point called Crystal
15 Windows and Doors, and this is a rapidly growing
16 manufacturer. College Point is an incredibly hard
17 place to get to by public transit it turns out,
18 and they have a lot of Chinese immigrants working
19 at this manufacturer, many of them live in places
20 like Bayside and South Ozone Park, and it takes
21 two hours for the people to get there by bus. So
22 you could almost walk from Bayside faster than you
23 could take a bus, it's no wonder that the buses
24 are losing ridership. But it's not because the
25 demand isn't there, that's for sure.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I could give
3 you the analogy that getting from the East Bronx
4 to Lehman College or Riverdale by bus is almost
5 impossible, you have to take three buses and,
6 therefore, when you do get jobs in other parts of
7 the borough, you find yourself really not able to
8 get there easily at all.

9 DAVID GILES: I agree. We
10 actually, you know, we went out into the field in
11 the Bronx and rode the Bx12 on Fordham Road, this
12 was early one morning, and just to see the number
13 of nurses and nursing assistants on that bus route
14 trying to travel east-west was really pretty
15 impressive. So a lot of people do it and a lot of
16 people have trouble with it.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Your report
18 really shed light on the fact that people are
19 working outside of Manhattan more and more. Where
20 do you see anyone responding? Where do you see
21 any--have you seen any type of initiatives going
22 on? Are you following up on this report with
23 stakeholders in any way?

24 DAVID GILES: Yeah, we have, we
25 followed up with a lot of advocates, you know, and

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2 it's difficult because, you know, someone, I think
3 it was Councilman Ulrich, asked why there's not a
4 BRT corridor right now in Queens and I think the
5 answer is that, you know, when the MTA and DOT
6 tried to plan for corridors in Queens, there was
7 lot of initial community pushback, and I think the
8 way that BRT lines are treated in the press, you
9 know, when the press starts reporting on proposed
10 routes, they end up talking to a lot of the
11 merchants that abut the BRT corridor, talking to
12 them about what it would mean to them to have a
13 lane of parking taken out. And I wouldn't want to
14 say that that wouldn't hurt them and that's not a
15 real issue because I think it is, but they don't
16 go, the reporters don't end up going to, you know,
17 SUNY Downstate and a lot of these bigger employers
18 who are very frank about what kinds of troubles
19 they're suffering through for lack of transit. I
20 think, you know, there are larger, more invisible
21 issues at work here than I think gets normally
22 relayed in the process.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I thank you
24 very much.

25 DAVID GILES: Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. Our
3 next panel Gene Russianoff, Straphangers Campaign;
4 William Henderson, New York City Transit Riders
5 Council; Jeffrey Zupan, Regional Plan Association;
6 and Veronica Vanterpool of Tri-State
7 Transportation Campaign.

8 Okay. Veronica, if you want to go
9 first and then Gene and then we'll do the panel,
10 okay? Introduce yourself, please.

11 VERONICA VANTERPOOL: Good
12 afternoon, thank you. Oh, yes. Thank you. Good
13 afternoon, thank you, Chairman Vacca and Members
14 of the New York City Council Transportation
15 Committee. My name is Veronica Vanterpool and I'm
16 with Tri-State Transportation Campaign, and I'm
17 pleased to be here today to talk about expanded
18 transit service in the outer boroughs.

19 Some interesting trends have
20 defined the outer boroughs lately: Zoning changes
21 and cheaper real estate are spurring more
22 development in the Bronx and Brooklyn. We've
23 heard from David Giles at CUF that job growth in
24 the outer boroughs has outpaced job growth in
25 Manhattan; and fewer people outside of Manhattan

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2 own cars and rely on buses, subways, and bikes to
3 get around. One shared characteristic of this
4 trend, however, has been the increased demand on
5 the City's public transit system.

6 To accommodate this demand, the New
7 York City DOT and the MTA have implemented several
8 new transit initiatives, and one of the most
9 successful by far is what we're talking about
10 today, or one of the most we're talking about
11 today, and that's Select Bus Service. In the
12 Bronx, which was the very first corridor and the
13 third busiest bus route in all of New York City,
14 we've seen tremendous success along the Fordham
15 Road corridor, the Bx12. We know that ridership
16 has grown by 10% on that corridor and travel time
17 has shrunk by 20%. That is the most significant
18 travel reduction thus far of the three fully
19 implemented bus rapid transit corridors or Select
20 Bus Service corridors in New York City. And
21 there's other statistics in the outer boroughs of
22 Manhattan, for example, that support that same
23 sort of trend of increased ridership and reduced
24 travel time.

25 The success of these routes is

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2 setting the stage for the next phase of SBS
3 corridors in the outer boroughs. Nostrand Avenue,
4 with 40,000 daily riders, is one of the busiest
5 routes in Brooklyn; the Bronx might soon see its
6 second SBS corridor along Webster Avenue, where
7 52,000 daily passengers ride buses; Staten Island
8 is primed to see a modified version of SBS on the
9 S79 route this fall.

10 SBS is one of the most flexible,
11 it's one of the easiest, and most affordable ways
12 of meeting this growing transit demand outside of
13 Manhattan. With very little in startup costs,
14 transit service can be expediently transformed for
15 thousands of people daily. And since 2008, when
16 the first SBS service went into effect in the
17 Bronx, the needs of bus riders have been better
18 prioritized than they ever have been. And what we
19 need from our elected officials and of you all
20 today in the Council, and of course, our state
21 electeds, is continued support of the existing
22 projects that New York City DOT and the MTA have
23 plans, but also future projects. We know that,
24 again, since 2008, we're seeing the needs of bus
25 riders prioritized in a way that has never been

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2 done and we need to see these sorts of projects
3 move forward, we know that they are--they're
4 certainly showing a lot of success that is
5 measurable and bus riders are indeed very, very
6 happy to see them.

7 And we need, you know, to keep
8 these projects moving forward, we need support,
9 political support for both capital and operating
10 dollars--capital dollars to buy, you know, modern
11 and efficient new buses, and the operating dollars
12 to support expansion of service on these routes
13 and pay for the day-to-day operating expenses.

14 There's just a few things that I
15 want to point out. One of the things that you
16 asked, Chairman, was about bus ridership being
17 down in the outer boroughs. That is true to an
18 extent, but what we've seen, according to New York
19 City Transit's 2011 ridership statistics, is that
20 seven routes in the Bronx and seven routes in
21 Queens have actually seen significant growth in
22 buses. And in Brooklyn, five routes have actually
23 grown, and one route has grown by 46%, their
24 ridership. So that just speaks to the intent of
25 this hearing, looking at ways of expanding transit

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2 access in the outer boroughs and we're seeing
3 that, the statistics are certainly showing that
4 bus ridership is growing and SBS is one wonderful
5 way in meeting that demand.

6 And just on an interesting note,
7 Bill Wheeler pointed out that the SBS in the Bronx
8 is just about a, you know, he's thinking about
9 connecting it or there's been thoughts about
10 connecting it to First and Second Avenue. Talking
11 about coordination and working with other systems,
12 the SBS in the Bronx actually ends one mile from
13 the proposed Westchester County BRT system, and
14 we've heard Bill talk about how the Bronx and this
15 reverse commuting is increasing so significantly.
16 So just talking about beyond the boroughs and
17 exploring employment opportunities in the suburbs
18 as well is something to consider down the road.

