

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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December 9, 2010
Start: 10:17 am
Recess: 3:35 pm

HELD AT: Committee Room
250 Broadway, 16th Floor

B E F O R E:
JAMES VACCA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Gale A. Brewer
Daniel R. Garodnick
David G. Greenfield
G. Oliver Koppell
Jessica S. Lappin
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Deborah L. Rose
James G. Van Bramer
Peter A. Koo
Eric A. Ulrich

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Letitia James
Lewis A. Fidler
Brad Lander
Stephen Levin

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

Janette Sadik-Khan
Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation

David Woloch
Deputy Commissioner of External Affairs
NYC Department of Transportation

Ryan Russo
Assistant Commissioner for Traffic Management
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Norman Steisel
Neighbors for Better Bike Lanes

Lois Carswell
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Carol Linn
Prospect Park West resident

Marty Markowitz
Brooklyn Borough President

Noah Budnick
Deputy Director
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Christine Berthet
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Eric McClure
Co-Founder
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Scott Stringer
Manhattan Borough President

Nancy Gruskin
President
Stuart C. Gruskin Family Foundation

Clark Vaccaro

Jack Brown
Spokesman
Coalition Against Rogue Riding

Elizabeth Brody
East Coast Greenway Alliance

Barry Benepe

Ken Coughlin
Member
Community Board 7

Benjamin Shepard

Dr. Linda Linday

Karl Roeslev

Mel Wymore
Chair
Community Board 7

Joanna Oltman Smith

Robert Moore

Henry Rinehart

Scott Cavanaugh
Business Development Director
Bike and Roll New York City

Stephen Vaccaro
Chair
Transportation Alternatives East Side Committee

Douglas Gordon
City resident
Father

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

Bob Casara
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Bay Ridge, Brooklyn

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Brooklyn Greenway Initiative

Gene Aronowitz
45th Street
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Steve Faust
Professional Transportation Planner, Retired
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Robert Madsen
City resident, cyclist
Brooklyn, Community Board Nine

Linda Prine
Doctor
Lower Manhattan

Marcus Wolen
City resident, cyclist
Jackson Heights

Mary Beth Kelly
City resident
Upper West Side, Manhattan

Deta Awl
City resident, cyclist
West Harlem

Heidi Untener
City resident
Upper East Side, Manhattan

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

Tila Duhaime
Co-Chair
Upper West Side Streets Renaissance Campaign

Shirley Secunda
Chair, Traffic and Transportation Committee
Community Board Two, Manhattan

Ian Dutton
Chair, Bicycle Strategy Subcommittee
Community Board Two, Manhattan

Sharon Phillips
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Jeffrey Lennet
Cyclist
New Jersey

Nick Rosack
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Jim Forat
City resident, cyclist

Rhonda Rose
City resident, cyclist
Upper East Side, Manhattan

Kevin Stevens
Pediatrician
Mt. Sinai

Richard Stevens
City resident
Cycle safety advocate

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2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: First would
3 like to welcome everyone here to this meeting of
4 the Committee on Transportation of the New York
5 City Council.

6 I want to state publicly and very,
7 very definitively that this meeting will be held
8 and there will be order at all times. My
9 commitment is to make sure that that happens. All
10 speakers are to be treated courteously. I do want
11 you to know that applause is not something we will
12 tolerate, because that often disrupts testimony.
13 We want you to be attentive and polite at all
14 times. I do need your cooperation. If you would
15 shut cell phones off, that is also requested so
16 that the hearing is not disrupted.

17 I want to call the meeting to
18 order. My name is James Vacca and I am
19 Chairperson of the Committee on Transportation for
20 the New York City Council. I want to welcome all
21 of you here today.

22 Today, we are conducting an
23 oversight hearing on the impacts of increased
24 bicycling and the growing network of bike lanes on
25 New York City streets. We are accessing the

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2 implementation of Local Law 90 of 2009, which
3 required community notification and input whenever
4 DOT undertakes major transportation projects.

5 We are here today to talk about
6 bicycles. And believe it or not, few issues today
7 prompt more heated discussion than bike policy in
8 New York City. New York City is in the midst of a
9 plan to create 1,800 miles of bike lanes by 2030,
10 or 50 additional miles of bike lanes every year
11 for the next 20 years. Such a major reengineering
12 of our streets is bound to cause controversy, so
13 what we'd like to do is to learn more about the
14 city's plans to accommodate bicycles and how that
15 will impact New Yorkers across the five boroughs.

16 Today, first, I have to state,
17 nobody disagrees that having more bicycles and
18 using more bicycles is a good thing. Bicycles do
19 not pollute the air, they're good for your health
20 and they're the preferred method of transportation
21 for thousands of New Yorkers every day.

22 But in a city where traffic is
23 often horrendous and finding a parking spot can be
24 an unbelievable challenge, expanding the bike
25 network is often all about tradeoffs. More bike

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2 lanes can mean fewer parking spaces or fewer
3 travel lanes, or it could mean more congestion and
4 more aggravation for people who use their cars.

5 As much as anyone in the city might like to think
6 that people don't need to use their cars, I have
7 to tell you I, myself, come from a community where
8 you can't get from your house to the doctor or to
9 the supermarket or to a church without using a
10 car.

11 Too many people are starting to get
12 the feeling that New York's bike policy could be
13 about getting people to give up their cars and
14 abandon their cars. Biking is a good
15 transportation alternative, but I do not believe
16 that making it impossible to drive should be a
17 policy our city pursues.

18 The question is not should we
19 accommodate bicycles, the question is now do we
20 accommodate bicycles without making it more
21 difficult for everyone else to get from point A to
22 point B. How do we avoid a bike backlash? These
23 are all judgment calls. Is it beneficial to
24 reduce one lane of traffic on Prospect Park West,
25 for example, to create a dedicate bike lane? If

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2 so, where does that traffic go? How do cars pull
3 over to pick up passengers? How do truck make
4 deliveries without clogging traffic for blocks on
5 end?

6 Does it make sense to building bike
7 lanes in places where very few people use bikes in
8 the hope that the bike lanes will encourage people
9 to take up cycling? If so, how are communities
10 consulted? Whose block is chosen? How do we
11 measure whether the strategy is working? What is
12 the process and is it consistent?

13 These are the questions that I've
14 been hearing from residents throughout the city.
15 At today's hearing, I hope to get a sense on how
16 DOT makes these determinations. Our public
17 streets are precious real estate and this topic is
18 very important to many New Yorkers.

19 I know we have many, many people
20 scheduled to speak today, so I'll save any
21 additional comments. I thank you all for coming
22 and I ask for your patience as we go through the
23 hearing. We will be here for some time and be
24 prepared, as I am prepared and I know my
25 colleagues are.

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2 I'd like to introduce my colleagues
3 that are here with me today. To my extreme left
4 we have Lew Fidler from Brooklyn, we have David
5 Greenfield from Brooklyn, Peter Koo from Queens,
6 Lyle Frank is the counsel to this committee, I'm
7 James Vacca, chair of the committee, Dan Garodnick
8 from Manhattan, Jessica Lappin from Manhattan,
9 Letitia James from Brooklyn, and Oliver Koppell
10 from the Bronx. Nivardo Lopez is here; he is the
11 staff analyst for this committee.

12 We will start of with the
13 Department of Transportation. I first want to
14 note for the record that I thank Commissioner
15 Sadik-Khan personally for coming here. She
16 rearranged a foot surgery that was scheduled. She
17 is here today. She had the foot surgery. She
18 rearranged it for last night. I should clarify.
19 She's here today. That speaks to what I note to
20 be the importance she attaches to this issue. I
21 want to thank her for going out of her way to be
22 here.

23 So I'd like to introduce
24 Commissioner Sadik-Khan, and if you can, introduce
25 your staff. Again, I thank you.

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Thank you.

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Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the

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committee. I am Janette Sadik-Khan, Commissioner

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of the New York City Department of Transportation.

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With me today are David Woloch, the Deputy

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Commissioner for External Affairs and Ryan Russo,

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the Assistant Commissioner for Traffic Management.

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Thank you for inviting us here today to discuss

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cycling in New York City.

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Bicycling has increased in New York

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in recent years, with DOT's bicycle commuter

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counts showing a 109 percent increase from 2006 to

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2010. That is by design. As you know, one of the

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key policies in Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC

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initiative is to prioritize more efficient and

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sustainable travel on city streets, and PlaNYC's

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transportation strategy--

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [interposing]

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Excuse me, Commissioner. I'm sorry to interrupt.

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Do you have a copy of the testimony? I don't have

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a copy of your testimony. Was it given to you? A

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copy of the Commissioner's testimony. Here it is;

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I'd like to give it out to the members so we can

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follow it. Thank you, Commissioner. I'm sorry.

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2 Please proceed.

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: As you know, one of the key priorities of Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC initiative is to prioritize more efficient and sustainable travel on city streets. PlaNYC's transportation strategy specifically calls for making cycling a viable option for all New Yorkers. This isn't about banning cars, this is about balance and making our streets work for all users of our transport network.

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As you also know, PlaNYC is not a conceptual plan or set of broad principles. It is a highly detailed action plan with clear goals and benchmarks. An important part of DOT's mission is implementing the measures that PlaNYC calls for.

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I would like to state at the outset that our success in making cycling attractive to more New Yorkers is in no small part due to the collaboration with the City Council, specifically in the Council's strong endorsement of PlaNYC in 2007, our work with members on individual street projects and certainly the Council's passage in 2009 of landmark indoor bicycle parking legislation that has led to the establishment of

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2 access plans creating over 3,100 new bike parking
3 spaces in New York City office buildings. Thank
4 you for your support and for your work.

5 New York is naturally suited to
6 bicycling. Over half, 54 percent, of all trips
7 made in the city are less than 2 miles. Huge
8 numbers of people live, work and play within a
9 small area. Our topography is also mostly flat,
10 and over time the City has had the wisdom to
11 develop excellent cycling facilities on each of
12 the four East River Bridges, eliminating the East
13 River as a barrier.

14 Our density is one reason delivery
15 businesses make such extensive use of bikes. But
16 making cycling more accessible and viable for most
17 people requires some changes to the design of our
18 streets. Only a few people are willing to ride a
19 bike up a major avenue in mixed vehicle traffic.

20 Our bike lane network, which gives
21 people on bicycles a greater sense of safety
22 through separation from moving traffic, is clearly
23 having a major effect in attracting more New
24 Yorkers to cycling. The addition of 200 miles of
25 new bike lanes between 2006 and 2009 coincided

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2 with four straight years of double-digit
3 percentage increases in our commuter cycling
4 counts.

5 Within the expanded network, the
6 more robust facilities have proven the most
7 attractive to cyclists. Our protected bike lanes,
8 that situate the bicycle lane between the sidewalk
9 and a row of parked cars, have all seen dramatic
10 results in terms of increased numbers of cyclists.

11 On 9th Avenue, our first protected
12 bike lane, daily cycling volumes grew 69 percent
13 from 2007 to 2010. On Kent Avenue in Brooklyn,
14 cycling volumes almost doubled from 2008 to 2010.
15 On Grand Street in Soho, cycling volumes increased
16 56 percent from 2008 to 2010. On Broadway,
17 cycling increased 50 percent in one year. And on
18 Prospect Park West, cycling has tripled in just
19 one year.

20 The protected bicycle lanes
21 represent a more substantial change in street
22 design than conventional painted bike lanes. I
23 want to point out that every single one that
24 exists in New York City was supported by the
25 appropriate community board or boards. In the

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2 cases of Columbus Avenue and Prospect Park West,
3 community boards requested these facilities from
4 DOT.

5 DOT outreach and consultation on
6 these and other types of bike lanes does not end
7 with the community board. Our project teams and
8 borough commissioners post project plans online,
9 they survey buildings and establishments along
10 street corridors, meet with individuals and local
11 groups both before and after projects have been
12 implemented, and remain committed to problem-
13 solving for and with the people of the City on a
14 nearly 24/7 basis.

15 Will everyone be happy with every
16 change? Of course not.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Excuse me. I'm
18 sorry, Commissioner. We must have decorum at all
19 times. We can't have the talking. Please
20 proceed, Commissioner.

21 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Will everyone
22 be happy with every change? Of course not. As
23 long as we enjoy freedom of expression, we will
24 have people complaining, and that's as it should
25 be. But even in cases with well-covered

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2 opposition, there is widespread, if quieter,
3 support for these projects, as the opinion survey
4 of the Prospect Park West case from Council
5 Members Lander and Levin has shown.

6 One of the most significant effects
7 of the bike lane network has been an overall
8 reduction in collisions between bicycles and motor
9 vehicles, even as cycling volumes have risen. One
10 of the spurs to the rapid development of the
11 network was a 2006 DOT/Health Department and NYPD
12 study that found that only one of 225 bicyclist
13 fatalities between 1996 and 2005 took place in a
14 marked bicycle lane.

15 The safety benefits of bicycle
16 lanes have been magnified with the expansion of
17 the network. Adjusting for the much greater
18 amount of cycling on streets today, the incidence
19 of cyclists killed or severely injured in New York
20 was 4.1 times greater in 2001 than in 2009, and
21 2.3 times greater as recently as 2006 versus 2009.

22 The presence of bike lanes and
23 cyclists on a city street also appears to have a
24 traffic calming effect that produces other safety
25 benefits. The installation of bike lanes usually

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2 involves a narrowing of the motor vehicle portion
3 of the roadway and indicates to drivers that they
4 need to watch out for other road users.

5 DOT's recent Pedestrian Safety
6 Study and Action Plan found that collisions
7 between pedestrians and vehicles on streets with
8 bike lanes were about 40 percent less deadly than
9 crashes on streets without them. On Vanderbilt
10 Avenue in Brooklyn, for instance, 76 percent of
11 vehicles were traveling over the 30 mile an hour
12 speed limit before the installation of bicycle
13 lanes. After the project's completion, only 27
14 percent of vehicles were speeding.

15 Protected bike lanes have also had
16 measurable safety benefits for pedestrians and
17 drivers as well as for cyclists, because they tend
18 to reduce speeding and also reduce pedestrian
19 exposure to vehicle traffic. On 9th Avenue in
20 Manhattan, annual fatalities and severe injuries
21 to pedestrians are down 61 percent, accompanied by
22 a 70 percent drop for motorists, since we
23 implemented the bike lane in late 2007. We're
24 seeing similar trends in other corridors .

25 The other long-term safety benefit

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2 of allowing more people to confidently navigate
3 the city by bike is also helping check the
4 increasing health problems such as the epidemics
5 of obesity and type 2 diabetes. Obesity rates
6 have more than doubled in the past 20 years. The
7 City Health Department has clearly determined that
8 cycling has strong potential to lower the chances
9 of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension,
10 depression, arthritis and osteoporosis and that
11 walking and cycling for transportation in New York
12 City are associated with better physical and
13 mental health.

14 In spite of the data that we have
15 reported, and the fact that in 2009 we saw the
16 lowest overall traffic fatality rate in the City's
17 history, there is clearly a concern among the New
18 York pedestrians about the increase in cycling and
19 behavior such as cyclists running through red
20 lights or riding against the direction of traffic.

21 DOT has pledged to address these
22 problems and to help shift the culture of city
23 cyclists to one that is more respectful and
24 respectful of the rules of the road. We have
25 already begun what will be a nonstop bicycle

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2 safety and cyclist behavior campaign based around
3 these cardinal rules: yield to pedestrians, ride
4 in the direction of traffic, stop at red lights
5 and stop signs and stay off the sidewalk unless
6 you're under 13.

7 We will be urging cyclists
8 themselves to call out negative behavior and start
9 making bad riding socially unacceptable. Our
10 first major media campaign will launch in early
11 spring. It will feature a good cast of
12 celebrities that will bluntly tell cyclists to
13 stop riding like jerks.

14 Other features of our effort will
15 include bike ambassadors who will let people know
16 how the new design bike lanes work and continually
17 inform people of cyclist rules of the road.

18 In 2012, we hope to launch a Paris-
19 style public bicycle system that will further
20 increase the accessibility of cycling to New
21 Yorkers and the city's millions of visitors. We
22 expect that it will not only provide a great
23 additional option for short trips in the city, it
24 should also further improve safety by increasing
25 the visibility of cyclists on our streets and

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2 providing us with another major platform for
3 communicating the basic rules of the road for bike
4 riders.

5 Finally, we have recently secured a
6 safety grant from the New York State Department of
7 Motor Vehicles that the NYPD will devote to
8 greater enforcement of traffic rules governing
9 cyclists, and we have developed some new thoughts
10 about strengthening laws regulating commercial
11 cyclists that we look forward to working through
12 with you and your legislative staff.

13 I want to close by emphasizing that
14 while there are inevitable growing pains as
15 cycling moves from the margins to the mainstream,
16 its growth in New York is already delivering
17 substantial safety, mobility and health benefits.
18 The city's bicycle program, with your assistance
19 and support, is a huge success and represents a
20 major step towards a greater, greener New York.

21 Thank you for inviting DOT to
22 testify today. I'd be happy to answer any
23 questions you might have.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
25 Commissioner Sadik-Khan. We appreciate your being

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2 here. I do want to introduce members who have
3 arrived: Council Member Brad Lander to my left,
4 Council Member Gale Brewer to my extreme left,
5 Council Member Debi Rose, right behind me.

6 Welcome.

7 Let me start off with some
8 questions, Commissioner, about bike policy. My
9 first question revolves around criteria. What is
10 the criteria the DOT uses in deciding where to put
11 a bike lane? How do you decide where a bike lane
12 goes? If you could just go through the internal
13 process for me, the engineering, the planning?
14 But how do you site bike lanes? What is the
15 criteria, what is the basis, what is the internal
16 process?

17 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We're in the
18 midst of building out the city's bike lane
19 network. The focus that the City Department of
20 Transportation has right now is to create an
21 interconnected system of bike lanes. So we're
22 really basically filling in the gaps in the
23 existing bike lane network. We also respond to
24 community requests for bike lanes and bike
25 facilities. We do traffic analysis before and

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2 after on what those bike lanes changes in designs
3 would be.

4 The network connectivity, the
5 demand, both existing and potential are all parts
6 of what it is that we look at when we make
7 decisions about bike lane projects.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: When you do the
9 assessment, when you do the engineering and
10 planning, do you coordinate with other city
11 agencies? I'm thinking, do you coordinate with
12 the Small Business Administration to see about how
13 it will impact business? Do you coordinate with
14 the City Planning Commission to review
15 demographics in the area? What other city
16 agencies do you work with, if any?

17 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We work very
18 closely with NYPD and the Fire Department most
19 particularly to ensure that there are no public
20 safety issues associated with the projects that
21 are proposed. In addition, we do extensive
22 outreach before we do a proposal to ensure that we
23 are addressing the loading and unloading and the
24 curbside needs of local residents and businesses.

25 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: There's no

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2 entity you work with though that assesses the
3 impact on business, on the business community?

4 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: As part of our
5 outreach, we basically work with SBS through the
6 BIDs, the business improvement districts as we do
7 the outreach.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: What is the
9 cost of implementing new bike lanes? Not just to
10 paint the lines, but to study, design, hear
11 community input, make modifications and put the
12 lanes on the streets? What is the cost of a
13 typical bike lane, soup to nuts? Is this capital
14 or expense money? I would assume it's expense
15 budget money.

16 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: No, it's
17 capital money.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: This is capital
19 money.

20 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: The good news
21 is, Mr. Chairman, is that this is one of the most
22 cost effective investments that you can make.
23 Eighty-percent of the cost of the bike lanes in
24 New York City is paid for by federal funding.
25 Only 20 percent is local. So it's a great bang

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2 for the buck in terms of what it is that we do
3 when we implement bike lanes in New York City.

4 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You're talking
5 I think, though, the capital budget must fund the
6 actual construction. But when I mentioned the
7 expense budget, I was talking about people on
8 staff at DOT who do the community input
9 consultation work, who modify the plans. These
10 are bodies. So that's what I meant when I asked
11 you about the expense budget. What is the fiscal
12 implication? Do you have a bike division? Or is
13 there a section in your office that employs x
14 amount of people that are working on the bike
15 network you referred to before?

16 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: It's
17 incorporated as part of the overall work that we
18 do when we do the bike lane work. So that's part
19 of what it is that we do with the federal grant.
20 That's part of what we do when we do the local
21 match. So it's part of the overall cost of the
22 program. I mean, when you think about it, I think
23 we spent \$8 million on putting the bike lanes in
24 to date. So when you look at 20 percent of that,
25 I think we've had a pretty good return on

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2 investment for that money. So it's under \$2
3 million for all of the work that we've done to
4 date.

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: The signage,
6 there's an expense regarding signage and painting?

7 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: It's all in.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: It's all in.
9 The people working on this, you're saying it's 80
10 percent federal and 20 percent city. So
11 therefore, even the people employed in your agency
12 who are working on the planning and the community
13 outreach, 80 percent of their salaries are borne
14 by the federal government?

15 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Now, I
17 wanted to talk if there are locations where bike
18 lanes have been installed where you feel there has
19 been more traffic congestion caused than existed
20 before. We've had complaints from PPW, Prospect
21 Park West. We've had complaints, Columbus Avenue,
22 1st and 2nd Avenue. Are there areas where bike
23 paths have been installed that you notice
24 increased traffic congestion? If so, has that
25 congestion been appropriately addressed or

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2 mitigated?

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: No, actually, we haven't found that. I mean it's a case by case project analysis, obviously. But when you take a look at the statistics for, say, Prospect Park West, the travel times are virtually the same, slightly down, and volumes have been maintained. So despite the fact that we have a tremendous increase, a tripling, in the number of weekday cyclists, we've got the same number of vehicles being processed and they're moving forward just fine.

Vanderbilt Avenue, the same volumes before and after. Broadway, the volumes were maintained and the travel times actually improved. On 1st and 2nd Avenue, we designed that particular project to accommodate the traffic demands on that corridor. We're very sensitive about what the impact is of all of our street designs, not just bike lanes. That includes bus lanes, that includes the truck loading, off-hour delivery hour projects that we're working on. That's incorporated in every project we do.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: What study do

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2 you make, basically? How do you arrive at these
3 conclusions? Is there a study you make? Is there
4 an evaluation tool you use? How can you say that
5 there's not been an increase in congestion?

6 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We do before
7 and after.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Your agency
9 counts cars, counts speed of cars?

10 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Tracks speed of
12 cars?

13 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I visited PPW
15 and I noticed that at certain parts of the block,
16 traffic slowed and in certain parts of the block
17 it continued to go quickly. What was the
18 situation there before? I know PPW now has two
19 lanes. I noticed that at certain spots it slowed
20 and at certain spots it started to go quickly
21 again. What was that situation before? Do you
22 have concerns about either the congestion aspect
23 or the speeding aspect?

24 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Well, the good
25 news is that since we've implemented the project,

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2 speeding, which was a major concern of this
3 community, has gone dramatically down. It used to
4 be that 75 percent of the cars that were traveling
5 the corridor exceeded the 30 mile an hour speed
6 limit. Now we're down to 17 percent. It used to
7 be that we had a tremendous number of folks that
8 were riding on the sidewalk which created a huge
9 safety problem for pedestrians. That's now down
10 to something like three percent. That three
11 percent also includes kids who are on the
12 sidewalks. So we think that it's been a homerun.

13 The other piece that we used to see
14 is that people would speed as they tried to beat
15 the light. So that issue has been mitigated by
16 the new program that we put into place there.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: When you talk
18 about issues such as this, Commissioner, and you
19 talk about reductions in speeding and issues
20 relating to congestion, are you following a
21 national standard? Is there a national standard
22 that your agency looks at relative to whether or
23 not a bike lane is needed, where it should be
24 placed, is it successful? Is there something of a
25 national standard that you're looking at?

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2 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: The federal
3 government's policy is that localities are in the
4 best position to make decisions about their
5 transportation investments. So New York City is
6 not like Ames, Iowa; it's not like Lincoln,
7 Nebraska. It's a big city and we have a different
8 balancing act that we have to do here. We
9 continue to follow MUTCD regulations. We follow
10 AASHTO standards in all of the work that we do,
11 which is a requirement for the receipt of federal
12 funds. So we adhere to the federal standards and
13 we tailor our projects to meet the needs of the
14 local community.

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: So you're
16 saying that there are not national standards that
17 you follow. You use your judgment and that New
18 York City is unique.

19 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: No, I'm saying
20 we follow the standards but the standards allow
21 for flexibility.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Allow for
23 flexibility.

24 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Right.

25 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: So you often

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2 have flexibility and discretion because national
3 standards do not address bike-related issues or
4 bike-related policy?

5 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: No, every city
6 has the same flexibility. We're no more or no
7 less than any other city that looks to tailor
8 their transportation investments to meet local
9 circumstances and local characteristics.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I agree. I
11 think that you're agreeing with me and I'm
12 agreeing with you. I think we're both saying that
13 national standards allow you a certain level of
14 discretion.

15 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Yes, we're in
16 violent agreement.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Good. Now,
18 emergency vehicles, how do we make sure that
19 emergency vehicles have access? Again, when I saw
20 PPW, there were two lanes. If an ambulance or a
21 fire truck came, one lane would be precluded. So
22 therefore, there would be only one lane. So what
23 accommodations do we make for emergency vehicles?

24 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Well, we work
25 with the fire department and FDNY to make sure

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that our projects address the emergency access needs that those agencies have. We've done that in the past and we will continue to do that in the future.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: That's a little vague. Have you noticed issues arising relative to access for emergency vehicles when lanes have been precluded due to installation of bike paths?

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We have never created a project that precluded emergency access for emergency vehicles.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I didn't say you did. But have you noticed that there's been serious access issues that resulted from some of the narrowing and some of the lane preclusions?

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: No, we have not seen that. Prospect Park West is moving just as it has before. When we do find situations where it looks like there is an issue, we work with the community to address those concerns. In some cases it may be daylighting the corridor. In some cases it may be moving a particular loading zone. All of those issues we take into account and work with the community to address them.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You've recently
3 removed two bike lanes. One in Staten Island on
4 Father Capodanno Boulevard and one on Bedford
5 Avenue in Brooklyn. What criteria was used to
6 remove those lanes? Do you have data on vehicle
7 speed issues, pedestrian safety issues? Why were
8 those lanes removed?

9 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: In both of
10 those instances, what we're trying to do is build
11 out as safe a bike network as possible, make it as
12 safe as possible for folks that are riding their
13 bikes and to do so as protected and convenient as
14 possible. Both of those facilities had parallel
15 facilities right there. Father Capodanno
16 Boulevard, there was a bike lane something like
17 100 yards away that was much more robust and
18 provided a lot more protection.

19 When we were re-striping Father
20 Capodanno, we had the ability to not only enhance
21 the bike lane that we did nearby, but we also
22 provided better access for buses, which is a very
23 important part of our transportation network.
24 We're doing everything we can to make it faster
25 for buses to get through the congestion on the

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2 streets of New York. It's a really important low-
3 cost mobility option. We don't have a lot of
4 capital money to continue to build out our heavy
5 rail system. We have to look for ways to use a
6 sort of surface subway system like the select bus
7 service program that we have in place. So it's
8 not just about bikes, it's not just about cars,
9 it's all about the users of the network.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Bedford Avenue,
11 why was that removed?

12 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Because we had
13 a more robust facility right nearby, just like we
14 did for Father Capodanno Boulevard.

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: But they were
16 installed in the first place. That's my question.
17 They were installed. How long were they there
18 before they were removed? I think it was a
19 relatively short period of time. What happened
20 with these things?

21 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I think that
22 Bedford was 1978 or something like that.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Right. And you
24 removed it.

25 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Yes. When we

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2 were able to enhance the adjacent bike lane and
3 make it safer. We obviously want to encourage
4 cyclists to use the safest possible route as they
5 are traversing the streets of New York.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: How long was
7 Staten Island there?

8 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Since the 70s.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Since the 70s.

10 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We can get
11 back to you on the specific dates.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. My last
13 question is this, when we look at bicycling and
14 encouraging bicycling, because as you said, it
15 does have health benefits that are beyond
16 question. My statement to you is, do you have
17 statistics on how many people who use bicycles
18 would normally use cars?

19 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: No.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: No. Because my
21 question is are people who use bicycles, would
22 they be using mass transit? Is bicycling getting
23 people out of their cars or is bicycling reducing
24 people who would normally use mass transit? How
25 can we assess the impact bicycling has had on the

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reduction of car usage in the city?

JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Well, what we know is that every person that's riding a bike is not driving a car. So to the extent that we've seen a 63 percent increase in cyclists over the last two years, that number of cyclists is that many less cars. So what we're really trying to do is to create balance.

Our subway system is at capacity. You take a look at the 5 million people that we've got on the subway system. Anybody that takes, certainly, any of the subway service on the east side knows how congested and crowded that can be. It can take two or three cars going by before you are able to get on. So we're looking to provide as much mobility as possible and give New Yorkers options.

Not everybody is going to want to get on a bike. Not everybody is going to want to get on a bus. Not everybody is going to want to drive. So we want to provide as many options for New Yorkers to get around safely and conveniently. Half of the trips in New York City are under two miles, so we think that cycling has a strong role

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2 to play in the transportation network, particular
3 for those short trips.

4 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I don't doubt
5 that bicycling is something we should encourage.
6 I support that. I think it is a transportation
7 alternative. But let me state this: I think that
8 many of us feel, or at least I feel, that I would
9 like to know how bicycling has reduced car use in
10 the city. That was my question. Has bicycling
11 reduced those who would normally use MTA
12 facilities as opposed to driving? We don't seem
13 to have statistics on that.

14 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: No, but what
15 we can say is that when you provide convenient
16 options, when you design attractive, safe and
17 convenient facilities, people will use them.
18 We've built these bike lanes and people are
19 coming. They're sort of voting with their pedals.
20 It's a particularly important strategy when you
21 look at the over capacity that we've got on our
22 transit network. Really, a cycling network is a
23 great companion to a strong transit system. So we
24 look at them as all complementary.

25 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You said you've

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2 seen a 63 percent increase in bicycling. How many
3 bicyclists do you estimate use the city streets
4 every day? On an average day.

5 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I can get back
6 to you on that.

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Are we talking
8 200,000? Are there 200,000 who use a bike
9 everyday?

10 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I will get
11 back to you on the number.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You don't have
13 any approximation?

14 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I don't have
15 the number. I will get back to you on the number.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: No, no, I
17 appreciate that you will get back to me, but I
18 would think that DOT would have an approximate
19 number since we're laying out all these networks.

20 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I don't have
21 the number on me, but I will get back to you on
22 that.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I know. You
24 said that before. I am saying that I would think
25 that question would be one you could answer now.

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But you do not have the answer, but I understand. I will now go on to our Council people who have questions.

JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We also don't have the number of how many cars are on the streets every day.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Maybe we should. Maybe we should have those numbers too. My statement basically is that if we are evaluating policy and setting policy, I would think that those numbers are perfunctory numbers that we should have at our fingertips at all times as a New York City DOT. Let's go, first speaker, Council Member Koo.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: My question is you said 80 percent of the bike lanes are support by the federal budget and 20 percent from the city. But if the bike lanes are not used, it doesn't matter how much percentage is supported by the federal. Just like Macy's on sale, 80 percent on sale, but the clothes you want to buy, you don't use, you just put in the closet. There's no use. There are bike lanes in a lot of areas in the city and I hardly see any people using the

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2 bike lanes. They just tie up the lanes and
3 meanwhile, the motorists, they have no place to
4 park and they have a hard time to drive because
5 they don't want to get into the bike lane. The
6 businesspeople have no place to load and unload.

7 You also said you have consulted
8 with the local business people, the BID and the
9 community board, but in my experience, when I
10 asked them, they said that you never consulted
11 them when you put bike lanes in our neighborhoods,
12 in Queens and Flushing.

13 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Well, we
14 definitely consulted with the community boards and
15 we definitely consult with communities. We can
16 get back with you on the detailed outreach that
17 we've done. I would love to get back to you on
18 that.

19 As to the number of cyclists that
20 we've seen, we're seeing a dramatic increase on
21 cyclists on city streets. Cycling is up 255
22 percent since 2001. You can take a look at any of
23 the bridges and you see cycling. On the Manhattan
24 Bridge alone, it has had a 90 percent increase.
25 We're seeing a dramatic increase. But what we're

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2 really trying to do, as we're building out this
3 network, we're only going to see cyclists continue
4 to grow like that if we build protected and
5 connected routes that actually get people to where
6 they need to go. That's really what we're
7 focusing on right now.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: In my
9 experience, we have to find statistics on how many
10 people actually use the bike lanes.

11 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I've got the
12 numbers here. We've got cyclists, if you want to
13 take a look at the afternoon peak periods,
14 cyclists make up 12 percent of the traffic on
15 Prospect Park West, 22 percent of the traffic on
16 Hoyt, 26 percent of the traffic on Bleecker
17 Street, 32 percent of the traffic on East 10th
18 Street, 37 percent of the traffic on Prince
19 Street.

20 We're working very hard to build an
21 interconnected network of routes that work.
22 Obviously, we think that by building a safe and
23 attractive network that's what's going to
24 encourage people to be out there.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: If not too

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2 many people use it, why have a bike lane there and
3 meanwhile the motorists have no place and the
4 business people have no place to delivery stuff.

5 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: But we are
6 seeing the cyclists using the bike lanes.
7 Obviously it's going to go down when we hit the
8 dead of winter, but basically we're seeing
9 cyclists go up dramatically on all of the
10 corridors where we've put in the new bike lanes.
11 I'd be happy to sit down with you and your staff
12 and review all of the impacts that we've seen and
13 all of the increases that we've seen with the bike
14 lane investments.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: New York City
16 is a big city. There are some parts of the
17 boroughs that we don't need bike lanes. The
18 downtown area is already too congested. In
19 suburban areas, I see it's good to have bike plans
20 for kids to ride around after school. But very
21 few people use a bicycle to go to work. When I
22 see it, it's mostly delivery people.

23 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Actually,
24 that's not accurate in terms of the information
25 that we have which shows that we've seen a huge

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2 increase in cycling since we put down the new bike
3 lanes. Again, you're right, bike lanes aren't
4 right for every single neighborhood. What we're
5 trying to do is create and fill in the gaps to
6 create a comprehensive bike network that gets you
7 from point A to point B safely and where you need
8 to go. So we're trying to create a comprehensive
9 system. It's not for everywhere, but we're trying
10 to create a network that meets the demand on the
11 streets of New York.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Commissioner,
13 on the premise that bicycling is good for the
14 health, nobody can argue against it, but I think
15 we should encourage more people to walk. It's
16 much simpler. You don't need to create lanes for
17 them, just increase the pedestrian sidewalk a
18 little bit.

19 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: But that takes
20 lanes away from motorists too.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So encourage
22 more people to do walking.

23 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I could not
24 agree with you more. We have got to have a
25 balanced approach to our transportation network.

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2 We've got about 33 percent of New Yorkers driving.
3 We've got about 30 percent of people using transit
4 to get around. We've got about 30 percent of New
5 Yorkers walking. So we have to have a balanced
6 investment strategy that accounts for how
7 everybody wants to get around. Some people love
8 to walk. Some people like to take the subway or
9 the bus. Some people like to drive. We have to
10 account for all of that when we make our
11 transportation investment.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: My last
13 question is my request to you is when you do bike
14 lanes in a lot of neighborhoods in Queens, please
15 consult the local community boards, the local
16 business associations. I mean, if you pull
17 everybody there--

18 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: [interposing]
19 We do that and we will continue to do that. I
20 look forward to our conversation on just exactly
21 how detailed our outreach has been.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you very
23 much, Commissioner.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
25 Council Member Koo. I'd like to mention we've

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2 been joined by Council Member Eric Ulrich.
3 Commissioner, I wanted to elaborate on Council
4 Member Koo's statement just very briefly.
5 Yesterday, I went out and bought this New York
6 City cycling map.

7 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: It's free.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, it's free.
9 They send them free. When I saw this, there are
10 bike paths here that I did not know existed or
11 that I did not know were planned. I looked at my
12 own district, City Island Avenue, which only is an
13 island of 4,500 people with 37 restaurants,
14 traffic in the summer is unbelievable. Traffic in
15 the summer is backed up constantly. There is one
16 lane on and one lane off and a fire lane in the
17 middle to guarantee emergency vehicle access.

18 Why didn't we know? Is this going
19 in or is this part of a five year plan? What is
20 this?

21 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: That's from
22 the bike master plan. That's not a project that's
23 planned for right now. What we do, as I keep
24 stating, is we do consultation with the
25 communities about where these bike lanes should go

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2 and address the concerns. Obviously, I'm hearing
3 quite strongly that that's perhaps not the best
4 location for a bike lane in your district. But
5 what we do is, again, what we're trying to do is
6 create a comprehensive network, an interconnected
7 network of bike lanes that gets people where they
8 need to go. Some of the old projects were
9 disconnected. I wasn't here for that. It was not
10 concentrated in the areas where we need to
11 literally fill in the gaps to make it a smart
12 system, an easy system, an attractive and
13 convenient system for people to get around.

14 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: What is that
15 master plan? Is that a five-year plan, a ten-year
16 plan? This is somewhere, so where is this? If I
17 see it here, what does it mean?