19 And Tri-State supports the Penn
20 Station Access study, we think that's a wonderful
21 way of capitalizing on some of the potential for
22 rail service in the Bronx.

23 And lastly, I just want to point
24 out that every transit user is a pedestrian and/or
25 a bicyclist, and having infrastructure that

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2 supports a safe pedestrian environment and a bike
3 environment is important, especially with the
4 launch of Bike Share. There's a unique
5 opportunity to integrate into new public
6 transportation, you know, stations locations
7 existing--or infrastructure for, you know, better
8 pedestrian safety--sidewalks, crosswalks, bike
9 lanes, bike parking racks, et cetera.

10 And just to close, we know that
11 transit ridership nationwide has grown
12 significantly, it's 5% in the first quarter of
13 2012, and we've seen that replicated in New York
14 City's transit systems so we really need to
15 capitalize upon this. The trend is upward with
16 transit users or ridership and we need to really
17 put the capital and operating dollars behind that
18 to support that growth. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.
20 Just for the record, could you clarify the one-
21 mile lots between the Bronx route and the
22 Westchester? I'd like to know it just for the
23 record.

24 VERONICA VANTERPOOL: Yes, the SBS
25 12, the Bx12 route, which terminates along Fordham

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2 a little at 207 in the Bronx is actually just a
3 mile short of the proposed Westchester County bus
4 rapid transit system that will run along Central
5 Avenue, and Westchester County DOT is currently in
6 its development phase for a very--the corridor
7 along Central Avenue that runs through Yonkers,
8 White Plains, and Greenburg, the town of
9 Greenburg, so having--closing that gap, that one-
10 mile gap could really deliver a lot of
11 opportunities for residents of Westchester who are
12 coming into the Bronx, and then, again, Bronx
13 residents who are commuting into Westchester. And
14 that kind of conversation can, and should be,
15 happening into, you know, at the municipal level
16 at both counties--Westchester County and then
17 Bronx County--and the agencies involved.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: That will be
19 happening. I thank you.

20 VERONICA VANTERPOOL: Wonderful,
21 thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Gene?

23 GENE RUSSIANOFF: Good afternoon,
24 Mr. Chairman and Committee staff, I'm Gene
25 Russianoff with the Straphangers Campaign.

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2 I'm going to focus on two things
3 about boroughs outside of Manhattan and then
4 transit. The first is select bus service, which
5 will be pretty brief, since it's been a big topic
6 of this hearing, and the second is the expansion
7 of a program called FasTrack, which is repairs to
8 the subways.

9 You know, I think it's amazing to
10 be at a hearing where a Queens City Councilperson
11 complains about not getting access to select bus
12 service, we've come a long way from SBS being eyed
13 warily by many in the political world to something
14 that's desired and is a great improvement to
15 customers. Well when done right and when combined
16 with sensitivity to curb access and parking for
17 businesses and customers, it can greatly improve
18 the quality of life of many neighborhoods. And
19 like the other groups who will speak, we strongly
20 favor the SBS projects that are in the can that
21 are currently under construction or about to be
22 construction and City DOT has a list of phase II
23 possible corridors, in my testimony is the address
24 for the site and I think it's a good thing. And I
25 think Council Members should advocate as strongly

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2 as they can for these kind of improvements in
3 their district.

4 And one thing to say is, you know,
5 you were complaining about the pace of the
6 regional rail. Well, you know, this is a
7 frustration about SBS, it's moved at a steady
8 pace, but I've become--I and I think other groups
9 have come to appreciate the need to listen to
10 communities, most vividly demonstrated by the M34
11 where the issue of curb access for deliveries and
12 for pickups with paratransit and with other
13 concerns is legitimate. And so I think that
14 project improved because of the exposure to
15 community concerns and elected officials'
16 concerns.

17 And the second point I want to make
18 is about FaTrack. FaTrack is the repair program
19 when New York City Transit has closed several
20 subway line segments in the central business
21 district in downtown Brooklyn between 10 o'clock
22 at night and five in the morning for four
23 weeknights each on a quarterly basis. Yeah, the
24 program has a lot of advantages, which we list:
25 It's improved worker safety, it's made it more

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2 efficient, there have been fewer breakdowns and
3 train delays because of the changes, and we share
4 those concerns. But New York City has put out a
5 list of segments outside the CBD for possible
6 FasTrack treatment in 2013. These routes have
7 fewer alternatives, as do the ones that have been
8 done recently in the central business district.
9 We're not opposed to FasTrack, we think it has a
10 lot of value, we just think your Committee should
11 be asking tough questions of the transit--of New
12 York City Transit about what kind of hardships the
13 riders on these lines, and they're listed in my
14 testimony. For example, the Broadway NQNR from
15 Long Island City to downtown Brooklyn and in
16 Washington Heights from 168th Street to 207th
17 Street and so on and so forth. And so these lines
18 don't have the same rationale that the, let's say,
19 the Lexington in midtown to lower Manhattan at
20 which is that you could easily take the R train as
21 an alternative.

22 So I just think--and I've listed
23 some questions, and I think you should ask the
24 transit officials about what the impact is. And
25 they're going to move these in next year in 2013,

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2 so it's timely to ask what kind of hardships will
3 the riders have to bear under FasTrack done more
4 in the outer boroughs.

5 And the very last thing, you know,
6 one of the success stories, you know, and a lot of
7 these issues are so very local, one of the success
8 stories is that, while preparing what's called the
9 Culver Viaduct, the F train line in Brooklyn, they
10 tacked on five additional stops to the southern
11 end of the G, so now it used to stop at 4th Avenue
12 and 9th Street and now it goes all the way to
13 Church Avenue. And they've said they've not made
14 up their mind about whether that's going to be a
15 permanent change or not. But I just want to
16 celebrate it as some--one of the things the
17 Transit Authority has done that has improved local
18 transit greatly.

19 Anyway, thank you very much, Mr.
20 Chairman.

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, Mr.
22 Russianoff, thank you.

23 Sir, would you introduce yourself,
24 sir? Do you want to go next?

25 WILLIAM HENDERSON: My name is Bill

1 Henderson, I'm with the New York City Transit
2 Riders Council. And, you know, I'd like to start
3 out just about five years ago, in 2007, our
4 umbrella organization, PCAC, the Permanent
5 Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, did a
6 report on access to, mainly to Manhattan from some
7 of the outer boroughs areas that are underserved.
8 Unfortunately, we haven't seen--I think my chair
9 is about to, you know, a little bit of movement
10 there--unfortunately, we haven't seen things get
11 markedly better in the intervening five years.
12 What we've seen on SBS, while it's very much a
13 credible project or creditable program, its
14 improved existing transportation networks are not
15 really added new links that are needed to bring
16 people in from historically underserved areas.