18 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: It's a 2030
19 plan.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: 2030 plan.

21 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: But it's now on
23 bike maps. So it could happen in 2 years or it
24 could happen in 20 years.

25 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Yes.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: When will we
3 know whether it's 2 years or 20 years? Is there a
4 timetable for any of this that you could tell us?

5 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: What we do is
6 we work with specific communities to identify
7 places of need in the network. Many of the
8 projects, if not most of the projects that it is
9 that we implement, are requested by community
10 boards who are concerned about speeding, safety
11 and the like and want better access to be able to
12 get around by bike. Most of our bike lane
13 projects are anchored by very significant
14 pedestrian improvements that make it easier for
15 people, old, young, disabled, whatever to be able
16 to cross the streets safely.

17 We've got a city of 8.4 million New
18 Yorkers and it's my job to make sure that our
19 streets are as safe as they can possibly be. So
20 our investment strategy right now is focused on
21 creating a comprehensive network, filling out the
22 gaps that we've got in the network. That's
23 basically where it is that we're focusing right
24 now.

25 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: So many of the

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things on this map are dormant at this time.

JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Much like City Planning has got plans that go out 2030, that doesn't mean that those housing developments or those rezonings are going to be happening tomorrow. But again, it's taking a longer term look at the city to plan smartly for an eventual development or program. The city is constantly changing. We need to make sure that we are cognizant of that and take a longer term view.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: This is part of the 2030 plan.

JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: It may happen later or sooner. You commit, of course, to community consultation.

JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: It's part of Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC initiative that the City Council passed in 2007.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I know we passed a plan, I was looking at specifics though. Let me go on, Council Member Fidler.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Commissioner. I want

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2 to start by saying I very much endorse the idea of
3 the fact that there are multiple ways that people
4 get around in the city and that no one of them can
5 be sustained in the absence of the others. While
6 I'm a little skeptical that you can tell us the
7 percentages of increase in bike ridership without
8 telling us how many people make up those raw
9 numbers, I'm not so concerned with that because I
10 give some credence and faith to the "Field of
11 Dreams" notion of build it and they will use it.
12 You certainly can't expect them to use it if you
13 don't have it.

14 My concern is really more one of
15 location. Until the Chairman's question just now,
16 I hadn't heard you use the term master plan, which
17 is the term that is constantly used when bike
18 lanes are being discussed in my neighborhoods. My
19 neighborhoods are not neighborhoods where bikes
20 are going to be used to commute to work in
21 downtown. As far away as I could possibly be from
22 Lower Manhattan, downtown Brooklyn. Biking in my
23 community is a recreational activity: Canarsie,
24 Sheepshead Bay, Marine Park.

25 When was this master plan derived?

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2 Who had input into it? Did we vote on it?

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4 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: It was
5 developed in the 90s. I believe it started under
6 Mayor Dinkins and was implemented by Mayor
7 Giuliani and continues to be implemented by Mayor
8 Bloomberg.

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9 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: So that
10 tells me when but it doesn't tell me who. Who had
11 input into it and did we ever vote on it?

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12 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Each community
13 board had input into the development of the master
14 plan.

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15 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: In what
16 way?

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17 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: The plans for
18 the neighborhood were presented to the community
19 boards and they all had input in terms of where
20 they thought the lanes should go.

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21 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: It was
22 devised back in the Dinkins era, is that what
23 you're telling me?

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24 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I think City
25 Planning was involved in that as well. I wasn't
there.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Well,
3 apparently neither was I.

4 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: But to your
5 concern about what's happening in Sheepshead Bay
6 and your neighborhood in that from your
7 perspective this is not, perhaps, the
8 transportation investment that you would choose,
9 in fact we have not implemented bike lanes in your
10 community district based on community input. So
11 the decision was made that we were not going to
12 pursue them.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: That's news
14 to me. So we're not doing the bike lanes on East
15 94th and East 95th?

16 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Pardon?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: So we're
18 not doing the bike lanes in Canarsie?

19 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Well I think
20 we're in discussion with the community board. I'm
21 saying that there has not been one that has been
22 implemented there. We continue to have
23 discussions with the community board. I think it
24 really reflects the fact that we continually
25 solicit input and we work with communities and

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2 community boards. Virtually every single project
3 that we've implemented has changed thanks to the
4 input and the good guidance that we get at the
5 local level.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I think
7 that's kind of half true. I don't say that to be
8 snooty, I say it because I think maybe you're not
9 aware. You sent a couple of brave folks to
10 Community Board 18 to discuss the Canarsie bike
11 lanes. The feedback that you got, if anything,
12 was why East 94th and East 95th, this is a
13 community that's surrounded by parks and waterways
14 in a beautiful u-shape. People do their
15 recreation around the waterways. Maybe you should
16 think about that.

17 The answer we got was well, heck,
18 that doesn't connect Eastern Parkway to Shore
19 Parkway. I don't know anyone who's looking to
20 connect Eastern Parkway to Shore Parkway. The
21 response to that was well that's the master plan.

22 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I believe the
23 idea was to improve the access to the parks
24 themselves. But as it kind of highlights the
25 success of the input process and what our outreach

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2 strategy is. We take that input and then we don't
3 move forward.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Well,
5 again, Commissioner, we're in the middle of that
6 process. You just indicated a decision hasn't
7 been made. So we don't know yet--

8 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: [interposing]
9 I'm indicating that we continue to work with the
10 community board.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: If I could
12 just finish. So we don't yet know. We were
13 informed of the bike lane implementation in
14 Canarsie. It was only at the request of both the
15 community board and the Council Members and the
16 Assembly Member that you all came. So we don't
17 really know yet.

18 My other experience on Garretson
19 Avenue, where you were responding to our requests
20 for traffic calming measures. Then we were
21 informed first, well, you know, the master plan
22 calls for a bike lane here, therefore there is
23 going to be a bike lane in whatever we do.

24 The response to that unanimously
25 from the community was not here, this is the wrong

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2 street, but two blocks over we have Marine Park
3 and that's where our bikers would like to go.
4 That's where the bicyclists want to be. That's
5 where the community would like to see them because
6 that's where my constituents want to bicycle. Why
7 don't you put it over there?

8 We got half of it. You didn't put
9 it in on Garretson, which would have endangered
10 people's lives. Good. But then you didn't put
11 them in by the park where they were requested. So
12 you kind of listen a little bit.

13 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Which is the
14 street? I'm sorry.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Stewart.

16 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Stewart.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: It goes in
18 and out a little bit because the park is not a
19 perfect square.

20 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I will take
21 this as a request for a bike lane over there.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: That's
23 fine.

24 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We'll take a
25 look at that.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Could you
3 take the request as well that you not put them in
4 on East 94th and East 95th in Canarsie for the
5 sake of connectivity and look at the area
6 surrounding the water where my community would
7 probably like to do its biking and see whether
8 that's feasible? East 108th, Seaview and
9 Paerdegat Avenue?

10 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I'll certainly
11 take a look at it.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I would
13 appreciate that.

14 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I'm happy for
15 that input.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I don't
17 understand the connectivity part. Why that's the
18 holy grail, I don't get it. I think we should
19 have bike lanes where people want to bike. That's
20 my belief.

21 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: But you have
22 to build a network that's functional. So you have
23 to actually--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER:
25 [interposing] Why?

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2 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Because you're
3 trying to get people to be able to use them to get
4 to where they need to go. So if a bike lane is
5 out there and it doesn't connect, then it just
6 dumps you into the middle of a dangerous
7 situation. Obviously we're trying to make it as
8 safe as possible for people that need to get
9 around. We do take community input, as you heard
10 on Garretson Avenue. That was not an area that
11 the community wanted to have it in, so we didn't
12 put it in.

13 But what we do each and every time
14 is notify the community board about what we intend
15 to do and then ask whether they want to have a
16 presentation, what they want to hear. We
17 constantly outreach to try to get the input.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: So I
19 suppose you would be in support of the
20 legislation that I've introduced that would
21 require you to have a hearing with the community
22 board 90 days before you implement the bike lane.

23 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I haven't seen
24 the legislation but I'm happy to take a look at
25 it.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: That's all
3 it says. How about the concept, not the
4 legislation?

5 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I will take a
6 look at it and we will get back to you on that. I
7 don't know if 90 days is enough time given how
8 community boards work.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Fair
10 enough. I mean, you want to make it longer, I was
11 trying to be generous to the agency. My concern
12 is this, we're working off a master plan that
13 almost nobody, not the bicyclists, not the
14 residents, not the current community boards, not
15 the current elected officials have ever seen or
16 had any input in. It is true.

17 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: They have
18 input.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: If this was
20 done in the Dinkins administration, the people who
21 are in government now had no input whatsoever.
22 The community boards had no input in it
23 whatsoever. I don't remember hearing about it and
24 I was a pretty active civil leader in the 90s. I
25 don't remember it. I know that it's the policy of

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2 DOT that if you ask for a traffic light someplace,
3 you say that it takes a year and a half for
4 traffic patterns to change, so you can't ask for
5 it again for a year and a half, Commissioner.
6 That means that you acknowledge kind of inherently
7 that traffic patterns change.

8 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Yes, and the
9 master plan in--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER:
11 [interposing] A master plan that was developed in
12 the 90s, even if we had input into it, has been so
13 made irrelevant by the change in demographics, the
14 change in communities, the change in street plans
15 that you've got to go back to communities and ask
16 them again.

17 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: That's what we
18 do.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Before you
20 spend the money.

21 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: That's what we
22 do.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Before you
24 do this.

25 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: That's what we

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2 do. Council Member--

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COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER:

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[interposing] So I'm asking that it be

5

institutionalized. That you have to do it.

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Can you give

7

me an example where we have not done that?

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COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: If we

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hadn't asked you to come to Canarsie, would you

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have scheduled it?

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Yes.

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COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: You would

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have?

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We always

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notify and we always go out there and we always

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solicit input. The bike master plan is a planning

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tool, it's a guide. It's not set in stone. The

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reason why we do such extensive outreach is to get

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the input of local communities to deal with

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changes on the streets, to deal with changed

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usage. That's exactly one of the main reasons why

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we go out there. So we're constantly looking for

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that feedback.

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COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Well then,

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Commissioner, I'm expecting that you'll be in full

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2 support of at least the concept of the
3 legislation. That you will, in fact, consult with
4 communities before implementing bike lanes. I
5 think that would go a long way. I've got to tell
6 you, this is not a war. This is not like you've
7 got to be for the cars or you've got to be for the
8 bikes or you've got to be for the buses. It's
9 really not.

10 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Exactly.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: The cowmen
12 and the farmers can be friends. But you need to
13 find out where people want it. You need to know
14 where people want it. And I'm not even saying the
15 majority, because quite frankly if the majority in
16 my community don't want bike lanes, I don't think
17 that's the end of the question. Because as long
18 as there are people in my community who want them,
19 they're entitled to them too. But they should get
20 them where they want them, not where you think
21 they belong based on some discussion that happened
22 before you and I were in government.

23 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I think we're
24 in violent agreement on that.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Great.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

See, my thank you was calm. Everybody else was...
Let's go on, Council Member James.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:

Commissioner, how's your foot?

JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: It hurts.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: It hurts.

So I'll be gentle. First, let me thank you for coming. As you know, I have attended a number of funerals, memorials for cyclists who have died in my district and in Council Member Lander's district. In fact, at last count, I have attended about seven. I also want to thank you. You supported my position in saving the ghost bikes all throughout the city of New York. I took that on and thought it was necessary to memorialize those who have lost their lives on our streets. I just want to thank you for that.

I also want to thank you, notwithstanding the objections of my colleagues, for you coming out to Community Board 2 and working with me to strike a compromise on Flushing Avenue, on Empire Boulevard, on Sand Street, on Dekalb Avenue, and the list goes on and on.

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But what strikes me and again, notwithstanding the objections of my colleagues, I'm hoping that you expand the network. This map of Brooklyn indicates that most of the bike lanes are in downtown Brooklyn and that central Brooklyn and south Brooklyn is nowhere land. My constituents would love to have access to the parkways and the shoreways in the great Borough of Brooklyn. I would hope and urge that we would construct more bike lanes in Brooklyn.

Notwithstanding the objections of my colleagues and my very shy borough president, Marty Markowitz.

JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I look forward to working with you and the local community boards and residents and businesses on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
Particularly, since I represent part of central Brooklyn, Community Board 3, where as you know, people of African ancestry are suffering from a number of ailments: obesity, heart disease, diabetes. I can think of no better way than to address the culture that exists, the sedentary culture that exists not only in central Brooklyn

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but throughout the city and this nation of
providing bike lanes and transportation
alternatives.

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So I guess the question that I have
to you: is there any evidence that bike lanes
cause traffic congestion?

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We have not
seen it in the assessment that we've done on the
bike lane improvements that we've made. So what
we've seen is that we're able to accommodate the
additional volumes of cyclists while maintaining
the same level of traffic and throughput on the
streets of New York.

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COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: My other
question is there appears to be a number of
protected bike lanes, and I recognize that there
are two types of bike lanes. There's a number of
protected bike lanes, class 1 bike lanes, in
Manhattan: 2nd Avenue, 8th Avenue, 9th Avenue,
Columbus Avenue. We have some in Brooklyn: Kent
Avenue and Prospect Park West. My question is why
is there not more protected bike lanes in
Brooklyn?

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Well, we look

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2 forward to continuing that conversation. What
3 we've been trying to do initially, again, is to
4 try to get that connectivity done in some of the
5 densest parts of the city where we really have a
6 big problem of cyclists dealing with mixed traffic
7 in highly congested corridors. But I agree with
8 you that protected bike lanes are the way that we
9 need to go in the sense that it gives cyclists
10 that sense of safety and we're also able to
11 provide pedestrians with really important
12 pedestrian safety enhancements like refuge
13 islands.

14 I really do look at the health of
15 our bike lanes as akin to how a scientist looks at
16 the health of a stream. When you see fish in the
17 stream, it's a healthy stream. When you see kids
18 and families in bike lanes, it's a healthy bike
19 lane. You see that in the protected bike lanes.
20 So we're looking to do more of that going forward.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Does your
22 agency work particularly with the Department of
23 Aging? I do know, for instance, on the Sand
24 Street block bike lane, it's a type 2 bike lane
25 and oftentimes when a car is double parked and/or

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2 when there's an Access-A-Ride, one has to go into
3 the bike lane.

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We do work
5 with them and we've been upping our game on that
6 because it's very important. For example, on the
7 west side of Manhattan, we have started doing
8 outreach to every single senior center and doing a
9 lot of outreach and education there. We will
10 continue to do that and we will do more of that.

11

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.
12 I have to mention that dreaded project in
13 Brooklyn. The one that you know I dislike
14 vehemently, violently, I'll use your term. What
15 are we going to do to provide more bike lanes to
16 Atlantic Avenue in Flatbush, in and around the
17 arena?

18

JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We customize
19 our bike lanes to deal with the issues, particular
20 roadway geometry needs of an area. I look forward
21 to working with you to make sure that we make that
22 project work.

23

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

24

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Can I have a
25 second round, Mr. Chair?

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Second round,
3 yes.

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COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: We'll try.

6

Commissioner, are some bike lanes temporary? Are
7 any bike lanes temporary?

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: No, we do not
9 do temporary bike lanes.

10

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: How do you

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measure congestion? How do you measure whether

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there is congestion after a bike lane is

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installed? What is congestion to you? What is

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it?

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RYAN RUSSO: When we design a

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project, we look at the traffic volumes and the

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number of lanes and the amount of traffic

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capacity. Traffic capacity is a function of the

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number of traffic lanes and the amount of green

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signal time.

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So each project is designed to

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accommodate the traffic demand, which is sometimes

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to the dismay of people who would like to see us

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be more aggressive and have more of a deleterious

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impact on traffic. It's designed to accommodate

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2 the demand that's out there. So we do traffic
3 counts and we look at our signal timing and we
4 make sure the number of lanes left and the amount
5 of green time that your given that is maintained
6 is enough to move the traffic that's out there.

7 As the commissioner noted earlier,
8 we count after the project to make sure that after
9 we've done the design, the motorists haven't sort
10 of fled that street and moved to another street to
11 sort of use a different cut through route and hurt
12 other streets. We don't want to hurt another
13 street at the expense of this particular street
14 that we're doing the project.

15 We'll use other tools such as
16 travel time runs to see how long it takes to
17 travel a corridor and other types of analysis to
18 make sure that traffic is operating well both
19 before and after the project.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: In some of the
21 major bike lane installation projects you've
22 undertaken, have you noticed that congestion has
23 switched from one location to another? If so,
24 what have you done to mitigate where the traffic
25 has now moved to and congested another area?

1
2 RYAN RUSSO: There's been only
3 small cases of some small shift. The only shift
4 we've had is appropriate shift, for example, 9th
5 Avenue. 9th Avenue is going through the Chelsea
6 and the Hell's Kitchen community and it was being
7 used as a cut through instead of the Westside
8 Highway by regional traffic instead of local
9 traffic. 9th Avenue was designed to accommodate
10 the appropriate amount of traffic, about 1,200
11 vehicles to 1,500 vehicles an hour. That's what
12 we have operating now. So, some of the folks who
13 were cutting through a neighborhood have moved
14 over to the highway. But basically, every project
15 is designed to accommodate the traffic that's on
16 that street. So it's not leaving.

17 Prospect Park West, we did counts
18 before and counts after. Basically,
19 statistically, the amount of traffic using that
20 street before and after is identical. The people
21 who were using the street before in a motor
22 vehicle are there now.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: One last
24 example. Some bike lanes don't preclude parking.
25 I have a bike lane in my district, it does not

1
2 preclude parking. So I don't see anyone using it.
3 But maybe 5 or 10 years from now they will use it.
4 So I'm not against that bike lane. I think it's
5 fine. People should use it. But the community
6 did not have parking precluded but it did slow
7 down traffic. How do you determine if you
8 construct a bike lane and the bike lane is not
9 used, but it is having a negative traffic impact,
10 what do you do in that case where that happens?
11 Do you remove that bike lane because of lack of
12 usage? Or do you leave it there even though you
13 think that most times it's not being used and
14 there are issues like I'm raising that exist?

15 RYAN RUSSO: What you're
16 hypothesizing is that we put the bike lane in and
17 that it slowed traffic to an unacceptable level.
18 That hasn't happened in our projects.

19 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: That is one
20 thing I'm presuming. But the other thing I'm
21 presuming that you may have put a bike lane in
22 that precluded cars from parking along a street.
23 If you did that and the bike lane is not being
24 used after it's there several months, what do you
25 do in that case?