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18 Unfortunately, there is not any
19 perfect or easy answers to solving the problem of
20 bringing people from areas that don't have the
21 public transportation service to where they need
22 to be. We think that the solution lies in
23 breaking down a lot of divisions and silos between
24 services and agencies and getting people to think
25 of this as a network. A lot of the potential

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2 solutions for improving transportation to some of
3 the underserved areas in the outer boroughs
4 involve two--potentially two services, maybe a
5 commuter rail and then transit bus or transit
6 subway service. We need to look at this as a
7 network and have those pieces of network work
8 together for this to be successful. We believe
9 that commuter rail lines are an essential part of
10 the solution, and we've heard some discussion of
11 that today with the Metro-North lines to the Bronx
12 and adding stations and getting access to New York
13 Penn Station.

14 Another roadblock that we found in
15 terms of using commuter rails though is the fare
16 structure. We have a fare structure that actually
17 almost discourages, actively discourages city
18 residents from using the commuter rails to travel
19 in the city--it's very expensive. We have a
20 situation out in southeast Queens where people who
21 live in close proximity to LIRR stations actually
22 will take either a dollar a bus or even a dollar
23 van to access the subway network because it's so
24 expensive for them to travel via LIRR service.
25 And as a result of there not being the demand at

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2 those prices, the LIRR service is not there in a
3 convenient or a timely manner that it could be
4 otherwise.

5 One of the things we've proposed to
6 deal with this is what we term a freedom ticket--
7 providing a fare within the MTA system that would
8 allow people to use whatever part of the MTA--
9 whatever MTA service is available that makes sense
10 for them to reach their destination at a fixed
11 cost to go from one point to another. We think
12 that's critical, and one of the things that could
13 support this is some of the fare technology
14 improvements that the MTA is making in its
15 planning. It's just critical for people who are
16 at Rochdale Village, for instance. They have a
17 train station right there outside their door to
18 not have to get on a city bus or not have to get
19 on a dollar van to go to Jamaica to--and, you
20 know, when they can take an LIRR or train straight
21 into Penn Station.

22 One of the other points that I
23 wanted to make is that, if we're going to maintain
24 service to some of the underserved areas,
25 maintaining the budget levels and the funding for

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2 the MTA is an absolute must. Unfortunately, the
3 easiest way to cut budget in the MTA is to cut bus
4 service. You know, you don't save much money by
5 cutting subway service because most of your
6 investment is in terms of capital, you've already
7 put it in the ground. Bus service, you're
8 spending money on gas, on operators, on
9 maintenance every day. If you don't have the
10 money there and you have to make the tough
11 decision to cut \$50 million, it comes out of bus
12 service and it usually comes out of bus service in
13 the underserved areas. So we have to be very
14 careful to make sure that the MTA and New York
15 City Transit is adequately funded.

16 The other thing I wanted to point
17 out is some of the things that the MTA is doing in
18 terms of information technology can really
19 improve, if not the service itself, at least the
20 riders' perspective and the riders' experience in
21 service, sometimes it can allow you to make
22 connections that you wouldn't have made otherwise.
23 One of the things that's very important is that
24 the MTA continue to push out a lot of the data
25 that it collects through some of the automated

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2 systems that are coming online and make that
3 available to app developers, who then can use that
4 in ways we probably haven't thought of right now,
5 but can use that in routing applications that you
6 could have on your smartphone and can allow you to
7 plan trips on-the-fly. If you can do that, you
8 can knit together the pieces of the network more
9 effectively, and if you have a unified fare
10 structure that allows you to use each of those
11 pieces, that's a home run for a lot of people who
12 are in underserved areas. You know, also within
13 the system, technology is tremendously important.

14 Traffic signal prioritization for
15 buses, improve signal systems for subways can
16 really reduce travel time, allow us to put a lot
17 more throughput through the system. We've seen
18 that on 34th Street, the tremendous decrease in
19 travel time from end to end that has occurred just
20 with the improvements that have been made so far.

21 You know, this really requires
22 improved coordination between the City and the
23 MTA, and within the MTA. I think we're on the
24 right track, but we need to do more. This is just
25 the SBS things we've done so far are just a start.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

Sir?

JEFFREY ZUPAN: Good afternoon, my name is Jeffrey Zupan, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Council today. I'm a Senior Fellow for Transportation with Regional Plan Association--excuse me--and we're a not-for-profit civic group that has been planning and advocating for sensible growth in the tri-state region since the 1920s.

I understand the focus today is on making faster progress on the Special Bus Services and BRT, and on creating more opportunities within the outer boroughs using the commuter rail system--Metro-North and Long Island Rail Road. We are supportive of faster action on both of those fronts.

In 2009, we issued a report, it seems like everybody else who's at this hearing today has issued a report. Well ours was called, Tomorrow's Transit, and we, like what we've heard before, we urged steps, we urged these steps and others to improve the city's transportation system, particularly within and between the outer

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2 boroughs. And particularly for people who do not
3 have cars available to them and where their public
4 transit is very poor. There's a couple of maps in
5 your testimony that shows where people are poor,
6 have no cars, and have poor transit and you'll
7 notice it's largely in the outer boroughs and
8 largely in the outer portion of the outer
9 boroughs. And the second map shows where there's
10 no subway service or express bus service to
11 Manhattan, which is also remains important. Our
12 full report is available at RPA.org, it's about
13 150 pages, and, obviously, can't go over all the
14 details here today. So I want to make a few
15 general comments about SBS and commuter rail in
16 the boroughs and spend a little time on another
17 proposal to help mobility in the boroughs.

18 On SBS, we hope to see the MTA and
19 the City identify other corridors where SBS could
20 do the most good for the most people. Perhaps
21 most importantly, the MTA could--and this is a
22 different idea here, it's very important--the MTA
23 could create a more widespread system of fast
24 buses, not by taking line by line by line with
25 SBS, as they are doing, which is sometimes very

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difficult to do, but with two actions:

Acceleration of the purchase of low-floor buses which makes it easy for people to get on and off, including many with three doors that speeds boarding and alighting, and the wider use of proof of payment systems like on the SBS systems to enable riders to quickly enter and leave through these multiple doors. So what we see is the need to accelerate the purchase of low-floor buses and contemplating proof of payment systems.

Just as we think about different BRT or SBS lines, we can begin to do this in a more widespread way. And particularly encouraging people to leave not by the front of the bus. It was very disquieting, I was on a 14th Street crosstown today and the message said please leave by the back of the bus, and it was a lightly traveled bus and it came to the next stop right after the announcement, three people who were sitting right near the door in the back of the bus walked to the front of the bus. So what does that do? What that means is someone waiting to get on the bus can't get on until these people leave so that means the bus is sitting there longer. If

1
2 you multiply this by many times, and you have
3 slower buses. And it seems to me, this is a very
4 difficult thing to do because people for some
5 reason feel more comfortable leaving by the front
6 of the bus even if they have to walk up to the
7 front of the bus, but I think there needs to be a
8 campaign to overcome that.

9 Now regarding commuter rail, there
10 are shorter term and the longer term actions, and
11 I think you're rightfully concerned about the
12 longer term action that now looks like it's 2019.
13 But there are shorter term things that can be done
14 in the Bronx with lines exist not waiting for new
15 services to exist and stations that exist at Mott
16 Haven, Melrose, Morrisania, East Tremont,
17 Highbridge, University Heights on the Hudson and
18 Harlem lines. And as Veronica pointed out and I
19 think Bill did as well, there's a problem with
20 fares and there's a problem with service, and as a
21 result, people are not encouraged to use those
22 lines, even if they stop in their neighborhoods.
23 And of course, the longer term action deals with
24 the Penn Station Access project that we spoke
25 about. And also, this can be done in Queens with

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more stops and lower fares.

And so I want to call your attention to--finally, I want to call your attention to a proposal we have called Triboro Rx--excuse me--which runs through Brooklyn, Queens--would run through Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens from Bay Ridge all the way to Yankee Stadium, connecting the three boroughs. And the most important thing about that--and you can see it on the map and my testimony--is this line would intersect virtually all of the radial subway lines in the system. So if you get on the subway, you can transfer this line, well if you're in this line, you can transfer to a subway line and reach many different locations and neighborhoods throughout New York City.

I went to a website recently and they indicated over 300 neighborhoods in the city of New York. One of the things I would like to do is to count how many of those neighborhoods would gain from Triboro Rx, I suspect it's at least a third of them would gain greater mobility.

This project was first proposed by RPA in the nineties and was recently cited by

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2 Borough President Scott Stringer as a potential
3 model for serving these areas. And it's not new
4 right-of-way, we are hopeful of studying this
5 proposal soon and we believe it could be a cost
6 effective approach to serving the boroughs.

7 In our testimony, we list many more
8 recommendations that were in our report at the
9 end.

10 I just want to conclude by
11 reminding everyone that none of these ideas, no
12 matter how good, will be implemented without
13 money. It takes lots of money just to keep the
14 transit system we have in a state of good repair,
15 much less improving upon them. While it's not the
16 City Council that has the prime responsibility of
17 finding these additional resources, it is the
18 responsibility of your colleagues in the New York
19 State legislature. To date, there has been little
20 interest in creating added revenues for
21 transportation. The mobility fee has been eroded,
22 the revenues from fuel taxes are declining as cars
23 get more efficient, and congestion pricing passed
24 by this Council did not find sufficient support in
25 Albany. Without the added revenues for transit,

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the ideas expressed here will remain just ideas.

We look forward to elaborating on any of these ideas with the Committee. Thank you for your time and attention.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you to the panel.

Our next panel Tom Lucania, representing Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., I. Daneek Miller of ATU Local 1056; Anthony Callender, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility New York; and Paul White, Transportation Alternatives.

Only two of them--

[background noise]

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, only two of the panelists are here so I will now call Elena Conte, Pratt Institute; Sandra Shoreinstein, Environmental Defense Fund. Mr. Lucania, I'll ask you--

[background noise]

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Are you here for TA?

YA-TING LIU: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: All right, have

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2 a seat there too, would you just put a chair
3 somewhere and then don't worry, we'll get you too.
4 I'm going to ask Mr. Lucania to start off.

5 THOMAS LUCANIA: Thank you,
6 Chairman Vacca and Members of the Transportation
7 Committee and staff. My name is Tom Lucania and
8 I'm the Director of Community Boards and
9 Legislative Affairs for Borough President Ruben
10 Diaz Jr. And I wanted to thank you today for the
11 opportunity to speak about the East Bronx Metro-
12 North railroad access.

13 The idea of providing one-seat rail
14 transportation to Co-op City, Morris Park,
15 Parkchester, and Hunts Point is the most dynamic,
16 and potentially the most important, transportation
17 investment in the Bronx since the construction of
18 the subways during the early 20th century.
19 Indeed, following the opening of the IRT subway
20 lines in the Bronx during the 1920s, the borough's
21 population increased by 530,000 residents. Thanks
22 to the foresight and the tenacity of those who
23 were responsible for this critical investment at
24 that time, these subways made the Bronx one of the
25 most prosperous counties in the nation and the

1 fastest growing borough in the city of New York.

2
3 Now nearly one century later, we
4 are on the cusp of a project that, for the cost
5 projected, has the potential of being one of the
6 most cost effective and beneficial transportation
7 endeavors for, not just the Bronx, but the entire
8 region. As envisioned, Metro-North Railroad,
9 using existing track infrastructure, would offer
10 railroad transportation to approximately 160,000
11 Bronx residents who reside within one mile of the
12 following locations: Co-op City, a community of
13 60,000 people; Morris Park, a community of 14,600
14 residents plus approximately 4,000 people working
15 at the Hutch Metro Center and the Albert Einstein
16 College of Medicine; Parkchester, a community of
17 condominiums and residences approximately 40,000
18 residents; and Hunts Point, a community of
19 approximately 46,000 residents and home to one of
20 the world's largest food distribution markets,
21 doing approximately \$2 billion in business
22 annually.

23 In addition to the obvious benefits
24 Bronx residents would realize by having access to
25 Manhattan in less than forty minutes, for the

1 first time Bronxites would reach suburban
2 employment centers without reliance on a car.
3 Likewise, commuters to Westchester and Fairfield
4 counties could reach Bronx employment destinations
5 without the need for a vehicle. This saves energy
6 while reducing harm to our environment. The end
7 result is an improved quality of life for the
8 Bronx, along with increasing real estate values.

9
10 Finally, the suburban commuters who
11 now reach Grand Central Terminal and then must
12 transfer to subways for access to Manhattan's West
13 Side, this new service to Penn Station will offer
14 a choice similar to those now being made possible
15 for Long Island Rail Road passengers who prefer
16 Grand Central access. Combined, these two
17 services would dramatically cut commute times,
18 along with reducing overcrowding on our subways.

19 It should, therefore, come as no
20 surprise that, when I convened a meeting with the
21 Metro-North officials, community business, and
22 those representing many East Bronx neighborhoods,
23 a capacity turnout was realized, with everyone
24 present expressing their strong support for Penn
25 Station access. Similarly, when the Bronx office

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2 of City Planning called a meeting at Fordham
3 University to consider their study on Metro-North
4 services to various Bronx locations,
5 representatives from Stamford, Connecticut, joined
6 those in the Bronx in support of East Bronx
7 railroad transit.

8 The American Public Transportation
9 Association points out that for every \$1 invested
10 in public transportation, \$4 is generated; and for
11 every \$10 million invested in capital
12 improvements, 30 million in business is realized.

13 The Regional Plan Association says
14 that real property values increase by 7% if
15 located within one-half mile of a new railroad
16 station and 5% within one mile. If the Bronx, and
17 indeed the entire service region of the
18 Metropolitan Transportation Authority, is to
19 realize its full potential, both as a place to
20 live and as a place of commerce, time efficient,
21 cost effective, and environmentally sound
22 transportation must be available. East Bronx
23 railroad service satisfies every one of those
24 prerequisites, therefore, making this happen is a
25 top priority of my administration.

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Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, Mr. Lucania. Sir, would you want to go next? Introduce yourself, please?

ANTHONY CALLENDER: Yes, my name is Anthony Callender and I'm representing the Institute for Rational Urban Mobility. Thank you very much, Chairman Vacca and the Committee on Transportation.

The Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc, IRUM, is a New York-based nonprofit concerned with reducing motor vehicle use in dense urban places. IRUM recommends consideration of the following measures for making MTA's bus and rail system more attractive, particularly for non-Manhattan travel: One, convert the single trip MetroCard to a two-hour pass and restore the one-day pass. MTA's elimination of the two-fare zone and the introduction of unlimited ride passes greatly increased the utility of MTA's existing rail and bus network, however, the limitation of making only a single trip, whether for one bus ride and one train ride or for two bus rides, penalizes riders who must make more complex trips

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2 or who would find it difficult to make a stopover
3 en route. The recent elimination of the one-day
4 pass is a step backwards. The simplest way to
5 correct this situation is to make all MetroCards
6 time-based unlimited-ride passes for two hours,
7 one day, seven days, or 30 days.

8 Two, revise and upgrade bus and
9 subway service guidelines to allow higher levels
10 of service. When service guidelines were
11 introduced in the 1980s, they allocated service
12 more uniformly based on observed levels of use.
13 However, these guidelines need to be reexamined
14 and recalibrated, taking into account other
15 factors, like environmental consequences and
16 economic impacts of service levels. The utility
17 of the transit system for non-Manhattan travel is
18 especially sensitive to service levels. Recent
19 fare hikes that exceed inflation have resulted in
20 sharp drops in bus ridership. MTA's service
21 guidelines lead to further cuts in service, which
22 result in further ridership declines, continuing
23 an endless downward spiral.

24 Three, integrate fares and increase
25 service on commuter rail lines in New York City.

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2 The introduction of the CityTicket for weekend use
3 has greatly increased ridership at Long Island
4 Rail Road and Metro-North railroad stations in New
5 York City. This ticket should be extended for
6 weekday use as well and priced at current city
7 MetroCard fares to fully integrate these lines
8 with New York City buses and subways. This would
9 eliminate the pricing penalty that limits the
10 utility these rail lines have, especially for non-
11 Manhattan travelers. Accompanying this fare
12 integration should be significant increases in
13 service, especially off-peak and on weekends.

14 Four, add new city-oriented
15 regional rail service on Amtrak's Hell Gate and
16 West Side lines. These Amtrak lines could host
17 new regional rail services, benefiting parts of
18 Upper Manhattan and the Bronx that are not well
19 served by existing subway lines. In the near
20 term, the convergence of these regional rail lines
21 at Penn Station would greatly enhance transit
22 operations for non-Manhattan travelers. We were
23 very glad to see the, you know, a number of
24 previous speakers had mentioned this and it seems
25 to be, you know, a very active plan.

1
2 Number five, last and number five,
3 beginning planning for new rail service on little
4 used or disused rail lines in New York City. Rail
5 transit service could be put in place with
6 relative little capital investment on the Bay
7 Ridge Freight line linking Brooklyn, Queens, and
8 the Bronx, the Long Island Rail Road's Rockaway
9 Beach line in central Queens, and the North Shore
10 line in Staten Island. All three lines would be
11 useful for non-Manhattan travel. Planning should
12 begin immediately, since restoration will require
13 considerable community consultation.

14 Many of these measures can be
15 included in a package of fare changes and funding
16 enhancements the MTA plans to consider at the end
17 of the year. Now is the time for the City Council
18 to be heard on these issues.

19 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, sir.
20 Miss, would you introduce yourself? Thank you.

21 ELENA CONTE: Hello? Hi, I'm Elena
22 Conte, I'm with the Pratt Center for Community
23 Development. Thank you for the opportunity to
24 testify.

25 Pratt Center works to create a more

1
2 sustainable and equitable city by working with low
3 and moderate income communities throughout the
4 five boroughs to empower them to plan for and
5 realize their futures. Our transportation equity
6 project has identified and pursued an agenda
7 that's aimed at increasing the mobility and job
8 access of the most transit dependent and at
9 reducing the impacts of transportation
10 infrastructure.

11 Over 750,000 New Yorkers now have
12 commutes of over an hour in each direction every
13 day. And two-thirds, almost 460,000 of them, are
14 on their way to jobs paying \$35,000 per year or
15 less. These New Yorkers are on the train, or on a
16 bus and a train, or two buses and a train. And if
17 you're a person of color, your commute is likely
18 to be significantly longer. African Americans,
19 Latinos, Asian Americans all have longer average
20 commute times than their white counterparts--and
21 this is documented more in the handouts that you
22 have. Trips to work are now so long that they're
23 undermining the lives of families and communities,
24 as well as our whole economy.

25 Our transit system needs to expand

1
2 and improve in ways that are fast, cost effective,
3 and that will serve the people who depend on it
4 the most. As we've heard today, right? The
5 current system was designed and developed to
6 transport people rapidly to lower Manhattan, yet
7 most working class New Yorkers live and work in
8 the same borough and need a system that serves
9 their reality. Manufacturing and service jobs,
10 when concentrated, are clustered in centers
11 outside of Manhattan--and there's also an
12 attachment that identified some of those major
13 centers there for you--and these are in places
14 like College Point, Queens, and Sunset Park,
15 Brooklyn. But generally, these jobs are more
16 dispersed across the five boroughs than the
17 professional jobs that are centered in downtown
18 Manhattan. Again, laborers and construction
19 workers, domestic workers, home health care aides
20 are all working at sites in every neighborhood
21 throughout the city, and the people who do this
22 work live overwhelmingly outside of Manhattan.

23 There has been a lot of discussion
24 about Select Bus Service today, so I'm going to
25 skip some parts and go to more recommendations.

1
2 So regarding Select Bus Service,
3 New York could have a state of the art bus rapid
4 transit network up and running, but it's not going
5 to take shape without the City Council's
6 leadership. I urge you to consider passing a
7 resolution in support of the Select Bus Service
8 program and its continuation after 2013 at an
9 increased pace of implementation and that
10 identifies priorities for implementation that are
11 based on improving equity, job access, and sound
12 transportation planning. Much of which you've
13 heard echoed today, but some priorities might be
14 connecting lower income neighborhoods that are
15 beyond the train network, especially public
16 housing; serving major job centers, such as JFK
17 Airport, the central Brooklyn hospitals, and the
18 Hunts Point Food Distribution Center; projects
19 that specifically reduce racial disparities in
20 commute times and that otherwise serve the most
21 transit dependent; and finally, increasing network
22 connectivity. Routes that cross bridges and
23 connect boroughs, especially on routes that avoid
24 Manhattan, have great potential to expand mobility
25 for working class residents.

1
2 There are two other main points of
3 recommendation. In particular, it would be
4 particularly valuable for the Council to think
5 about integrating transit into its land use and
6 planning oversight. Although the hearing has
7 focused on transit mobility, it's important to
8 remember that transit access is shaped by policy
9 and decision-making about other types of
10 transportation infrastructure. In many parts of
11 the city, especially lower income communities,
12 transit access is as much about pedestrian safety
13 to the bus stop or the train as it is about when
14 the bus or train arrives. Topics of City Council
15 oversight hearings for DOT should be aimed at,
16 one, ensuring that DOT prioritizes pedestrian
17 improvements in the communities that are the most
18 compromised by truck and car traffic and whose
19 residents are threatened by poorly designed and
20 dangerous intersections and proximity to highways.