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RYAN RUSSO: Actually, in terms of the projects we've done in the last four years, about 118 of them, a very small proportion sort of you're right that you have to get the space from somewhere, either excess or a traffic lane or a parking lane. Sometimes it's there and not a traffic lane. A very small percentage involve the removal of a parking lane to create the bike lane. It's very small examples. In those cases, we have the appropriate amount of bicycle traffic. So if you have an example where you think parking was removed and there's not enough cycling happening, we can look at that and maybe give you the numbers that say otherwise.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Let me mention that Council Member Levin has joined us and Council Member Rodriguez. Council Member Garodnick is next.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Commissioner, thank you for your efforts to protect bicyclists and pedestrians and slow traffic. Certainly nothing, if not bold, and we appreciate that and certainly appreciate your being here today immediately after your

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2 surgery. We know you're in pain as you sit there.

3 [Laughter]

4

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: So what
5 I wanted to note was that New Yorkers don't fear
6 change. We have to try new ideas, we have to
7 consider how they work, create some criteria for
8 measuring them and figure out whether they are
9 successful and how to make the final decisions.

10

My question for you is really one
11 about how we should be measuring the success of
12 bike lanes in New York City. Because it sounds
13 like ridership of cyclists is certainly a prime
14 criteria for DOT. If they're being used, that is
15 certainly one measure of success. Are there other
16 measures of success that DOT considers when trying
17 to evaluate whether a bike lane is successful in a
18 community?

19

JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Certainly the
20 safety impact is a primary goal. If we're
21 reducing injuries to all users: cyclists,
22 pedestrians, motorists. That's a really important
23 criteria that we use in evaluating the performance
24 of a bike lane.

25

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: How

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2 about the perception of pedestrians? I will raise
3 this for you here. People I think who are walking
4 in areas which are new to have bike lanes, I have
5 found are concerned about bicyclists riding
6 quickly by where they don't expect them.

7 Presumably that will change over time as people
8 get more accustomed to bike lanes. But is that a
9 measure as well, if there are continued pedestrian
10 concerns about interacting with a bike lane in a
11 particular configuration?

12 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I think that
13 really points to a really important issue which is
14 that we really need to do as much as we can on the
15 education front. So the design and function of
16 our streets is changing. So we need to make sure
17 that we've got the education component up there to
18 get that information across. You know, you need
19 to look both ways when you cross the street, no
20 matter what direction the traffic is coming from.
21 I think people know that, but I think we need to
22 really get that message out.

23 Much like we have the messages
24 about speeding. A lot of people didn't even know
25 that there was a speed limit in New York City, we

1
2 found from our polling. So we have a big public
3 campaign on it's 30 for a reason. Because if
4 you're hit by a car going 40 miles an hour,
5 there's an 80 percent chance you will die. If
6 you're hit by a car at 30 miles an hour, there's a
7 70 percent chance you'll live. So we need to do
8 as much as we can to let people know that we're
9 doing this for a reason. So speeding is a concern
10 and we are doing as much as we can to improve
11 safety on the streets. It's having an impact.
12 That's why we have the lowest fatalities that
13 we've had in 100 years. But that doesn't mean
14 that we can stop and rest on that.

15 We have to do much, much more on
16 the public education and outreach campaign. We
17 will have a series of initiatives launching this
18 spring to make sure that we do that. I look to
19 everybody in this room to help us get that message
20 across to make sure that our streets are as safe
21 as they can be. We need to look out for one
22 another on the streets of New York.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Well, we
24 will certainly do that. I think the stakes are
25 high, particularly now as we see changes in the

1
2 streetscape. I can tell you somebody who
3 represents a very high density district and a very
4 small geographic area, the complaints that we get
5 about bicyclists who are doing improper things are
6 high.

7 In fact, even before bike lanes,
8 that probably was one of the bigger complaints
9 that we see as a quality of life matter.
10 Bicyclists on sidewalks or going the wrong way on
11 a one-way street. And of course, complaints from
12 bicyclists who had no safe place to be on a
13 street.

14 In fact, as somebody who
15 periodically rides a bicycle in Manhattan, in New
16 York City myself, I will say it feels extremely
17 dangerous to bike along 1st or 2nd Avenue in the
18 absence of a bike lane. So it's really important
19 that we try to address all of the interests
20 because we're living in such a close space with
21 one another.

22 The question that I have for you is
23 on education, how can we best share this
24 information with people? You mentioned bike
25 ambassadors which I'd like to hear a little more

1
2 about, and the don't be a jerk campaign. Is there
3 a way for us to very quickly get these messages
4 across? What I fear is particularly in a moment
5 where there is rapid change, that is the moment
6 that all New Yorkers, whether it's pedestrians or
7 bicyclists or cars are the most vulnerable.

8 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We've
9 distributed I think 25,000 of our bike safety
10 rules. We're getting them out as much as we can.
11 We do a lot of presentations on that at the
12 community board level. I think it's going to take
13 an effective advertising campaign also to really
14 have a broad based message that gets out there.
15 But I think all of us can work together to not
16 only get the word out and pass out the materials
17 that we've got and make the case. I and my team
18 stand ready to go out there with you at each and
19 forum each and every day to get the word out.
20 There is nothing more important than getting out
21 the message about safe usage on the streets,
22 whether you're driving, biking or walking.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Have you
24 partnered with the TLC to try to consider adding a
25 message on dooring? We want Council Member Brewer

1
2 to hear that message every time she gets into a
3 cab that she should be very careful when she opens
4 the door. There is a built in opportunity for the
5 DOT to share a message. Is that something that
6 you've considered?

7 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I'm not
8 looking to do a feature film as part of the Taxi
9 TV programming. But we are looking to put,
10 working with TLC Chair Yassky, to put decals to
11 remind people when they get out that they need to
12 be careful about how they get out of the cab.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: The last
14 point that I will make and then I will yield it
15 back is on enforcement. We hope that DOT, as it
16 educates and as it broadens bike lanes in the
17 master plan, would encourage NYPD to do proper
18 enforcement of the rules. I think that most
19 bicyclists understand what the rules and play by
20 the rules. But there are bad actors out there, as
21 there are in every area. We need to make sure
22 that education is accompanied by the appropriate
23 level of enforcement to make sure that people
24 understand that the city is serious and that as we
25 expand these bike lanes, that we're going to make

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sure they're used properly.

JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Commissioner Kelly has been a terrific partner on this. PD handed out 29,575 summonses last year which was a 7.2 percent increase over the year before. So we continue to work with him to do what we can to provide additional enforcement on the streets of New York.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you very much, Commissioner.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. I do want to mention Council Member Levin has joined us. I did mention it, right? Council Member Greenfield is next.

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you for your leadership of the DOT and you're overall out-of-the-box initiatives. I think we actually do appreciate that in government. But as you know, with great power comes great responsibilities. I think that's really what today's hearing is about.

I'm sure you're familiar with the concept of the butterfly effect, right? Small

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2 changes can have large impacts. Obviously, when
3 we have large changes they can have massive
4 impact. I just want to refer you specifically to
5 one issue that really concerns me. This morning,
6 *The New York Times* Cityroom blog wrote a quick
7 article on bicycle lanes on Columbus Avenue. The
8 thrust of their article, which of course is
9 debatable, was that it's being underutilized and
10 whether that's a good thing or a bad thing and
11 whether it will be more utilized.

12 What I really picked up from the
13 article and this actually concerns me is several
14 of the local store owners were complaining that
15 their business revenue has gone down as a result
16 of the bike lanes and that they were having
17 significant problems with deliveries. In fact,
18 one fellow actually said that Entenmann's hasn't
19 come to his store in three weeks. As a big fan
20 myself, I think that's an outrage that they
21 haven't been able to deliver Entenmann's cake to a
22 store in three weeks.

23 So my very serious question, is
24 there any study that is done on the local economic
25 impact before you install a bike lane?

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2 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We just
3 finished the Columbus Avenue bike lane and it's
4 cold out there. So it's not a surprise that
5 you're not seeing fleets of cyclists going down
6 the lane.

7 We do go door to door on these
8 projects. Actually, Council Member Brewer was
9 instrumental in making sure that we hit the right
10 businesses and we did it effectively and
11 continuously, in addition to the residents. We
12 made sure that we were able to address the loading
13 and unloading zone issues.

14 Of course, we're in a downturn and
15 business is difficult, but we continue to make
16 adjustments to make sure that the needs of
17 businesses are served in each and every project
18 that we put in. So if you have a specific
19 reference to a specific store, I'd be happy to
20 take that--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD:

22 [interposing] I'm not referring to a specific
23 store. I'm not even referring to the specific
24 Columbus Avenue. I just mention it because it was
25 in the *Times* this morning. My specific question:

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2 is there a specific economic impact study that is
3 done? The reason I ask that is because it seems
4 to me, as the story would indicate, and I'm sure
5 across the city as well, and Council Member Koo is
6 nodding along with me as I'm speaking, that in
7 some cases and I'm not saying in all cases, but in
8 some cases bike lanes could have a negative impact
9 on the economic activity of small businesses.

10 I think, as you mentioned,
11 especially in a rough economy, I think that has to
12 be taken into account before we build that lane.
13 So is that part of an automatic process that's
14 triggered where there is an actual study, or is it
15 more informal? If it is informal, might you
16 possibly move towards the study model?

17 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: You can't do
18 an economic impact study before the project is
19 done. What we have done is when we've implemented
20 a project, the one we have is Broadway where we
21 were able to show what the economic impact was of
22 that project. I think you've seen a 71 percent
23 increase in retail rents. There's a whole series
24 of positive economic impacts that come from that.

25 As the Mayor pointed out in his

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2 speech yesterday, the city is doing much, much
3 better than other parts of the country. I think
4 it's thanks to the investment strategies, policies
5 and programs that the Mayor is pursuing. I think
6 it is an interesting idea to take a look at the
7 study on the economic benefit of bike lanes or the
8 economic impact of bike lanes. That's something
9 that actually we had some notional conversations
10 with some consulting partners about. I look
11 forward to getting back to you on that.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Just to
13 reiterate, I think you can do an economic impact
14 study before projects are done. I mean business,
15 corporations, developers, they do that all the
16 time to figure out once we build it what the
17 impact will be. I would encourage you to possibly
18 consider doing this formally for every
19 neighborhood before you put a bike lane,
20 especially in light of the economic situation.

21 My next question for you has to do
22 with reckless drivers, or as you like to call them
23 "the jerks". I think it's nice that we're going
24 to have a campaign telling people not to be a
25 jerk. Unfortunately, I can assure you, having

1
2 been born, raised and living in New York my entire
3 life, there will always be jerks. My specific
4 question is would you support legislation that
5 would increase penalties and fines on reckless? I
6 want to be clear, most cycles are wonderful.

7 I can tell you that as the newly
8 elected chair of the Senior Center Subcommittee,
9 I've visited a lot of senior centers in the last
10 couple of weeks. One of the biggest complaints I
11 get from seniors is that in many cases, and this
12 is going to sound crazy, but they're afraid to
13 walk on the streets because of the cyclists. They
14 can see a car coming. They know that the cars
15 follow the rules. But a small percentage, to be
16 clear not all cyclists are bad. I think most
17 cyclists are great and doing it for the right
18 reason. A small percentage of cyclists are going
19 to be jerks even if we tell them not to be jerks.

20 So would you support legislation,
21 the concept of legislation that would increase
22 fines on reckless cyclists?

23 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I think what
24 we need to do is to get the enforcement piece
25 done, first and foremost. That's what we're

1
2 working on right now with Commissioner Kelly. I
3 think that's really where we need to go. I don't
4 think of cyclists of jerks. I think of bad
5 behavior, whether it's by cyclists, whether it's
6 by pedestrians or whether it's by motorists, as an
7 issue. So we're trying to capture attention to
8 get people to pay attention to this very important
9 issue.

10 In many instances, a lot of the
11 issue has to do with commercial cyclists, quite
12 frankly, that are trying to get food delivered
13 quickly to New Yorkers that want their food now.
14 So it's a complex city and we've got that issue to
15 deal with. I look forward to working with the
16 Council and legislative staff here to see how we
17 might be able to improve that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I
19 think, to be fair, just to clarify, I wasn't
20 implying in any way, shape or form that most
21 cyclists are jerks. I think I said most cyclists
22 are wonderful. There are some cyclists that,
23 quite frankly, if you tell them that they're
24 jerks, they'll probably just flip you off, right.
25 So I think we need more than simply telling people

1
2 that they're jerks. I think enforcement is
3 important. I'm wondering what you think about a
4 California model where the bicycles are actually
5 registered. So that allows for more effective
6 enforcement on bicycles.

7 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I've never
8 heard that. I don't think they're registered in
9 California, but I will check that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I'm
11 pretty sure they are in parts of California. I
12 would be happy to send you the information.

13 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I look forward
14 to that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I'd be
16 happy to send you the information on that. I
17 believe actually, technically, California allows
18 the localities to register bicycles and some
19 choose to and some choose not to. In places where
20 they're registered, they find them to be a very
21 effective enforcement tool. It's a nominal fee of
22 something like \$3 or so. That way, if you pull
23 over a cyclist, you're actually able to enforce it
24 by the fact that you know who that cyclist
25 actually is.

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2 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: You can
3 register your bike today at the local precinct if
4 you want to. We have the same system here. I'd
5 be interested and I look forward to finding out
6 the reports that you're referring to.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I'll
8 send you the information. It's mandatory
9 registration. Because that way if someone is
10 cycling, you're able to actually find out who that
11 cyclist is in certain situations. A final
12 question for you, is there mandatory reporting on
13 cycling accidents? Specifically, accidents that
14 may only involve two cyclists or immovable
15 property? Is there currently mandatory reporting
16 on those situations?

17 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I thank you
18 for that question. That is a very important
19 issue. One of the issues that we're working right
20 now with the Department of Motor Vehicles is to
21 update their MV104 reports that would allow us to
22 collect that on the same line where you have the
23 vehicle. If you split the line in half and have
24 vehicle and bike, you would be able to collect
25 that data. Right now there is no systematic way

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2 of collecting that data. I would hope that we
3 could work with our state legislative colleagues
4 to get that done. It's an extremely important
5 piece of work that's needed. I thank you for that
6 question.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I share
8 your concern. I'm afraid that perhaps the data
9 that we're receiving is not completely accurate
10 because we're missing many accidents that are
11 going unreported. As a safety tool I think it
12 would be important. Incidentally, this tracks
13 back to my potential registration requirement
14 because then you'd actually be able to track every
15 bicycle and who their owners are.

16 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We need to
17 track where we've got issues in terms of safety.
18 We've done a landmark safety study. It's the
19 largest ever done in the United States to track
20 the how, what, when, whys of incidents in the
21 city. That really is directing our investment
22 strategy. Coupled with a deeper understanding, a
23 more comprehensive understanding of what's
24 happening, I think that's a great suggestion.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank

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you, Commissioner.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I'm going to have to move this. I'm told we have 71 speakers. So I ask everyone's cooperation. Council Member Lappin?

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COUNCIL MEMBER LAPPIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My comments and questions have to do with pedestrian safety. Hello, Commissioner, how are you?

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Good, how are you?

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COUNCIL MEMBER LAPPIN: I'm doing okay. I guess I'll start with my second one since Council Member Greenfield talked about this somewhat. I think education is a great thing and will hopefully be helpful. I think this concept that it's socially unacceptable or that people are jerks is not the right way to handle it. What people are doing is they are breaking the law and they are putting lives at risk. It is that serious. I think it's sort of a cute joke, but I don't think it gets to the real danger. I have countless stories of people who have been hit killed. The former Council photographer was

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2 injured. A woman who lived in my district broke
3 her hip. I mean the list sort of goes on and on
4 and on. Particularly, when it is seniors or
5 children who are more vulnerable, they can be
6 killed or very, very seriously injured. So I
7 think the message should be more focused around
8 that.

9 Just so you're aware, I think some
10 of us have been working to try and educate people
11 for a long time and it only goes so far. The City
12 Council has a pamphlet that we used to produce, I
13 have it in my office, about the rules of the road.
14 I've put things in my newsletter. I've had
15 volunteers and interns go to the businesses, one-
16 on-one, along 1st and 2nd Avenues and give them
17 information. Councilwoman Brewer passed a bill
18 that required signage in these restaurants. So
19 it's not as if we haven't tried to educate people,
20 because we have. But it doesn't seem to work.

21 So even when we've worked with the
22 precincts, they'll only do so much enforcement.
23 The 19th Precinct, for example, has their own bike
24 team that does bike enforcement. They got the
25 bikes for free at One Police Plaza. I can't get

1
2 the 17th Precinct to do that. So how are you
3 going to get these precincts to really take this
4 seriously when they're facing budget cuts, fewer
5 cops on the beat and they've got other priorities?

6 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Well, first of
7 all, you've been a great advocate for pedestrian
8 safety and I appreciate that. The work that
9 you've done with seniors I think is really a model
10 for other communities. When you do those surveys
11 and you walk out there, I think it was really
12 important work.

13 You point to the fact that the
14 outreach that you've done has not been effective
15 and that it's not making a difference. I think
16 that's the reason why we're taking the approach
17 that we are with "don't be a jerk." The idea is
18 to grab people's attention so that they pay
19 attention to it. That's a different way of
20 grabbing people's attention so it doesn't get lost
21 in the sort of common public safety service
22 announcement realm.

23 A lot of the polling that we've
24 done has shown that that way that you capture
25 people's attention is by playing to their humor

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2 and not necessarily preaching at them. So we're
3 basically taking that information and using that,
4 incorporating that into how it is that we design
5 our safety campaigns.

6 The other piece is that what we've
7 done with the pedestrian safety study and action
8 plan is to really identify where the problem areas
9 are and focusing in on those areas: two-way
10 streets that cause a problem, left-hand turns.
11 Then in addition to that, focusing on our most
12 vulnerable pedestrians which are our kids and
13 seniors. So the Safe Streets for Seniors program
14 does that as well as our Safe Routes to School
15 program. So we think that getting additional
16 money for NYPD will help on the enforcement there.
17 We're looking forward to that.

18 We really do need to get beyond
19 brochures. That's why we're looking to up our
20 game in terms of the media, both TV, radio and
21 billboards.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LAPPIN: Well, I
23 hope that you do know better than the rest of us
24 and that your strategy will be successful. I want
25 to move the pedestrian safety study but add since

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2 you have had discussion of legislation here, one
3 of the first bills I introduced in the City
4 Council dealt with changing commercial cycling
5 regulations. So I assume we will be talking more
6 about that. I've been in sort of constant talk
7 over the years with our state senators who have
8 mirror legislation in Albany. We actually passed
9 a home rule message already this calendar year in
10 support of the state legislation, which is not
11 exactly the same, it's somewhat different from my
12 bill here in the Council.