21 An oversight hearing could also be
22 aimed at ensuring that DOT spends its planning
23 funds fairly and does not reserve its big-picture
24 sustainability planning for just the most affluent
25 areas of the city. Shamefully, DOT has just short

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2 circuited a federal Transportation Investment
3 Generating Economic Recovery, or TIGER, grant in
4 the South Bronx by refusing to do a full analysis
5 of all of the options that it initially promised
6 in the Sheridan Expressway Hunts Point study. The
7 \$1.5 million in federal funds should be expended
8 as were intended by taking a full look at the
9 Sheridan removal scenario, as well as the modify
10 and retain scenarios and carry them each to their
11 full conclusion for fair comparison.

12 And finally, funding. City Council
13 must insert itself in the debate for a sufficient,
14 ongoing funding stream for the MTA. Given the
15 importance of transit to equalizing opportunity in
16 the city, as well as to its economic and
17 environmental health, it's essential that the City
18 support the transit system through a budgetary
19 contribution, as well as through identifying and
20 championing fair, sustainable revenue sources,
21 such as rationalizing bridge tolls and/or other
22 pricing mechanisms. Doing so will have a
23 multiplier effect in that it will challenge your
24 colleagues in Albany to do the same. Monetary
25 support can provide the gateway for greater

1
2 control over how and where funds are spent, and
3 who gets served, empowering the Council to direct
4 improvements to the populations with the greatest
5 need.

6 Thank you for the opportunity to
7 testify. We have included a menu of supporting
8 documents and there's more where that come from if
9 you want to get to that level of detail and you
10 can find them on the web or just give me a call.
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.
13 Miss, would you want to go next?

14 SANDRA SHORENSTEIN: Yeah, my name
15 is Sandra ShoreNSTEIN and I'm a research associate
16 at the Environmental Defense Fund. I'll be brief.

17 Transportation sources are
18 responsible for approximately a third of America's
19 global warming. Traffic congestion and pollution
20 correlated health problems cost the New York
21 regional economy more than \$13 billion in 2007,
22 therefore, it is necessary that the City provides
23 better mobility and transit options.

24 Environmental Defense Fund supports transportation
25 programs that focus on expanding innovative

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transit that reduces traffic and congestion.

The Bus Rapid Transit and Select Bus Service programs are already being implemented in New York City's boroughs and have proven to be successful and popular, as so many people have highlighted today. These types of programs that support designated bus lanes, bus signal preferences, and preemption, faster boarding, and specialized bus branding and stations will improve transit and the air quality in our city. Bus Rapid Transit programs are already in effect in several U.S. cities, such as Los Angeles, California; Eugene, Oregon; and Orlando, Florida, and are being implemented in many more. These programs will effectively help reduce transportation pollution and travel time while improving traffic congestion.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. And I'd like to hear from Transportation Alternatives.

YA-TING LIU: Great. Thank you very much, Chairman Vacca and Committee staff. My name is Ya-Ting Liu, I'm the Director of Transit Advocacy at Transportation Alternatives. It's

1
2 been a long morning, I won't read the written
3 testimony verbatim, we've heard from so many great
4 experts, lots of great ideas, very compelling
5 statistics about the need, the transit needs in
6 outer borough, I won't repeat that. What I would
7 like to do is just share some of the feedback that
8 Transportation Alternatives have heard over the
9 last two years, especially in our transit Town
10 Halls that we've been doing in outer borough
11 communities to, especially to learn about the
12 impact and the toll those 2010 service cuts
13 continue to have on these communities and what
14 their transit needs and priorities are in the
15 future.

16 In the last two years,
17 Transportation Alternatives have partnered with
18 community groups, and city, state, and federal
19 elected officials on conducting these transit town
20 halls. To date, we've done six town halls in
21 Flushing, Jamaica, Elmhurst, Bronx River Sound
22 View area, Fordham Heights, and Sheepshead Bay.
23 And in every community, local residents made it
24 very clear that outer boroughs are not getting the
25 transit service they need, and in every community,

1
2 local residents have identified bus service as
3 their greatest hope for fulfilling that need, so
4 that's local bus, select bus, BRT, and also
5 express bus.

6 In Sheepshead Bay town hall, for
7 example, over 70 participants came out and said
8 that in the community that's only served by one
9 subway line, one subway stop in their entire area,
10 the fact that they lost weekday, off-peak service
11 and weekend service on B4, which is one of the
12 main bus lines that run through Sheepshead Bay,
13 Plum Beach, Manhattan Beach, has taken a
14 devastating toll for residents today. We heard
15 from residents in that area that said that they
16 need to work still on weekends and they have to
17 take a taxi because of a lack of B4 service in
18 that community.

19 Another example, we heard from town
20 hall participants in the Bronx River Soundview
21 area that commuting to work, to school, to shop
22 has become increasingly difficult. That's a
23 community where the average annual household
24 income is \$25,000 a year and where 70% of
25 households do not even own a car. So bus service

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2 is really the only way that residents can get
3 around, it's the lifeline, it's the lifeblood for
4 that community.

5 In Jamaica, Queens, our town hall
6 participants told us that surrounding communities
7 like Rochdale, Hillcrest, Briarwood, Laurelton,
8 need more bus service to make the subway and rail
9 connections through Jamaica to shorten their
10 commutes and improve their quality of life.

11 At the end of the day, our
12 recommendations really echo a lot of what you've
13 already heard today. In 2010, New Yorkers lost 38
14 bus lines, 10 express bus routes, 570 bus stops,
15 weekday service on 14 bus lines, weekend service
16 on 22 bus routes, overnight service on 18 bus
17 routes, not to mention service reductions on 41
18 weekday bus routes, 32 weekend routes, and 9
19 overnight routes. You heard earlier from Will
20 Henderson from PCAC that when there needs to be
21 savings at the MTA or they're looking to make
22 budget--close some budget gaps, they really turn
23 to local bus and we see that here in terms of the
24 2010 service cuts.

25 And that every town hall commuter

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2 has told us that they need this bus back, and
3 they're fed up with paying higher fares for less
4 service. They want their state legislators to
5 prioritize, not steal, transit funding. And just
6 to give you a sense of that scale, I mean, those
7 2010 cuts and all of those bus cuts that we've
8 heard, they only saved the MTA about \$100 million;
9 and in 2009, Albany diverted 100 million from
10 dedicated transit funds; in 2010, Albany diverted
11 another \$160 million from dedicated transit funds.
12 So if Albany simply just returned half the money
13 that it took, we could restore these bus cuts from
14 2010, and maybe even add new service.

15 And lastly, the Select Bus Service,
16 of the six town halls that we've had, we have yet
17 to hear any negative feedback about Select Bus
18 Service. In fact, the only complaint that we've
19 heard from these town halls is that there are not
20 more select bus routes. So even as bus ridership
21 is declining citywide, ridership on select bus
22 routes is increasing.