13 You mention the pedestrian safety
14 study and that you know where problem areas are.
15 We want it to be online. We want Traffic Stat
16 data to be online. We know you have it. Mr.
17 Woloch testified at our last hearing on my bill
18 that you meet monthly with the PD. That you are
19 augmenting that information with information
20 you're receiving from the state. Pedestrians will
21 be safer. Bicyclists will be safer. Everybody
22 will be safer if we know where the trouble spots
23 are. So are you here today to testify in support
24 of my bill?

25 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: It's really an

1
2 issue for PD and I can't really speak to the
3 issues that Commissioner Kelly has with that. I
4 would ask that that's the best way to go there. I
5 would also suggest that I'm not saying that I know
6 better than anybody else about how this public
7 outreach campaign is going to work, it's just that
8 we've done a lot of research to find out what are
9 the most effective ways to get this message
10 across. How we need to tailor it to meet the
11 demographic that we're going after. It's not a
12 matter of my view, it's a matter of looking at the
13 research findings.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LAPPIN: That's
15 great. We changed the bill, so it's not the
16 Police Department, it's the Department of
17 Transportation. At your request, we made some
18 changes to how often you'd have to produce the
19 pedestrian safety study. We've had extensive
20 discussions with your agency about the
21 legislation. We laid it on desks, although we're
22 still negotiating it. So I'd like to know if
23 you're here today to say that you will support the
24 bill?

25 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I haven't seen

1
2 it, so I can't say right now. But I look forward
3 to working with--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LAPPIN:

5 [interposing] No, you can't say you haven't seen
6 it.

7 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I have not
8 seen it.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LAPPIN: Mr. Woloch
10 testified extensively about it. The bill has been
11 discussed publicly. There was a front page story
12 on the *New York Post*. There was a front page
13 story on the *New York Times*. I can't believe
14 you're sitting here telling me you haven't read
15 the bill.

16 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I have not
17 read the bill. But I look forward to, as long as
18 we're in the middle of negotiations to look
19 forward to working with your staff and team to
20 come up with a bill that works.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LAPPIN: I will tell
22 our Council staff that despite our negotiations
23 that I guess the top of the agency is not engaged.
24 Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Council Member

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2 Lander and then Council Member Brewer and then
3 Council Member Levin and then we will conclude
4 this section of our hearing.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you,
6 Mr. Chairman, for convening this important hearing
7 and one that obviously so many people feel very
8 strongly about. Thank you, Commissioner, for
9 being here. As you know, the Prospect Park West
10 bike lane sparked a lot of passion in our
11 community. The issue itself, as we're here today,
12 gets at something deep. We're politicians and not
13 sociologists so I don't think we'll sort of talk
14 as much about the way and the depth of feeling
15 this sparks. But to me it's pretty interesting.

16 I appreciate Council Member
17 Fidler's optimism that the ranchers and the
18 farmers can get along. We've got to find a way to
19 make it work for the growth of cycling to work for
20 cyclists and to have everybody feeling good about
21 what's happening in their neighborhoods and that
22 road safety is improving for everyone and that
23 neighborhood quality of life is improving for
24 everyone. That's not necessarily easy to do on
25 things that people feel passionately about and

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have different points of view on.

I appreciate your reference to the survey that Council Member Levin and Community Board 6, and I'm pleased we're joined by District Manager Craig Hammerman. He'll hopefully testify before he had to go at midnight or something.

That, as you know, showed broad support for the Prospect Park West bike lanes amongst residents of Park Slope. But very mixed feelings, about evenly divided, from residents of Prospect Park West and we're going to hear, and I know you'll have some staff stick around. We've got a lot of constituents of mine and Council Member Levin's in the room.

That also identified modifications around the pedestrian/bike interaction, the aesthetics, parking and loading and enforcement issues. We appreciate the willingness that you've expressed to really look at those things. We'll hear more from Community Board 6 about the process you engaged in, both before, during and after. I think it's important to use what we're hearing here in general as a sort of model for how we improve engagement in general.

1
2 So two questions, one on engagement
3 and one more on enforcement. We've heard today
4 about the master plan and about the difference
5 between sort of the dotted lines and the solid
6 lines on the map. I appreciate what you said
7 about your commitment to go to every community
8 board and have a dialogue, and Council Members,
9 before any new bike lane would come into place.

10 I wonder if it might make sense to
11 issue some sort of broad but formal invitation for
12 folks to comment on the dotted lines on the map as
13 well. I think there's an opportunity for
14 community boards. I've been asking people who
15 were engaged at the time when the bike map was
16 done. It was a long time ago. It's unclear what
17 that was. It seems to me that community boards
18 and Council Members who would like to give you
19 some feedback on sort of the master plan, it'd be
20 nice for them to have an opportunity to do so.
21 Some may say that's a place that even 20 years
22 from now we're not sure is right.

23 In my community, people want more
24 connections. I think we've talked about this and
25 I appreciate the willingness of your staff to look

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2 at it. We need a connection from sort of the
3 southern half of my district, from Kensington and
4 Sunset Park up to Park Slope. We've got kind of
5 robust bike networks in both directions, but we do
6 want some more connectivity there. So I wonder if
7 it might be possible, not just sort of okay we're
8 ready to do this bike, what do you think, or we've
9 identified this one, but here's the 2010 bike
10 master plan. It reflects some long-term thinking.
11 Does your community board or does the Council
12 Member want to sort of give some expression on we
13 like or dislike that particular route or we need a
14 new connection here where we don't yet see one
15 coming.

16 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Well, we
17 always take into account the requests that
18 community boards and local communities have on
19 where they want to see a bike lane. We're really
20 powerfully focused on the work that we have in
21 place today. We really look at the master plan as
22 really a planning tool and a guide. At this
23 point, when we go to the community boards,
24 communities have limited time. So one of the
25 things that we also do is really try to focus on

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2 meeting the needs of particular projects that
3 we've got underway. So many of the projects that
4 we have are requested by the community board and
5 sort of focusing on that and in order to get that
6 done we think is the most effective use of our
7 time.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I

9 appreciate that. Obviously things that are on the
10 immediate time horizon always have to be dealt
11 with. I wonder, in light of the sort of passion
12 that people feel, and people's desire to be
13 included if it wouldn't make sense just to take
14 the 2010 map and write a letter to community
15 boards and Council Members that simply said: hey,
16 want to make sure you saw it. If there are things
17 on it you'd like to discuss with us, you're always
18 welcome to do so. So community's input would be
19 solicited on the master plan and not just on the
20 next one that makes sense and people would know.

21 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: You might want
22 to do that with City Planning who has the sort of
23 longer term view though. So maybe there's a way
24 to marry the City Planning's master plan work with
25 the bike piece. I think that might be an

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2 interesting idea.

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4 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Then
5 whether it's you guys or City Planning, I think an
6 invitation to community boards and Council Members
7 to give some input on the master plan, since it's
8 been so long since there was input on the master
9 plan. Again, in my district you're going to get
10 that we want more connectors. Maybe in Council
11 Member Fidler's district, or Council Member
12 Vacca's, you're going to get that we're not so
13 sure about the dotted lines that are on the map.
14 Anyway, I appreciate that.

14

15 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I'm happy to
16 talk more about that with you and with Amanda.

16

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Super.
18 Thank you. Then I also want to talk a little bit
19 more about enforcement. I think on the issues
20 that are related to design that there's a lot that
21 we're able to do together. I'm looking forward to
22 working with you on some of the things that folks
23 said in our survey about Prospect Park West.

23

24 But I share the feeling of Council
25 Member Lappin that the education is wonderful. We
just had a bike to school day at my son's middle

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2 school. It was great. I think those who came
3 out, it was the kind of day that moves you love to
4 live in Park Slope and feel like the expansion of
5 the cycling network and a community that wants to
6 have sustainability, you know, it was wonderful.
7 But I'm not sure that that's the pathway to
8 addressing the core safety issues.

9 To me this is a bigger issue. It's
10 not just about cycling. I mean, I appreciate that
11 folks didn't go to the NYPD Police Academy to be
12 traffic cops, whether for cyclists or for cars.
13 But if we take it seriously, we have to do
14 something to have a higher percentage of what they
15 do be attending to street safety. Look, cars kill
16 more than bikes kill, but in both cases we need
17 it. I think cycling has increased significantly
18 more than driving has increased.

19 So while you say that the number of
20 citations are up on cyclists, it doesn't sound
21 like they're up by anywhere near the volumes that
22 we think cycling is up. You guys don't do
23 enforcement, but you are responsible, and I'm
24 grateful for it, in part for the significant
25 increase in cycling. I think we need a

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2 significant increase in enforcement as well, of
3 cycling and of driving.

4 So I appreciate the NYPD is your
5 partner here and that they're not here and I wish
6 they were. Maybe we need to have an enforcement
7 hearing that looks both at cycling and at driving.
8 But I wonder what you think we can do to increase
9 enforcement. I appreciate that there's some
10 money. I assume if it was big dollar amount, you
11 would have put it in your testimony. What's the
12 path to getting more enforcement from the NYPD?

13 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I think you
14 really need to ask Commissioner Kelly that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Well I'm
16 sorry that he's not here. So it's hard for us not
17 to ask you because he's not here. To me it's
18 partly about keeping people safe, per Council
19 Member Lappin's question, but it is partly about
20 sort of navigating the tensions that people feel
21 here.

22 I've gotten a lot of feedback on
23 the bike lanes in my district. Quite a few
24 seniors have said to me they actually like the
25 Prospect Park West bike lines and they're glad

1
2 they're there. But they also tell me about their
3 concerns, fears and anxieties on Prospect Park
4 West and everywhere else in the neighborhood as a
5 pedestrian. If we can't increase confidence that
6 the rules of the road are going to be enforced,
7 it's going to be hard I think to build a consensus
8 around ramping it up.

9 So I do think that there's a strong
10 interest, if we're going to strengthening the
11 cycling network in a sustainable way, in
12 addressing enforcement issues. While I appreciate
13 that that's not your domain, I think they're
14 deeply, deeply connected and we really can't do
15 one without the other. So I would appreciate your
16 help in figuring out how we address those
17 enforcement issues. I think separating them and
18 saying that's for the NYPD is going to leave us in
19 a position where it's harder to strengthen the
20 bike network. Every call I get from somebody who
21 says I just got hit or I almost got hit, makes it
22 harder. I love the education, but we're just not
23 going to solve this without. If it's really an
24 official means of people commuting and
25 transportation, we've got to enforce it. Let me

1
2 end my question. I won't even make a final
3 comment after my question.

4 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: The other
6 place where I get the most significant degree of
7 concern is around deliveries, cyclist deliveries.
8 I'm one who calls for takeout food late at night
9 all the time and I want it fast and I appreciate
10 it can come on a bike. But I also sense that
11 there are outsized problematic riding done by
12 folks who are doing deliveries on bikes. I wonder
13 if you guys have looked at, either in partnership
14 with the NYPD, or on your own, some initiatives
15 that would help address that issue, whether giving
16 businesses responsibility for what their cyclists
17 are doing or some other way of helping improve
18 safety in cyclists delivery.

19 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: As I mentioned
20 in the testimony, I look forward to working with
21 the City Council and your staff on identifying
22 some ways to do that. I do think that commercial
23 cyclists pose an issue. But we need to look for
24 some innovative ways to try to get a better handle
25 on that activity to make sure that they do obey

1
2 the rules of the road and that people aren't
3 endangered or fear for their lives as they cross
4 the street. So I look forward to continuing that
5 conversation.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Super.
7 Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.
9 Commissioner, two things quickly I wanted to ask.
10 Some people bring to my attention that when people
11 have bicycles and they leave them out overnight,
12 the bicycles are always ripped off and vandalized
13 on city streets. I know the Council enacted some
14 legislation requiring that when new buildings are
15 built there must be a set aside for bicycle
16 storage in new construction. Have you given
17 thought to what we could do so that bicycles are
18 not ripped off? It seems to be a very common
19 occurrence, especially in neighborhoods where
20 there are large amounts of bicycles.

21 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Well, we are
22 doing as much as we can to provide effective
23 bicycle parking. We've got 10,000 bike racks on
24 the streets of New York. We have new outdoor bike
25 parking facilities. Thanks to the leadership of

1
2 the Council, we now have the indoor bike parking
3 provision so that in Class A office buildings with
4 freight elevators, if a tenant is requesting bike
5 access, that access needs to be provided. So
6 we've had tremendous success. 3,100 access plans
7 have been filed.

8 We did that together, recognizing
9 that the number one reason, according to the
10 Department of City Planning survey, that people
11 were not commuting to work was the lack of indoor
12 bike parking. New Yorkers are not comfortable
13 leaving their bikes on the streets of New York for
14 seven hours, eight hours, ten hours at a time. So
15 we think that the indoor bike parking piece will
16 help.

17 As to the enforcement and what
18 happens on bike vandalism and theft, we are doing
19 as much as we can to improve our bike rack designs
20 so that it's difficult to rip them off. The
21 second thing is obviously the question on the
22 enforcement piece that would go to Commissioner
23 Kelly. We're trying to design our facilities to
24 make them as theft resistant as they can be. We
25 hope that that will be a help to address that

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problem.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: One last

question, Commissioner, I wanted to bring up. I

know you're working with the Police Department and

you're working with City Planning and you work

with other agencies in probably an informal way as

you increase the bike network and you address

parking issues and you address speeding and

congestion. Have you ever given thought, or is

this something you are considering, insomuch as

formalizing an interagency task force that deals

with this as we go forward for the next five, ten

years? Have you thought or is this something you

envision of having a formal task force structure

of an interagency nature that would address those

issues?

JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: No. The

Transportation policy's program and mission is at

the Department of Transportation. What we do is

work with our agency partners when we implement

projects to assure that they also address the

needs of our sister agencies. We've found that to

be an effective tool and it's worked well and

that's what we continue to do going forward. But

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2 basically what ends up happening is our borough
3 commissioners work with their counterparts and our
4 other sister agencies on each and every project.
5 We have quite extensive outreach. We did, I think
6 it was 2,000 meetings, with the public through our
7 borough commissioners, our open houses and
8 community board meetings. So we've found that the
9 community board, the borough commissioner liaison
10 is the effective way to get it done at that level.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
12 Commissioner. Council Member Brewer?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'm getting
14 Jimmy Vacca a bicycle for Christmas.

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Maybe a
16 unicycle.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'm getting
18 you a bicycle for Christmas. I promise you.

19 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. You've
20 got a deal.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'm not
22 kidding.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You've got a
24 deal.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: DOT can

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2 sell him a helmet.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I'll get
him a helmet.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I want to help.
I need a helmet too.

7

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: We'll get
him everything. We can't wait.

9

10

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: But he also
needs a bike lane.

11

[Laughter]

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13

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: If I get a
bike, I'll use the bike, don't worry, lane or no
lane.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I promise
you, it's on it's way.

17

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: If you say so.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And I'm
paying for it. Two questions. First of all, I
don't want to repeat, because we want to hear from
the public. The senior issue, the commercial
stores issue and enforcement, those are all three
big ones that need to be addressed. I'm your
unabashed supporter of bike lanes.

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Now, I will tell you Community

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2 Board 7 voted for the bike lanes on Columbus. I
3 live at the top and I work at the bottom in our
4 district office. So it's 50/50 in terms of
5 support and people who are concerned. The way we
6 deal with the concern is tomorrow at Community
7 Board 7, to pick up on the chair's question, we
8 have a meeting with the senior groups, with the
9 commercials, with the bicyclists, to try to start
10 to address some of these issues. There is an
11 issue regarding drop off of commercial goods, be
12 they UPS, et cetera. There is an issue for the
13 seniors. I think it takes education.

14 My question is you mentioned bike
15 sharing, which of course I'm very excited. I like
16 everything shared, cars, bikes, et cetera. Bike
17 sharing, how will that, do you think, help support
18 some of the usage of the bike lanes? I find that
19 they are used, although some idiots go on the
20 other side of the street, even when there's a bike
21 lane that they could go on. I've had many fights
22 about that.

23 How do you think that bike sharing
24 will increase usage? How also do you think, or is
25 there any way, to get even more education? People

1
2 have to look when they cross a bike lane, but when
3 they get to the median where there's a place where
4 you can stop, I do think it's a shorter time
5 period to cross for some of the seniors. So
6 that's a plus. How do you think the bike sharing
7 will or will not help bike lanes?

8 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Well, we think
9 we'll have more cyclists out on the streets as
10 people find the convenience of being able to pick
11 up a bike and ride it free for 30 minutes and then
12 park it at a nearby station. So that will do a
13 lot. I think we'll see more cyclists on the
14 lanes.

15 The other piece of that is that
16 we've seen from other cities that when you do
17 implement a bike share program, people that are
18 not even bike share users but just have their own
19 bikes, that number increases as well. So it's a
20 collective effect, both in terms of people who
21 ride more frequently and then the people that are
22 using the bike share program itself.

23 With 47 million tourists in the
24 city of New York each year, we think that will be
25 a help. The fact that for New Yorkers, 54 percent

1
2 of all trips are under two miles. We think that's
3 going to be a very effective way for people to get
4 around, particularly when people do not take
5 subway trips for under a mile.

6 Similarly, we think that it's a
7 great way to reduce congestion on both the surface
8 system and the subway system. So we think that it
9 will go a long way to improving the usage of
10 cycling on the streets of New York, improve the
11 utilization of the lanes and really make it easier
12 for people to get around and will be an important
13 economic development strategy.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Then just
15 finally, I know that PD is working with you on
16 enforcement. It's a small dollar amount that they
17 have available to them to focus on this issue. I
18 just hope that you will commit to really upping
19 the grant writing, if that's what it takes,
20 between you and PD to get more enforcement.

21 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Absolutely.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: In order to
23 create a support network with the seniors and with
24 the stores and with people who are dubious of the
25 bike lanes, which I am not, but I understand the

1
2 concern out there, perception as well as some
3 reality, then we need to make enforcement a top
4 priority. I know we say it but could you get back
5 to the chair with how we're going to go about
6 doing more than what is currently done?

7 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
10 Council Member Brewer. Council Member Levin and
11 then we are finished with questioning from this
12 body, for you Commissioner, until the next panel.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you,
14 Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to ask a
15 couple of questions. I'm actually not on the
16 committee, so I'm going to keep my questions
17 brief.

18 I would just like to ask, and you
19 might have addressed it during your testimony. I
20 arrived a little bit late. What is DOT's budget
21 in FY 11 for bike lanes?

22 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We don't break
23 down our budget that way. But what my testimony
24 showed is that 80 percent of the cost of bike
25 lanes is federally funded. So only 20 percent of

1
2 the bike lane cost is locally funded. You can do
3 the math. I think our total for the last three
4 and a half years was \$8 million for the total
5 investment and we're only 20 percent of that.
6 That was for a three and a half year program.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So FY 11's
8 city tax levy--

9 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: [interposing]
10 I don't break it down.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --dollars,
12 I'm just curious. We're facing budget cuts
13 throughout the city.

14 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: This is one of
15 the most cost effective investments you can make.
16 I mean if you're looking at basically \$1.75
17 million for the entire build out of what we've
18 just done, 200 miles of on-street bike lanes, that
19 should give you a sense of what we do on a yearly
20 basis. It's not a lot of money.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I was
22 wondering exactly what the number was.

23 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I mean, we
24 don't have our 2011 plan finalized, so we don't
25 know what it is, but it will certainly be under

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\$500,000.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you for that answer. With regard to enforcement, I want to echo the sentiments of my colleagues. The reality is that the level of biking has gone up so dramatically, thanks in large part to your efforts, and that's a good thing. The network of bike lanes has facilitated that tremendously.

That being said, there is a little bit of a disconnect within the bicycling community I think that's more endemic than can be addressed in a public education campaign. I think that those are effective and worthwhile efforts, but I don't believe that they will solve the problem. We share the road. We have to all follow the rules of the road. So I have two questions for that.

Number one, if somebody is pulled over, and this is maybe more of a question for NYPD, but if somebody is stopped for going through a red light, they don't have identification on them, how do you enforce something like that? If you don't have a system of registration with bicycles, how do you enforce something like that?

1

2 If they don't have an ID on them?

3

JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I don't know
4 what the PD's policy is. I don't know if they
5 take them into custody. I don't know how it goes.
6 But Commissioner Kelly would be in the best
7 position to respond to that. Maybe this happened
8 before you arrived, but in the testimony I
9 couldn't agree with you more. We need to do as
10 much as we can. Public education is one part of
11 the equation and we need to do more. Like set up
12 a bike ambassador program so that people are
13 helping one another obey the rules of the road.

14

We are also doing as much as we
15 can, and Council Member Brewer pointed out, we
16 need to do what we can to identify additional
17 funding sources so that we can improve the
18 enforcement on the streets of New York. We are
19 committed to doing that. I look forward to both
20 working with the Council here, reporting back to
21 the chair and working with Commissioner Kelly on
22 that. It is a very important issue.

23

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Because I'm
24 one that believes that really the best way to
25 influence that type of behavior is to provide

1
2 deterrents. I cycle and one of my favorite things
3 to do is monitor this behavior because certainly
4 in a lot of parts of my district there are a lot
5 of cyclists, in Williamsburg and Greenpoint and
6 down in the Slope and in Boerum Hill.

7 It's commonplace to have cyclists
8 go through a red light. You see it all the time.
9 I've never seen one pulled over. It needs to be
10 addressed. I mean, if I really want to get away
11 with it, I would just ride around without an ID I
12 think. I'm wondering what are the exact plans for
13 upping that enforcement.

14 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We're working
15 with PD. We got a safety grant to do that. We're
16 going to look for additional funding sources to
17 improve the level and the amount of enforcement
18 that we've got on the streets of New York and ask
19 cyclists to help one another to do a better job of
20 policing. And actually asking all users of the
21 network. It's not just cyclists, it's drivers
22 obeying the rules of the roads, it's pedestrians
23 not stepping out with headphones and getting in
24 the way of everybody.

25 It's a collective dance on the

1
2 streets of New York. We have to really work
3 together to ensure that we have safe streets for
4 everyone. So I look forward to talking with you
5 about that in some detail.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I appreciate
7 that and I agree with you 100 percent. I'm just
8 wondering, do we have clear goal posts?

9 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: We're looking
10 to increase enforcement on the streets.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, I
12 think, right?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Just one
14 last question.

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. One
16 last question, Council Member.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: One last
18 question, I'm sorry. Regarding Prospect Park
19 West, it's a controversial issue and there's an
20 ongoing dialogue. Is there a willingness to work
21 with folks that are seeking to see some
22 adjustments made? Does DOT have a willingness and
23 an open mind to make some adjustments?

24 JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: Yes, we've
25 been doing that and we will continue to do that.

1

2 Thank you.

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4

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you,
Commissioner.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Now, only
because I love her, I'm going to let Council
Member James have one quick question.

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COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Just one
last question. Commissioner, do you support
legislation, from what I understand, pending in
Albany that would basically include in the whole
education process when one gets a license,
educating motorists about sharing the road?

14

15

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JANETTE SADIK-KHAN: I do.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.

17

18

19

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Commissioner, I
want to thank you. That you went out of your way
to be here today. I want you to get better. I
know you went the extra yard to attend. I thank
you. I thank you for your testimony.

21

[Applause]

22

23

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I wish you
well. I said no applause, but for that I allow
the applause.

25

[Applause]

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Jimmy, you should send her flowers.

4

5

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I said I would allow applause once and they applaud twice.

6

7

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: There you go. Maybe he can deliver them on his new bike.

8

9

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I shouldn't have said it once.

10

11

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.

12

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: On my new bike.

13

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Deliver

14

flowers.

15

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I'll deliver

16

chaos on my new bike, that's what I'll deliver. I

17

want to thank the Commissioner and let's allow her

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to leave and then we will go to our next panel. I

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have the three names. Let me call up our first

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panel please. Our first panel will be Norman

21

Steisel, Carol Linn, and Lois Carswell, all from

22

Brooklyn New York.

23

[Pause]

24

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,

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Commissioner. Commissioner Steisel, Deputy Mayor

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2 Steisel, we welcome you.

2

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[Pause]

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Deputy Mayor

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Steisel, let me welcome you and thank you for

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coming. Would you start off your testimony?

7

NORMAN STEISEL: I want to thank

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you, Chairman Vacca, and the rest of the

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committee. Chairman Vacca, I particularly want to

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thank you for your leadership that you've shown by

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calling this oversight hearing, which is part of a

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continuing effort to rationalize the use of our

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scarce transportation resources. I was quite

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impressed by your opening comments about how to

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try to find the appropriate balance that would

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service the many needs that New Yorkers face as

17

they go through their daily lives, using our

18

streets and highways.

19

I'm hopeful that as a result of

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this process, with your help and that of your

21

committee and with enhanced community involvement

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that your recent legislation and some of your new

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legislative initiatives that you've been talking

24

about will promote and we'll be able to find the

25

most sensible way. I think the issue is to find

1
2 the most sensible way to expand the use of bike
3 lanes in New York City.

4 The heated nature of the present
5 controversy over the experimental bike lanes, as
6 it's been called frankly by the Commissioner. I
7 was quite surprised to hear her say today that
8 there were no experiments because she, in her
9 correspondence with the community board, after
10 agreements were made to implement the bike plan
11 has repeatedly said that this was a trial and
12 subject to further evaluation. She talked about
13 the nature of the evaluation. So I don't
14 understand that. Frankly, we were looking forward
15 to that evaluation, as I'll explain in greater
16 detail.

17 I think the heated nature of the
18 present controversy over that trial on Prospect
19 Park West in itself shows that the current process
20 for introducing new bike lanes in the city is not
21 working as well as it should be. So let's quickly
22 go back to basics. I know there's a scarcity of
23 time here today. But let's talk about our mutual
24 objectives.

25 The Prospect Park West trial had

1
2 two basically. One was to encourage bike
3 ridership and the second was to calm traffic.
4 Combined, they represent a vision that I think we
5 all share: making our streets safe and pleasant
6 for all users, the young, old, wheeled or bipedal,
7 while we want to minimize congestion, emissions,
8 and noise, and enhance the quality of life for
9 everyone.

10 In order to reach this shared goal,
11 we do not object to the trial. We don't object to
12 the bikes. But we do feel that any experiments
13 should be conducted objectively and in conformance
14 with accepted standards. Our group, the Neighbors
15 for Better Bike Lanes, which was founded by a
16 woman named Louise Hainline, who is the chairman
17 of graduate studies at Brooklyn College, which is
18 a totally local based community organization, is
19 essentially very concerned about data-driven
20 analysis. We will go wherever the facts lead us.

21 If an objective review of the
22 credible data establishes that the bike lanes on
23 PPW is not as successful as it could be, that it
24 does not produce benefits above the no-action
25 case, or that it makes the situation worse rather

1
2 than better, we ask that the lane configuration be
3 modified to take these findings into account or
4 that a more desirable alternative be implemented
5 instead. I was pleased to hear the commissioner
6 in response to our Councilman's question suggest
7 that she was open to modification, pending more
8 about what we learn about the situation.

9 So what do we know now? Do the
10 data that we have show that the Prospect Park West
11 bike lane has been successful? As we've heard
12 today, I think it should have become crystal clear
13 that answering this question is complicated by the
14 fact that the agency responsible for this effort
15 does not seem to have adequate empirical basis for
16 valid evaluation. Or if they do have such data,
17 they have thus far denied our requests or delayed
18 us in our requests that they share them with us.

19 But from the data that we have been
20 able to collect, and our group has gone to great
21 lengths to collect data independently from public
22 available sources and to also document
23 observations that we've made, which I'll describe
24 to you. Observations that our residents of our
25 neighborhood, from hundreds of letters and

1
2 eyewitness incident reports we have received, a
3 copy of which I will leave with you. I have a
4 single copy for you, Mr. Chairman. I think when
5 you look at all that information, to answer the
6 question as to whether this trial has been
7 successful, the answer appears to be a resounding
8 no.

9 Let me begin with the most serious
10 issue: the effects on public safety. Prospect
11 Park West formerly had three lanes of one-way
12 southbound traffic bordered by parking lanes along
13 both curbs. The street carried, as it still does,
14 a relatively heavy volume of traffic, 12 to 15,000
15 vehicles a day.

16 One of these curb lanes, plus an
17 additional buffer strip, has now been turned into
18 a two-way bike lane. Cars formerly parked along
19 that curb are now parked between the two-way bike
20 path and a now more congested traffic lane in a
21 space that is narrower than the former parking
22 lane.

23 This means that drivers entering or
24 exiting this parking lane must back out of or nose
25 into a now narrower traffic lane that carries half

1
2 again as much traffic per lane as it did before.
3 Drivers in that traffic lane, who formerly might
4 have been able to shift into another lane to avoid
5 the parking cars are now much more likely to have
6 to stop and wait, along with all the cars behind
7 them, while the driver gets into or out of this
8 narrow strip.

9 This diminution of lane width,
10 combined with an increase in per-lane volumes,
11 would in itself seem to increase rather than
12 decrease the probability of vehicle into vehicle
13 accidents due the increased potential for
14 sideswiping. There is added risks as well to
15 public safety in terms of vehicle into pedestrians
16 or bikes into pedestrian accidents, since drivers
17 and passengers have no choice but to enter or exit
18 next to a lane of moving traffic. This risk is
19 somewhat less, the drivers obviously get out into
20 the bike lane on that side.

21 But it's very evident to most
22 people. As a local resident told Councilmen
23 Lander and Levin in their recent survey, "I nearly
24 got clobbered by a bicycle the other day when I
25 accidentally stepped back into the bike lane after

1
2 strapping the baby into her car seat." The
3 probability of these accidents just seem to be
4 growing. They seem to be the predictable effects
5 of changes in the roadway geometry.

6 In their survey of over 3,000
7 Brooklynites, while there seems to be support of
8 the bike lane, although I think the survey was
9 flawed in many respects, which I won't elaborate
10 on right now, they found that a clear majority of
11 respondents from every part of Brooklyn felt that
12 parking was less safe in this corridor. And most
13 of the respondents from the immediate
14 neighborhood, that is Prospect Park West and its
15 side streets, felt that driving and walking were
16 less safe than they had been before the bike lane
17 was installed, which would be obvious that the
18 people in our neighborhood would feel that way.

19 What was even more incredible is
20 that while most people felt that bikers were safer
21 than they had been before, only a minority of
22 those even from non-adjacent neighborhoods felt
23 that walking or driving were safer. So there
24 still is this persistent view that the lanes
25 aren't working perhaps as well as they should be.

1
2 The accidents that our neighbors
3 have reported validate these perceptions. That's
4 the book I'm going to give you. We've had
5 neighbors who have physically observed and
6 reported to us. These are verifiable emails that
7 have been mailed to us. These are real people.
8 They're not anonymous respondents to a computer
9 survey.

10 That in just five months since the
11 bike lane have opened, we've received eyewitness
12 accounts of 10 vehicular accidents on Prospect
13 Park West, which compares to an annual average
14 rate of 8.8 for the preceding 4 years. So at the
15 rate we're going, the accident rate is trending or
16 is on a pace to double what it was previously.
17 Along with 8 accounts of bikes hitting
18 pedestrians.

19 Just this week we had eyewitnesses
20 report 2 collisions between bikes and cars,
21 compared to the prior annual average of just a
22 half a bike accident of any kind. That was an
23 average that was taken over a multiple number of
24 years. So it appears that the kind of dynamic
25 that I described on the street with cars trying

1
2 to maneuver has been seriously constrained and is
3 probably contributing to these accidents.

4 This also raises the question of
5 public safety of congestion. Prospect Park West
6 was rarely gridlocked in the past. The gridlock
7 that results every time a Postal Service, a UPS, a
8 FedEx or a Fresh Direct truck; school bus,
9 ambulance, or taxi, grocery shopper, whatever
10 blocks a lane while loading or unloading packages
11 now is very common. I think you, Mr. Chairman,
12 when you were there, you noted that you observed
13 some of that. That's particularly true, of
14 course, during rush hours. Thank goodness, we
15 have not yet experienced any heavy snowfalls,
16 because I think the response in that situation is
17 totally unpredictable.

18 Probably the most compelling and
19 disturbing fact is that emergency vehicles on more
20 than one documented occasion have been forced to
21 drive around several blocks rather than proceeding
22 directly down Prospect Park West. There were just
23 simply not able to get by. And while the
24 commissioner assured us she didn't intentionally
25 design any bike lanes that were expected to have

1
2 calming influence effects, these things do happen
3 as a reality. So I think when first responders
4 cannot respond as quickly as they once did, lives
5 may hang in the balance. That's a very serious
6 consideration that all of us who are interested in
7 public, whether they're on the Council or in the
8 administration, or those of us as citizens, really
9 need to take account of.

10 Our greatest concern with the bike
11 lane experiment, however, is the lack of
12 transparent, objective data. I think that's going
13 to haunt you. Whatever is done in Prospect Park
14 West, and we have some suggestions about how it
15 can be improved. Whatever is going to be done,
16 that failure, that lack of transparent, objective
17 data, it is very difficult to have a common basis
18 for an informed discussion of the salient issues.
19 We're left to he said/we said, some other agency
20 has the data but we can't seem to get it, they
21 don't collect it correctly, which must be a
22 maddening process for you as somebody who's intent
23 on making public policy.

24 In requests for information, we
25 have either been told that the data did not exist

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2 on a few occasions, on other occasions after the
3 data was posted on Streets Blog, which is a forum
4 that is of great interest, mostly to people in the
5 biking community, we were told a week later the
6 data was available and it would be made available
7 to us.

8 Let me give you an example of each
9 of the contradictory cases or the confounding
10 factors that are caused by the lack of this data.
11 If you look at the most recent report that was put
12 out by DOT, on December 3rd on their website,
13 where it purported to talk about the positive
14 effects of traffic calming. It points out that
15 during this trial it's been quite successful in
16 calming traffic.

17 In fact, that average travel speeds
18 on Prospect Park West are now about 7 miles per
19 hour, reduced from 33 roughly to 25 miles an hour.
20 On the other hand, and as we heard the testimony
21 here today, that average travel times from one end
22 of Prospect Park West to the other, that's Union
23 Street to 15th Street, which is about a mile, that
24 that has not produced any congestion.

25 The travel time is virtually the

1
2 same. 2.54 minutes, which means they're traveling
3 at about 19 miles an hour, versus 2.47 minutes, or
4 about 19.9 miles an hour. Now these two sets of
5 numbers cannot both be correct. They cannot both
6 be correct. Either speeds decreased or they
7 didn't. If they didn't, the traffic calming did
8 not work. If DOT's test drivers were unable to
9 get past 20 miles an hour either before the bike
10 lane or after it, traffic calming does not appear
11 to have been called for in the first place, which
12 frankly we already knew because Prospect Park
13 West, based on New York State Department of Motor
14 Vehicle data was the safest north/south streetway
15 within the entire Park Slope community.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Can I ask you
17 to wrap up a little bit? I gave you extra.

18 NORMAN STEISEL: I appreciate it.
19 One of most compelling problems.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: He's a former
21 deputy mayor of the city of New York. Excuse me,
22 I'm not here for conversation. I use my
23 discretion.

24 NORMAN STEISEL: There's one other
25 observation I would want to make about the data

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2 and then I'll come to a very rapid conclusion.
3 Because of the difficulty in getting the data, we
4 actually went out over a period of about 15 days
5 and videotaped Prospect Park West for 12 hours a
6 day. We have direct comparisons to the data that
7 the department reported in its most recent
8 December 3rd filing. We would be obviously
9 prepared to give anybody who wants it the DVDs
10 that we collected. We counted 470 bikers in this
11 12 hour period. The Department of
12 Transportation's count was 860 bikers. Now this
13 is not a normal or any margin of any conceivable
14 measurement error. Maybe there are valid reasons,
15 but we can't find any.

16 The reason I point it out is I
17 think these three examples that I gave just call
18 into question much of the analysis that has been
19 done by the DOT in terms of providing
20 prescriptions to people and then evaluating them
21 after the fact as they have, in fact, committed to
22 do. So we are continuing to pursue it.

23 We frankly think the better
24 alternatives, given these factors, was to go back
25 to the master plan. I was very impressed by the

1
2 commissioner's pointing out that the city's master
3 plan--even though I was also surprised that many
4 people here didn't even know it existed--has a
5 very effective bike plan that was laid out many,
6 many years ago, which would be acceptable to this
7 community. Another alternative is to use the park
8 bike lanes which can be reconfigured to
9 accommodate two-way recreational and commuting
10 traffic interests.

11 It was also kind of interesting to
12 hear the commissioner talk about what happened in
13 Staten Island when she said there were other
14 alternatives available merely 100 yards away.
15 Well that's exactly the situation on Prospect Park
16 West. We urge and we will work with her and her
17 department and our local representatives to try to
18 reframe what was done.

19 Finally, if I just could.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Please wrap up.

21 NORMAN STEISEL: I will.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I have the
23 borough president here, and in due respect, I need
24 you to conclude quickly.