23 And we need to really accelerate
24 the implementation. Now we know that a lot of the
25 delay has to do with the intensive community

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2 planning process required to build a successful
3 route and the answer is not to decrease the amount
4 of community consultation, but really, ultimately,
5 increase the funding for select bus program and so
6 that the DOT and MTA can allocate more staff time
7 to this program. Right now, the agencies are on
8 track to add about two lines a year and we think
9 they could do better.

10 Lastly, we need to improve express
11 bus service. They're a way of life for New
12 Yorkers who live in the outer boroughs and commute
13 to Manhattan, but when they're stuck in traffic or
14 their service is cut, people's livelihoods are
15 crippled. Express bus service should be increased
16 and should be given dedicated lanes throughout on
17 the highways with camera enforcement.

18 And I guess lastly, the economic
19 vitality of our city depends on public
20 transportation network that connects workers to
21 jobs, and businesses to customers. For our
22 economy to grow, our transit system must also
23 grow, but the fact is not all boroughs are treated
24 equally when it comes to transit service.
25 Prioritizing expansion of bus service and making

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2 existing service more reliable is the only way to
3 ensure that all five boroughs thrive equally going
4 forward. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.
6 Thank you all. Our last panel Jeff Rollo,
7 Atlantic Express; Manny Mauliclic [phonetic],
8 Atlantic Express; Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, Southern
9 Brooklyn Democrats; John Rozankowski, Grand
10 Concourse resident.

11 [Off mic]

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Miss,
13 would you want to go first? Introduce--

14 JENNIFER THORPE-MOSCON: Sure.

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes.

16 JENNIFER THORPE-MOSCON: My name is
17 Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon and I'm the Chair of
18 Southern Brooklyn Democrats.

19 Thank you for this important
20 meeting. Getting around in the outer boroughs can
21 be a challenge, and we appreciate your help in
22 this matter. We, as residents of and advocates
23 for southern Brooklyn, would like to ask you to
24 help restore several lines of bus service in our
25 communities that have been cut. Each of these

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2 cuts has been to the severe detriment of our
3 communities, particularly our elderly and disabled
4 populations. The cuts that occurred in 2010
5 showed a clear disregard for the neighborhoods and
6 people of southern Brooklyn, and we ask you to
7 help stop the treatment of our residents as though
8 we were second-class citizens of this city.

9 One line we would like to see
10 restored is the B64 bus line. The B64 used to run
11 to Coney Island but now terminates on Harway
12 Avenue and 25th Avenue. That bus line serves many
13 people in our community, and cuts to that line
14 have resulted in many, including and especially
15 the elderly and people with disabilities, having
16 enormous difficulty getting around and commuting.
17 Indeed, many have found their commute times
18 increase dramatically.

19 The elimination of a portion of the
20 B64's route is not simply an inconvenience, it
21 harms our most vulnerable, those with
22 disabilities, and in so doing defies the Americans
23 with Disabilities Act. It was difficult enough
24 for people with disabilities to get around before
25 these cuts, the subways are largely not accessible

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2 to them, and Access-A-Ride must be planned in
3 advance and does not allow for flexible travel.
4 Now people with disabilities find their options
5 even more limited.

6 This is all the more true since the
7 B82 has had its service cut as well. Only one in
8 maybe three buses runs the full route to and from
9 Coney Island, further harming southern Brooklyn
10 residents who live and work in the areas on the
11 full route in Gravesend and Coney Island. The B82
12 is a critical link between southern Brooklyn and
13 more central and northern areas, such as
14 Flatlands, Flatbush, and Canarsie. It is a link I
15 personally utilize all the time, and there are
16 many more like me. Its service must be fully
17 restored and protected.

18 Another line we need restored is
19 the B4 bus line. The B4 bus is the only bus that
20 fully connects the diverse neighborhoods of Bay
21 Ridge, Bensonhurst, Gravesend, and Sheepshead Bay.
22 It is a bus that many people use daily to get to
23 and from work or to visit the busy commercial
24 district in Sheepshead Bay. When the changes to
25 this line were made in 2010, initially there was

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2 promise. The streamlining of the route reduced
3 the commute time, and that was a benefit.

4 However, that benefit was sharply offset by the
5 fact that the bus only runs the full route during
6 a very short period of time during rush hour. Not
7 everyone works a standard 9 to 5 schedule, and
8 even those who do have travel needs outside of
9 those hours--whether to stores, the Sheepshead Bay
10 movie theater, a doctor's appointment, or some
11 other destination. This is not only a problem
12 during non-rush hours on weekdays, the entire
13 neighborhood of Sheepshead Bay is cut off from
14 using this bus to get to or from any destination
15 at all during the weekend, and this neighborhood
16 is one that has only one subway stop in the entire
17 area. The B4 cuts have left those people, who
18 otherwise might have needed only one bus to get to
19 or from their homes, taking two or three buses or
20 even having to take expensive car service.

21 A third line we would like to see
22 restored is the B2 bus line. Service on this line
23 has been completely eliminated on weekends and
24 overnight. The community of Marine Park relies on
25 this line, as other nearby buses are not local or

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2 proximal enough to be of use to most residents,
3 especially the elderly. Cuts to this line have
4 forced some riders, for whom the B2 was once the
5 only necessary bus, to use multiple buses
6 including ones that are as far as three long
7 avenue blocks away. Rather than reducing service
8 on this line, the MTA should extend it past
9 Midwood deeper into southern Brooklyn where the
10 service would be welcome and frequently used.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Can you wrap
12 up? I think the rest of your testimony is--are
13 areas you've gone into before. Is that all right
14 with you?

15 JENNIFER THORPE-MOSCON: All right,
16 all right.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I would like to
18 ask you quickly, of--

19 JENNIFER THORPE-MOSCON: Sure.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --the three
21 restorations you want, which is your priority?
22 You want the MTA to restore all three cuts, but--

23 JENNIFER THORPE-MOSCON: Right.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --their answer
25 to you may be that financially that's not

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feasible, so what would be a priority with you?

JENNIFER THORPE-MOSCON: Well the B64 actually, the bus already runs the full route, it just doesn't pick up customers. So to pick up customers while it's already running that route would be a trivial matter for them, it wouldn't cost them anything additional.

So if they're going to spend funds on something, I would say the B4.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: The B4.

JENNIFER THORPE-MOSCON: I'd just like to quickly add then that these cuts occurred at the exact same time as cuts to Access-A-Ride occurred, I don't think anybody's mentioned the issue of Access-A-Ride. Access-A-Ride has instituted feeder service, where now people with disabilities that aren't judged to be quite severe enough are, rather than being taken from one place to another, are being taken from their homes to a bus stop. So at the same time as they cut bus service, they're forcing the elderly and people with disabilities to take buses more often. So it's certainly a conflict of interest that needs to be resolved.

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So I thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

Sir?

JOHN ROZANKOWSKI: Good afternoon,
I'm John Rozankowski, Bronx resident.

The most important outer borough mass transit needs are, first, need for improved intra-borough mobility. And, Councilman, you're familiar with this one. In my native Bronx, the problem is going from east to west. In every MTA public hearing, people have complained about the fact it takes over an hour to get from Grand Concourse to Throgs Neck. What has the MTA done about the Tremont Avenue corridor? Nothing. It's off their radar screen.