25 NORMAN STEISEL: Okay. It's clear

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2 to me that in going forward, regardless of what
3 happens in Prospect Park West, and you've
4 commented on many of these things, I think there
5 needs to be much more definitive standards for
6 where bike lanes are introduced. The measurements
7 of the various factors and indices that are going
8 to be used to determine whether the thing worked
9 or not needs to be produced.

10 The community board and the
11 neighborhoods, as you have argued and have
12 proposed in your legislation, need to have much
13 more fulsome presentations by the DOT instead of
14 being coerced into a solution which the DOT
15 favors.

16 Finally--

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: No, no more
18 finally.

19 NORMAN STEISEL: I think it's that-

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I have to
21 interject. I have to move on.

22 NORMAN STEISEL: I would simply say
23 I hope you would read my comments in full.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I will.

25 NORMAN STEISEL: I have other

1
2 suggestions which I know you're interested in
3 structural changes to how governance will take
4 place in reviewing future bike lane
5 implementation.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
7 Commissioner. Now, the two young ladies that are
8 here, I will give you two minutes each, as I will
9 all future speakers. So please limit your remarks
10 to two minutes. State your name for the record.

11 LOIS CARSWELL: I'm Lois Carswell.
12 I'm a Park Slope resident. I want to thank you,
13 Mr. Vacca, for your evenhanded introductory
14 assessment of this issue. It was great. I just
15 want to make a few personal observations.

16 When I moved to Park Slope in 1962,
17 Park Slope was redlined. We worked with the
18 banks. The streets were bare. Two friends and I
19 went door to door and got trees planted. Prospect
20 Park was dangerous and neglected. The Prospect
21 Park Conservancy was formed.

22 All these were problems that could
23 be solved. There were actions you could take and,
24 banding together with others of goodwill, you
25 could move ahead. Now Park Slope is a landmarked

1
2 neighborhood, its streets are lush and tree-lined,
3 and Prospect Park is a green, safe public
4 playground.

5 But suddenly, there is a new threat
6 to public safety and aesthetic excellence, and
7 this time the threat is much more insidious
8 because it comes cloaked in sanctimony, disguised
9 as public good. What the Prospect Park West
10 protected 2-way bike lane really is, is the
11 arbitrary decision of a public agency to favor the
12 habits and desires of bikers, a small minority of
13 New Yorkers, estimated one-quarter of one percent
14 of city dwellers, at the expense of pedestrians,
15 drivers, and users of public transportation.

16 What has been created is nothing
17 less than a nightmare. A magnificent tree-lined
18 avenue connecting two landmarked areas has been
19 turned into a congested and dangerous eyesore.
20 All this at the whim of DOT, without widespread or
21 timely consultation with the majority of the Park
22 Slope community. I live on Prospect Park West. I
23 got one piece of paper under my door and this was
24 after the thing was a done deal. Using the
25 trumped-up bogeyman of excessive speeding and a

1
2 pro-bicycle agenda, DOT has imposed a 2-way
3 protected bike lane. I bring you to encourage
4 DOT. One second.

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Do you promise
6 you'll be less than two minutes?

7 LOIS CARSWELL: All right. Put the
8 cars back where they belong along the curb and add
9 a one-way bike lane next to them. Or put all the
10 bike lanes into Prospect Park where bikers are
11 already welcome, as happened in Staten Island.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you very
13 much.

14 LOIS CARSWELL: Almost two minutes.

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. You
16 were great. Please would you introduce yourself
17 for the record.

18 CAROL LINN: Hello, thank you for
19 this opportunity. I'm Carol Linn. I've lived on
20 Prospect Park West not quite as long as Lois, but
21 almost. We moved here and I've been here for 31
22 years. I raised two children on Prospect Park
23 West.

24 When our car was being broken into
25 a regular basis, when my husband was mugged on the

1
2 street, we were worried about the neighborhood.
3 We did not leave; we stayed. One thing I never
4 worried about was crossing Prospect Park West. I
5 mean you looked at the lights, you saw the
6 traffic, you could move and you knew it was clear
7 and you moved with the kids.

8 In June, we were away for a couple
9 of weeks. We come back and we see what was our
10 formerly beautiful street was now mutilated.
11 You've got these cars in the middle that make it
12 look like a parking lot. You've got tremendous
13 traffic congestion.

14 I often walk across Prospect Park
15 West at Grand Army Plaza. As you're crossing to
16 the housing side of it, away from the park side,
17 you have no idea where bikes are coming from.
18 They can be coming from any direction. They're
19 coming from the park, they're coming from the
20 streets. There is absolutely no law nor rule
21 there that's obeyed.

22 There is very often tremendous
23 congestion because there will be deliveries at the
24 residence there or the doctor's facilities. Then
25 someone else is pulling out of a spot, so there is

1
2 absolutely no room for the traffic. So Grand Army
3 Plaza is totally blocked with car traffic.

4 It really should be moved into the
5 park. There's a lane there. I run every morning
6 in the park. I see the bikes, the cars and the
7 runners can all be accommodated in the park. I
8 really think it should be changed. I'm going to
9 leave you with six seconds left. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. Two
11 quick questions from Council Member Lander.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: First, I
13 really want to thank all three of you for being
14 here today and for the voice you've taken on this
15 project. While we have some disagreements about
16 the bike lanes and the ways that they're achieving
17 their goals and what residents think, I know that
18 you're all motivated by making the neighborhood
19 better and safer. I appreciate the work you've
20 done over the years.

21 I am sorry for the way in which the
22 debate about this has become personalized. Marty
23 and I asked for people to yell at us, but
24 individuals who take advocacy on positions, and I
25 include Ms. Weinshall as well, I think have the

1
2 right to engage in debate without enduring
3 personal attacks for it. I'm sorry to the extent
4 that that has happened. I appreciate your being
5 here today, I really do.

6 First, while there are questions
7 about breadth of community consultation, I think
8 you heard here from my colleagues talking to the
9 commissioner about the role of community boards.
10 I guess in this instance because the community
11 board did both ask for a solution to traffic
12 calming and then did vote in favor of the two-way
13 bike lane, what do you think DOT should have done?
14 Should they have rejected the community board vote
15 and said we won't do the two-way parking protected
16 bike lane despite the vote of the community board
17 because other residents of the neighborhood didn't
18 or might not have approved of it?

19 NORMAN STEISEL: I think when you
20 go back and you look at the record, I think what
21 was not done, and I think the record is clear that
22 while the community board was looking for
23 solutions to deal with traffic calming and to
24 provide a bike lane, I don't believe from my
25 reading of the record, the minutes of the

1
2 community board meeting. I'm unaware of whatever
3 conversations or discussions may have taken place
4 independently with members of the City Council,
5 you or Mr. Levin or Mr. Yassky before that I
6 guess. But it is clear that alternatives were not
7 presented. That the DOT had a very strong point
8 of view and it came up with a solution.

9 I would also say that when you say
10 the community board approved it, the community
11 board conditionally approved certain changes.
12 Those changes never really came back to the board.
13 They were described to members of the
14 Transportation Committee about what was going to
15 be done. Again, I don't believe there was
16 adequate discussion of what other ways would have
17 achieved the same objectives.

18 My reading of the record and having
19 talked to some of the people at the community
20 board is that they felt they were getting a
21 certain degree of cooperation with the Department
22 of Transportation, which I gather is not the
23 easiest thing in the world to do, apparently. So
24 they were willing to accept the approach that was
25 being talked about without raising these other

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questions.

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Now given the DOT's long history, it would seem to me, and it was revealed in some of the questioning here earlier, that there needed to be more preliminary analysis about what the consequences to traffic would have been as well as to the bikers. The main emphasis seems to have been how to provide a safe protected lane for the bikers, which is all well and good. They should have a safe mode of transportation. But I think these other issues were ignored and the data that we're now seeing after the fact is proving that.

That's why I would urge more careful analysis be given and that DOT be required at the very outset to explain how it's going to analyze these various issues and what the community could expect so that informed judgments are made.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I think you're selling the community board short here. I was a member of it at the time and we have several others here. That was a lot of debate and discussion and we talked about traffic and we talked about double parking and we talked about

1
2 congestion and we talked even about the parking
3 dangers, all of which I think are real. So there
4 was a lot of discussion at that meeting before a
5 majority of the board voted in favor. That's
6 imperfect and not everyone in the community knew
7 about it, but it is the best vehicle of local
8 democracy that we have.

9 I listened and I appreciate your
10 recommendation for a one-way southbound lane,
11 which I think doesn't address the northbound
12 question. I guess I would just like to ask the
13 inverse. I wonder to what extent you've had a
14 chance to look at the modifications that are
15 discussed in the survey that we put out. It
16 presumes the same broad configuration of a parking
17 protected two-way lane but seeks to address
18 pedestrian/bike interaction safety, many of the
19 aesthetic issues that were discussed, many of the
20 parking and loading issues. Whether you've had a
21 chance to look at them and give some feedback on
22 whether they address some of the issues here, and
23 if not, if you would agree to do that and we could
24 have a conversation about them?

25 LOIS CARSWELL: I've looked at it.

1

2 I don't think they address the real issues.

3 CAROL LINN: Yes.

4 LOIS CARSWELL: Which are safety,
5 crossing the street, the double parking issue, the
6 congestion issue, the pollution issue, the
7 absolute terror of opening your door out into
8 traffic.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I think if
10 you look at them, actually, they almost all
11 address exactly those issues.

12 LOIS CARSWELL: No, but they don't-

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So without
14 saying you agree with the lane, I'm asking you if
15 you would agree to have a conversation about some
16 of them. Just as I'm glad to talk about the
17 modifications that you propose, I'd like you to be
18 willing to take a look at these modifications.
19 Not they're going to change your opinion, do they
20 help address some of the concerns that people are
21 raising. That's all I'm asking is if we're going
22 to engage in a dialogue, as I appreciate your
23 being here, if we could engage in a dialogue both
24 on the modifications you suggest and on the
25 modifications that come out of our survey.

1
2 CAROL LINN: I think the dialogue
3 you're suggesting is not quite the dialogue we
4 would like to have. I think it's a very limited
5 dialogue. I think it should be a broader
6 discussion.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: The
8 invitation to have it will stay open. I hope
9 you'll decide to take it.

10 LOIS CARSWELL: But you're coming
11 from a specific viewpoint of the lane stay and
12 let's see what we can--

13 NORMAN STEISEL: [interposing] I
14 think frankly that was one of the flaws in the
15 survey. You weren't really given an opportunity
16 to talk about alternatives. One of the things
17 that people who answered the survey, after it was
18 produced, yesterday I got three phone calls from
19 people who pointed out that had there been one of
20 the options to choose modification in the park,
21 they would have chosen that as opposed to the
22 choices they were given. So the results--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER:
24 [interposing] And if you looked, you saw 100 of
25 the 3,000 people actually suggested it. So they

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2 found a way to suggest it. Anyway, I don't want
3 to take up any more time. I will try to listen to
4 what you're saying and I ask that you also listen-

5 [Crosstalk]

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I'm going to
7 move on. I'd like to thank our first panel for
8 attending. I'd now like to call up Borough
9 President Markowitz.

10 [Pause]

11 MARTY MARKOWITZ: Whenever you're
12 ready, Mr. Chairman.

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Borough
14 President Markowitz, please proceed.

15 MARTY MARKOWITZ: Thank you very,
16 very much. Let me begin by thanking the New York
17 City Council Committee on Transportation and
18 certainly you, Chairman James Vacca, and members
19 for allowing me to speak today. I want to make it
20 clear that anything I say in my remarks nowhere
21 negates my opinion that Janette Sadik-Khan is a
22 consummate professional who cares greatly about
23 the future of transportation in this city. In
24 addition, Transportation Alternatives is an
25 outstanding organization and I thank them for

1
2 their leadership in bringing issues of
3 transportation to the forefront. My office, in
4 fact, has had a long working relationship toward
5 Brooklyn to name a couple of great events that
6 we've worked cooperatively with.

7 I'm also in favor of installing
8 bike lanes, particularly in neighborhoods closest
9 to Manhattan. I've been a vocal supporter of the
10 bike lane on 9th Street leading right into
11 Prospect Park and Park Slope and on the Brooklyn
12 waterfront greenway that will open up the entire
13 waterfront from Greenpoint to Sunset Park.

14 I also feel very strongly about the
15 importance of road safety. In fact, my office has
16 compiled a safety brochure that promotes civility,
17 common sense and respect for all road users and
18 copies are available here for anyone who might
19 like to review it.

20 But although cycling is a wonderful
21 way for people to transverse the city, it's simply
22 not a viable option for the majority of commuters.
23 Particularly in Brooklyn, many residents depend on
24 cars because their neighborhoods are not well
25 served by public transportation or not at all. In

1
2 this age of severe MTA cuts, I fear this group
3 will grow considerably.

4 As you're well aware, I've been
5 very vocal in my opposition to the drastic changes
6 made to Prospect Park West to accommodate a two-
7 way bike lane. Had DOT installed a traditional
8 bike lane, I would have supported it
9 enthusiastically. I know that overwhelmingly the
10 local residents would have as well. However, the
11 reconfiguration, in my opinion, has been a
12 disaster.

13 It increases congestion on the
14 roadway, particularly during the height of the
15 rush hour and during the summer months, the warmer
16 months, and ruins the aesthetics, in my opinion,
17 of one of the most beautiful grandest boulevards
18 New York City has, Prospect Park West. It takes
19 away parking spaces in Park Slope, one of the most
20 parking-starved neighborhoods in New York City.

21 It's increased the propensity of
22 cyclists to fail to yield to pedestrians,
23 especially to seniors, parents with small children
24 and folks with disabilities who can't see the
25 oncoming cyclists on the other side of the parked

1 cars which now are in the middle of the street.

2 It's grossly unfair, not to mention unrealistic to
3 ask pedestrians every moment of their lives to be
4 hyperactive, hyperaware of every hazard just to
5 get across the street to the park.
6

7 The point of today's meeting is to
8 discuss opportunities and challenges to oversight.

9 I have some suggestions. There's a lack of
10 clarity in how DOT makes those decisions.

11 Recently, a bike lane, as you already know, on
12 Father Capodanno Boulevard in Staten Island was
13 removed at the request of area residents, City
14 Council Member James Oddo and my colleague Staten
15 Island Borough President James Molinaro. Yet, my
16 similar request regarding Prospect Park West fell
17 on deaf ears.

18 I believe that the borough
19 president's office is worthy of some deference in
20 this matter since I'm the only elected official
21 that represents the entire Borough of Brooklyn. I
22 have a perspective on the impacts, not only in the
23 immediate area and the neighborhoods surrounding
24 the park, but all of Brooklyn.

25 On Central Park West in Manhattan,

1
2 the DOT somehow found a way to install a
3 traditional bike lane without drastically altering
4 the streets and without shifting parking to the
5 middle of the street. Of course, there is no bike
6 lane at all on Fifth Avenue along Central Park, or
7 on the area streets that lead directly into
8 Central Park. For instance, East 59th Street,
9 East 72nd Street and East 79th Street, just as
10 wide as Prospect Park West, between Madison and
11 Fifth Avenues, all of them go right into Central
12 Park, no bicycle lane.

13 It's crazy to believe that with all
14 the museums and tourists that Fifth Avenue doesn't
15 have the same problems with speeding as Prospect
16 Park West, allegedly. So why treat Brooklyn
17 different than the Upper East Side or the Upper
18 West Side of Manhattan.

19 DOT states that Prospect Park West
20 bike lane was put in to curtail speeding. You
21 would think we could have installed a couple extra
22 stop signs or traffic lights, but no. In my
23 opinion, the DOT took this request to improve
24 safety and slow down traffic and used it to turn
25 Prospect Park West into an experiment to fit their

1
2 current ideology. To me, allocating road use
3 should be about balance. Hard for some people to
4 accept the word balance. But what the DOT has put
5 on Prospect Park West is not balance, especially
6 considering that cyclists already have the use of
7 the roads in the park, which are closed to traffic
8 22 hours a day on each side during the week and 24
9 hours a day on weekends.

10 Now we could all agree that over
11 the last few years the streets of New York have
12 been radically transformed. This transformation
13 is happening at the behest of a few policy makers
14 at DOT acting unilaterally based on their
15 philosophical beliefs. Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC
16 calls for the installation of 1,800 bike lanes in
17 the five boroughs by 2030. DOT has also
18 instituted programs that have curbed driving,
19 reduced parking spaces, such as pedestrian refuge
20 islands, down the street sidewalk expansions and
21 projects that turn streets into pedestrian plazas.

22 This kind of significant change to
23 an existing condition in the city should not be
24 the sole purview of the executive branch of city
25 government and the DOT. If it were a traditional

1
2 land use, such change would have to go through
3 extensive review. But street space gets a pass
4 because it falls into some sort of oversight
5 loophole.

6 Like our land use review policies,
7 large scale changes to streets should involve
8 approval by the borough presidents and the City
9 Council, especially given the Transportation
10 Commissioner Sadik-Khan's own beliefs, as she told
11 the *New York Observer* in 2008, that in some way
12 she thinks of herself as the largest real estate
13 developer in New York.

14 Therefore, while I commend this
15 committee's current oversight efforts, I believe
16 that the Council should institute a new and potent
17 mechanism of independent oversight and approval
18 for all significant DOT interventions and street
19 changes. Any studies done on the impact of bike
20 lanes, plaza or other road changes must be made by
21 an impartial agency that is independent of the DOT
22 and not based on unscientific public opinion
23 polls.

24 Communities impacted by these
25 proposed road changes should be informed in

1
2 writing and public hearings should be required so
3 that community boards can make informed decisions
4 based on the residents and businesses they
5 represent. And of course, borough presidents must
6 be part of this oversight.

7 The Council must confront some
8 basic questions. How do we see the future of New
9 York City streets? Do we want the city's limited
10 road space given over to plazas, islands and bike
11 lanes, some of which are barely used, while there
12 are other uses that make more sense and move more
13 people. Shouldn't any reallocation of this
14 valuable road space be made to move the most
15 people and for projects like light rail or
16 trolleys?

17 There are other questions that need
18 answering. In this time of budget cuts, where is
19 this money coming from for these projects? Not
20 just construction materials and personnel and
21 contractors staffed to design bike lanes and
22 plazas. What about the potential for these road
23 changes to impede emergency vehicles? Do we
24 really know whether DOT changes are negatively
25 impacting police and FDNY? Is there even a

1
2 mechanism for the FDNY, not to mention NYPD, the
3 Sanitation Department and private ambulance
4 services to weigh in on plans before they are
5 approved?

6 The DOT claims their policies
7 foster public safety, but with all due respect, in
8 my opinion this is not only about safety, it's
9 about ideology. It's about an ideology whose
10 ultimate goal is to force people out of their
11 cars.