In Queens, the problem is north-south because the Great Green Barrier, which is Forest Park and the cemeteries, split the borough in half, forcing residents to go through Manhattan to move around their own borough. One example, it takes students from the Rockaways two hours to get to Queens College. I mean, that's unacceptable.

Assemblyman Phillip Goldfeder has helped launch a citizens' initiative to reactivate

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2 the north Rockaway line, which would dramatically
3 improve intra-Queens mobility. Since the line is
4 on New York City property, the New York City
5 Council can be very helpful to get this project
6 off the ground. Now Councilman Eric Ulrich
7 mentioned Select Bus Service, this thing would
8 probably take the place of three Select Bus
9 Services, it's so effective.

10 The other point I'll mention today
11 is something that nobody brought up: Subway
12 service. Outer boroughs need faster subway
13 service because outer borough subways run through
14 many stations before entering Manhattan, creating
15 a very exhausting commute. This could easily be
16 remedied by all-day express service in the
17 direction of heavy travel. Of the two three-track
18 lines, only the number 6 and 7 have this. Even
19 though MTA Board members Charles Moerdler and
20 Fernando Ferrer, who are from the Bronx, have
21 complained about this problem, the MTA has done
22 nothing.

23 Since more and more people check
24 schedules instead of blindly going to stations,
25 and with countdown clocks, new subway services

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2 could be created to provide one-seat rides to
3 popular destinations. What has the MTA done to
4 take full advantage of these clocks and reduce
5 burdensome transfers? Absolutely nothing. And
6 I'll add, this is not a budget buster, in many
7 cases, it's a question of simply rescheduling
8 trains.

9 In the future, the City Council
10 should do two things: First--and this is very
11 important--hold public hearings on this subject in
12 the outer boroughs during the evenings, just as
13 you did with the blizzard of 2010 hearings. More
14 people would have an opportunity to describe the
15 punishments which this agency of public misery,
16 the MTA, inflicts upon them.

17 Number two, throwing more money at
18 the MTA is not the answer. The answer in the long
19 run is New York City should run its own subways
20 and buses, finally giving the people who use them
21 and pay for them power over mass transit policy.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

24 Sir, introduce yourself.

25 JEFF ROLLO: Okay. My name is Jeff

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2 Rollo, I'm Vice President of Operations for
3 Atlantic Express Transportation Group. Good
4 afternoon. Hello? Now? Hello, hello? There we
5 go, thanks.

6 Good afternoon, Chairman Vacca and
7 Members of the Committee on Transportation. My
8 name is Jeff Rollo and I'm the Vice President of
9 Operations for Atlantic Express Transportation
10 Group. Atlantic Express is a proud Staten Island
11 transportation company servicing the City of New
12 York for over 40 years. For your background, in
13 2001, when the MTA canceled express bus lines on
14 the South Shore, Atlantic Express got right on
15 board--excuse me--got right on board when asked by
16 the Mayor's Office and the New York City Economic
17 Development Corporation to provide a subsidized,
18 direct commuter express bus service to severely
19 underserved South Shore residents. For the past
20 ten years, we have not missed a day of service and
21 have gone above and beyond by adding buses at our
22 own expense to ease overcrowding, even when the
23 subsidies have expired. Atlantic Express is very
24 proud to be a part of the transit solution on
25 Staten Island and a public/private partner with

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2 City Hall to provide cost effective, reliable, and
3 quality transportation options for the working
4 people of the borough.

5 From day one, the Atlantic Express
6 X23 and X24 have been very popular and in great
7 demand, and we consistently experience strong
8 ridership. As the Center for an Urban Future's
9 Behind The Curb report states, there is no
10 question the number of commuters in the outer
11 boroughs is growing. Since the start of 2012, we
12 have seen a surge in X23 and X24 ridership that
13 has led to some major overcrowding and congestion
14 problems during peak periods. Our passengers
15 continue to ask us to add more buses to our South
16 Shore routes, but we are limited to our
17 contractual runs based on our contract with the
18 EDC.

19 Council Members, we have a good
20 problem in Staten Island: More people are going
21 to back to work. While this is good news, it also
22 creates an increased demand for public
23 transportation, especially in the underserved
24 areas, such as South Shore. We are eager and
25 willing to expand the X23 and X24 service to

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2 accommodate the new surges in ridership and
3 alleviate the overcrowding, but we need City
4 Hall's support. At this time, we propose adding
5 two additional buses on each route to help reduce
6 congestion and get more people on board. We
7 believe the additional buses will allow several
8 hundred more riders to get to work and back home
9 on time. We would appreciate the City Council's
10 support to make this low-cost, reliable solution a
11 reality. We would welcome the opportunity to
12 share with you individually a quantitative--excuse
13 me--and comprehensive review of our service costs.

14 Atlantic Express is very proud of
15 our service and contributions to its great
16 borough, and the hard-working unionized bus
17 drivers that transport Staten Islanders safely and
18 efficiently to their jobs every day. Atlantic
19 Express is committed to the people of Staten
20 Island and New York City and want to continue
21 providing low-cost, quality, reliable express bus
22 service to the commuters. The proud working men
23 and women of Staten Island need transit relief,
24 and they need it now.

25 I want to thank you, Chairman Vacca

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2 and Members of the Transportation Committee, for
3 your leadership on this important matter of relief
4 and hope for commuters in the outer boroughs.

5 Thanks again.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

7 When does your contract with EDC run out?

8 MALE VOICE: Two thousand fourteen.

9 JEFF ROLLO: Two thousand fourteen.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Have you spoken
11 to Councilman Ignizio? Isn't he the district
12 council--

13 JEFF ROLLO: [Interposing] We have,
14 we have. And the recommendation was to come here
15 and just--

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
17 Oh, okay, and I--

18 JEFF ROLLO: --take baby steps and
19 try to--

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
21 Let me speak to him and see how I can be helpful.

22 JEFF ROLLO: Fantastic.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

24 JEFF ROLLO: Thank you, Chairman.

25 Thank you all.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

Sir, did you want to speak also, sir?

MANNY MAULICLIC: I just want to quantify--

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing] introduce yourself.

MANNY MAULICLIC: I am Manny Mauliclic, also for Atlantic Express.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yeah.

MANNY MAULICLIC: I just want to quantify the surge of the ridership that we've been experience in the last two years. In 2010, we posted 627,000 ridership compared to 645,600 in 2011, which is an increase of about 19,000 ridership. So far, in 2012, in the last five months, we've already experienced 8,650 increase in ridership, which, when annualized, would mean about 39,000 riderships for the year 2012.

So that's really a big surge in our ridership so far.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: It's good to know. I feel good about that.

MANNY MAULICLIC: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: It's a good

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2 problem to have, but we have to provide service.

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MANNY MAULICLIC: Absolutely.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you all--

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JEFF ROLLO: Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --final panel.

7

8 And there being no further speakers and no further
9 questions, it is now 1:25 p.m. and this hearing is
10 now adjourned. I thank you all.

10

[Gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature *Tammy Wittman*

Date July 16, 2012