12 We must not treat driving and cars
13 as the enemy. Every day cars become cleaner and
14 more efficient. If we stigmatize car owners, in
15 my opinion we risk alienating a large part of the
16 city's middle class. In fact, a surprising thing
17 I found, Mr. Chairman, is that more than half the
18 emails that I received about this issue are folks
19 that are opposed to my position, admitted to me
20 that they own a car as well. For many New
21 Yorkers, owning a car is a quality of life issue,
22 one that offers security, privacy and convenience
23 for many of them, included many bikers.

24 We need to decide what the
25 fundamental mission of DOT is. Is it to

1
2 facilitate efficient movement of people and good
3 throughout the city or to create a traffic
4 nightmare to discourage car use and implement
5 nothing less than a backdoor approach to the
6 failed congestion pricing plan.

7 Since the current leadership of DOT
8 assumed the job in '07, I believe they have paid
9 scant attention to the goal of moving goods and
10 services in and out of New York City as
11 efficiently as they could. Our city economy
12 depends on this, but instead the DOT has
13 apparently decided that its priority is using the
14 government to force people out of their cars.

15 We need a rational, balanced
16 transportation policy, one that recognizes
17 appropriate areas for bicycle users, which I
18 enthusiastically support. This policy cannot be
19 developed or overseen by the DOT alone, especially
20 under its current leadership. So we must empower
21 the City Council and the borough presidents'
22 offices to play a larger role in these decisions
23 so that all New Yorkers, whether they bike, drive,
24 walk, or take public transportation, can keep this
25 city moving.

1
2 In the next few days, many
3 Brooklynites will receive my annual holiday card.
4 Let me share with you some of my favorite things.
5 This, in my opinion, will put some of this in
6 perspective. If I may, Mr. Chairman, to the song
7 of "My Favorite Things".

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Not to sing
9 though.

10 MARTY MARKOWITZ: [singing] Lanes
11 fit for Fido and lanes made for--

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [interposing] I
13 don't know if I can allow singing at a hearing.

14 MARTY MARKOWITZ: I'll read it.

15 [Laughter]

16 MARTY MARKOWITZ: I'll do it
17 briefly.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: After you sing,
19 we may all be singing the blues. I heard you once
20 before--

21 MARTY MARKOWITZ: [singing] Lanes
22 fit for Fido and lanes made for lovers, hikers and
23 bikers, significant others. A lane just for
24 Santa, but please don't complain. These are a few
25 of my favorite lanes. Strollers and schlepers and

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2 skaters and joggers, holiday lanes just for all
3 the egg noggers, let's not forget cars, it's
4 getting insane. Welcome to Brooklyn, the Borough
5 of Lanes. When the horn honks, when the dog
6 bites, when the bikers stray, I simply remember by
7 favorite lanes and then I just say, "oy vey".
8 Thank you, members of the committee. Thank you
9 very, very much.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Mr. Borough
11 President, I wish you a wonderful continued in
12 government.

13 MARTY MARKOWITZ: I'll try to keep
14 my day job.

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Keep your day
16 job, yes. Thank you, Mr. Borough President.

17 MARTY MARKOWITZ: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Keep your day
19 job. You have a quick question for the borough
20 president, Mr. Lander?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I always
22 look forward to the holiday card. I hope it's
23 coming with a recording this year. I actually
24 want to just call out attention to the fact that I
25 think your bike safety pamphlet is better than the

1
2 Council's bike safety pamphlet. I appreciate your
3 distributing it.

4 I do want to make the same request
5 that I made of the prior panel. I think it's
6 obvious that you have a different point of view on
7 what should happen with the lanes altogether, but
8 we have a set of recommendations, while
9 maintaining the configuration, that we believe go
10 to addressing many of the concerns people have. I
11 hope that we can work together to take a look at
12 them and get your feedback on them as we move
13 forward.

14 MARTY MARKOWITZ: Brad, my personal
15 objective is to remove these two-way bike lanes
16 and to install a traditional bike lane on Prospect
17 Park West. I'd love to see that. Any future
18 ideas for two-way bike lanes should incorporate
19 some of your ideas. Absolutely, I would totally
20 support that enthusiastically.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you.

22 [Off mic]

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Mr. Borough
24 President, I thank you very much.

25 MARTY MARKOWITZ: Thank you, Mr.

1

2 Chairman.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And I wish you
the best for the holidays.

5

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MARTY MARKOWITZ: All of us.
Merry, Merry, Happy--

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[Pause]

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Good health
first. Okay. Now our next panel will be--

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[Long pause]

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Our next panel
will be Noah Budnick, Transportation Alternatives,

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Christine Berthet--oh, Christine, how are you?

14

Come on up. Eric McClure. Why don't we start

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with Noah Budnick. [Pause] No, tell him no.

16

FEMALE VOICE: [Off mic] Sure.

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MALE VOICE: Yeah, because you're

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second.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, and let me

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acknowledge the presence of Council Member Van

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Bramer, I'm sorry.

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[Long pause]

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: All right, just

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for the record, I'm going to give Mr. Noah, Noah--

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NOAH BUDNICK: It's all right.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --I'm going to
3 use my discretion and give Noah a little extra
4 time because I do think that we have heard from
5 those opposed in a significant way and I would
6 like to exercise my discretion in giving Mr.
7 Budnick additional time and I will use that
8 discretion.

9 NOAH BUDNICK: Thank you, thank
10 you, Chairman Vacca. I'm Noah Budnick, I'm the
11 Deputy Director for Transportation Alternatives.
12 I'm actually going to try to keep this under two
13 minutes because I know there are dozens of you
14 here that have been sitting here for a couple
15 hours listening to good discussion with the DOT,
16 getting into process, which is something we care
17 about.

18 But we are here, dozens of New
19 Yorkers, that are in strong support of the
20 improvements that are happening to our streets,
21 not only because we like to ride bikes and really
22 believe in that, but because we walk and we drive.
23 Forty-four of Transportation Alternatives members
24 own cars, this is approximating the city average.
25 So we come from a perspective that is very much in

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line with the City of New York.

I also just want to note that a number of people had to leave, including colleagues from the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, Charlie Komanoff, a long-time transportation analyst; Roberta Gratz, I think Roberta left, who's a scholar and well revered urbanist; as well as leaders from Velo City, which is a group that teaches high school students about urban planning, just one of a couple groups in the city that works with kids, including groups like Recycle-A-Bike that are encouraging more young people to ride in New York City.

I'm going to make just a couple points. One, I want to thank the Council for their support of cycling. As many have mentioned, the Bikes Access to Buildings bill was a game changer and that has meant a lot for improving cycling in the city and we encourage you to keep supporting streetscape projects that make the streets safer for cyclists and pedestrians. And the reason why is that New Yorkers want to ride bikes. The DOT has stats on increased cycling, we have stats on increased cycling. The fact of the

1
2 matter is that cycling is the fastest growing mode
3 of transportation in the city, it's increasing at
4 a rate more than any other and that indicates a
5 trend--New Yorkers want to ride and we need to
6 make the streets safe for them.

7 Making the streets safe for
8 cyclists also makes the streets safer for
9 everybody else and this is very important--cycling
10 makes the city safer for everybody.

11 In the increasing number of
12 cyclists on the streets, there's a safety numbers
13 phenomenon, and with the infrastructure
14 improvements that have gone in, the conditions
15 have become safer for pedestrians and drivers--and
16 this is well documented.

17 Now I just want to go through a
18 quick list of projects where from petition signers
19 to local residents to community groups to
20 community boards there has been a very thorough
21 process of getting public input. All of these
22 projects started with public request: Prospect
23 Park West started with public request; 1st and 2nd
24 Avenue; Flushing; Kent; Vanderbilt Avenue; Sand
25 Street, where I've campaigned for years to improve

1
2 access to the Manhattan Bridge; Allen; Pike
3 Street; Christie Street; Vernon Boulevard in
4 Queens; Columbus Avenue was a completely
5 community-driven process; the South Bronx
6 Greenway; the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway; the
7 Bronx River Greenway; the East River Greenway.
8 These projects are moving because New Yorkers,
9 like the ones in this room, are organizing
10 themselves independent of even groups like
11 Transportation Alternatives, because they believe
12 in a better city and they want to realize these
13 projects, they want to realize streets where they
14 can go out their front door and they can get to
15 where they want to go on their bike.

16 Transportation Alternatives

17 believes in a network of protected bike lanes
18 throughout the city because that is how we're
19 going to get people of all ages and abilities to
20 ride. And bike share is going to be what is going
21 to fill these bike lanes with cyclists, bike share
22 has transformed cities. And if New York wants to
23 keep up with world cities like Paris or even
24 cities like Washington, DC, L.A., Chicago, Boston,
25 cities in our backyard, we need to pick up bike

1
2 share and we need to make it work seamlessly with
3 our public transit network and the protected bike
4 lane network is an integral part of that, you got
5 to lay the tracks before you run the train.

6 The last point I want to make is
7 that much has been done, New York City has 6,200
8 miles of streets, yet only a few hundred miles of
9 bike lanes, so there's much more work to do. And
10 for the last 50 years, our streets have really not
11 changed at all, the streets have been out of
12 balance for too long, and as we look to the
13 future, we can't forget where we've come from.
14 Neighborhoods that were torn apart by highways,
15 streets like Prospect Park West that couldn't be
16 crossed, the roads annual death tolls used to be
17 triple what they are last year, last year had the
18 lowest number of fatalities on record, and this is
19 coming in a time when, not surprisingly, more and
20 more bike improvements and pedestrian improvements
21 are going in.

22 Whether it's encouraging more
23 neighborhood bike riding with education campaigns,
24 networks and protected bike lanes, using a bike
25 share network to make cycling a seamless arm of

1
2 our public transportation system, or designing
3 roads that benefit bikers, walkers, as much as
4 drivers, we're heading in the right direction. We
5 deeply appreciate the Council's support on this
6 and we look forward to working with you to improve
7 the city for cycling, walking, and driving. Thank
8 you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, I'm
10 sorry, thank you very much. Would you identify
11 yourself? Oh, I'm sorry, Councilman Van Bramer
12 has a question.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: I think
14 I can wait 'til the panel is--

15 [Off mic]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Thank
18 you, Council Member. Please introduce yourself.

19 [Pause]

20 CHRISTINE BERTHET: My name--

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Two minutes,
22 please.

23 CHRISTINE BERTHET: --my name is
24 Christine Berthet, I'm the co-founder of CHEKPEDS,
25 a coalition for pedestrian safety of 800 members

1
2 on the West side of Manhattan. I personally do
3 not bike, and before I get in my testimony, I
4 thought I would mention that the master plan for
5 biking was introduced by Iris Weinshall, and she's
6 very proud of that.

7 Currently, automobile crashes
8 result in 250 death and 9,000 injuries annually in
9 this city. And what if there was a way to reduce
10 those numbers by half? And what if that tool
11 could be deployed rapidly and at very low cost?
12 You would probably all vote for it.

13 Well we have such a tool and it's
14 called a bike lane. In New York City, the bike
15 lane where they have been installed in our
16 neighborhood--9th Avenue, 8th Avenue--have been
17 documented to reduce crashes by over 50%, and they
18 reduced them for those streets, not just for the
19 cyclist, they reduced them for the cars, and most
20 importantly for me, for the pedestrians.

21 A bike lane reduce the crossing
22 distance and it also slows down turning cars, and
23 on 9th Avenue, eliminates conflict between turning
24 cars and pedestrian, which cause 23% of all
25 pedestrian fatalities.

1
2 A street with a bike lane is a much
3 safer street for pedestrians. And the pedestrian
4 are the large majority of all the streets' users,
5 nobody's more. Once a street is safer, people can
6 walk on it, children can walk to school, and we
7 can get to a healthier place. And, yes, it is a
8 change, and, yes, the change could be better
9 managed, but let us keep the focus on the results-
10 -saving 125 person from being killed and 4,500
11 from being injured every year is a moral
12 imperative.

13 We ask you to accelerate the
14 installation of Class 1 bike lanes, with turning
15 lanes signals throughout the city and to initiate
16 a serious education and enforcement of traffic law
17 for all users of the road. Thank you so much.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

19 [Pause]

20 ERIC MCCLURE: Thank you, Chairman
21 Vacca. My name is Eric McClure, I'm a local
22 activist in Park Slope, I'm a resident, I'm co-
23 founder of a group called Park Slope Neighbors.

24 I had a prepared text and I was
25 going to talk about how this was a project, the

1
2 Prospect Park West traffic-calming project, was a
3 project that was asked for by the community by the
4 Community Board in 2007 specifically suggesting
5 the inclusion of a protected two-way bike path and
6 the removal of a lane of traffic.

7 I was going to talk about how Park
8 Slope Neighbors collected 1,300 signatures, not
9 once, but twice, in support of traffic calming on
10 Prospect Park West, both in the beginning of 2009
11 asking DOT to implement a project like they've
12 implemented, and again this year to thank DOT and
13 remind them how much this is appreciated in the
14 community.

15 I was going to talk about how
16 speeding is down by an enormous factor on Prospect
17 Park West, where 75 % of vehicles were speeding
18 prior to the redesign, now 17 %, as the
19 Commissioner stated, are speeding currently. Our
20 own data, Park Slope Neighbors study, for an even
21 larger change in the speeding and an average speed
22 reduction of nine miles per hour.

23 I was going to talk about how
24 widely this project has been embraced in the
25 community, as evidenced by Council Member Landers

1
2 and Levin and CB6's survey, which showed that 78 %
3 of people in the community embrace it and don't
4 want it to be changed back to the way it was.

5 However, I'm going to, as quickly
6 as I can, address some of the misinformation that
7 Mr. Steisel had presented. This project was
8 primarily designed to reduce speeding, which it
9 has done to great effect. Because of the removal
10 of the lane, DOT was able to add the protected
11 bike path and further build out the bicycle
12 network. He complained about the lack of data
13 availability, however, I don't know what data he
14 didn't find available. In April 2009 at CB6's
15 Transportation Committee meeting, DOT presented
16 speed figures for the Prospect Park West, traffic
17 volume figures, they presented them again to the
18 full board, they presented them again this spring,
19 they've provided follow up data, all which shows
20 that what we had before was a traffic and speeding
21 plate avenue, which has been cured to a great
22 extent of that.

23 He talked about the increase in
24 vehicular accidents. I am in fairly frequent
25 contact with the top command at the 78th Precinct

1
2 which covers Prospect Park West, I've asked him
3 several times about any increase in accidents on
4 that avenue and I've been told repeatedly that
5 there has been no increase in accidents on that
6 avenue.

7 He cited one example of an
8 emergency vehicle which had to circle the block.
9 Again, I'd like to see the data on that because he
10 seemed so fixated on data.

11 Another point he raised was the
12 difficulty in parking and the dangers created by
13 the narrowing of Prospect Park West to two lanes.
14 I don't know how much opportunity you've had to
15 walk around Park Slope, but every other avenue in
16 the neighborhood is a two lane avenue--8th Avenue,
17 7, 6th, 5th. I've heard no clamoring from any
18 residents of any of those avenues to add a lane to
19 deal with the constriction on those roadways. The
20 fact is that Prospect Park West operates as a
21 well-designed, easily flowing roadway now, as do
22 the other two lane avenues in Park Slope.

23 Finally, as to the--he raised the
24 issue of the average travel time--and I'll finish
25 on this note, if you will--and the fact that DOT

1
2 presented data that showed that travel time has
3 not changed from one end of Prospect Park West to
4 the other, but speeding has been reduced by seven
5 miles per hour, or a factor of six in DOT's data,
6 and he said that's not possible. Well it is
7 possible because I am pretty confident that when
8 DOT went out and measured the travel time from one
9 end to another, they obeyed the speed limit on
10 Prospect Park West. The reason that you can still
11 travel legally in the same amount of time and see
12 speeding reduced is because we had so many cars
13 speeding on that avenue prior to the change.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

16 Council Member Van Bramer.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank
18 you, Mr. Chair. I think I've learned more about
19 Brooklyn streets in the last hour or so than I
20 ever thought I would.

21 I am from Queens so we can talk a
22 little bit about Queens here and I have to say I
23 am a supporter of bike lanes and always have been
24 and you talk about an increase in cycling, I
25 represent one of those people since I bought a

1
2 brand new bike on Vernon Boulevard on Long Island
3 City.

4 [Applause]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank
6 you very much. And we celebrated Bike to Work Day
7 as I bought the bike, and my partner and I are
8 frequent bikers along our bike lanes on Skillman
9 Avenue and 43rd Avenue and other places in the
10 district. And I think it makes it safer for
11 everybody.

12 So this is more directed towards
13 Noah, I mean, I'm always confounded by people who
14 say that no one uses the bike lanes, you know, no
15 one uses the bike lanes. That's not my
16 experience, that's not what I've seen when I was
17 out there. I see families, I see children with
18 their parents riding bicycles safely, and that's
19 the most important thing, so I wonder if you can
20 talk a little bit about that.

21 NOAH BUDNICK: Great, well thank
22 you for your support. And when people say nobody
23 uses bike lanes, I think about my block--I live in
24 Bed Stuy--in the middle of the day, there's no
25 traffic on it so nobody must use the street, why

1
2 do we need a road. And I think people need to
3 understand that cycling, like other types of
4 travel, is sensitive to time of day, so just from
5 a very pragmatic perspective, let's think about
6 what time of day people are making these
7 observations.

8 The other thing is--and this kind
9 of plays into the safety in numbers phenomenon--is
10 that New Yorkers are still adjusting to seeing
11 cyclists, and I think that this is an important
12 issue because it cuts across a lot of things that
13 have been raised--the use of bike lanes and also
14 the interactions between cyclists and pedestrians.
15 I think that raising awareness about the increased
16 number of cyclists will help people, number one,
17 start to recognize that the facilities are being
18 used, but it will also help improve relations
19 between cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers. And
20 the reason why crashes go down when cycling goes
21 up is because drivers just become more used to
22 noticing cyclists around them and driving more
23 safely around them. I think public awareness
24 campaigns are another great way to do that, things
25 that are more positive. We certainly agree with a

1
2 lot of sentiments here about improving cyclist's
3 behavior and have worked hard--we have a Biking
4 Rules campaign that a number of Council Members
5 have supported and it's really great, but we're a
6 small nonprofit and I think having positive
7 messages out about cycling will also help raise
8 awareness.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER:

10 Absolutely. Mr. Chair, you--

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: No, Mr. Bramer,
12 you proceed, I don't want to interrupt you.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: You're
14 the Chair. I thought I heard someone testifying
15 before, and they may have been against a bike
16 lane, say something about it being bad for the
17 environment. And I thought that was one of the
18 more interesting things that I've heard spoken
19 about in opposition to bike lanes, so I was
20 wondering if you could just talk a little bit
21 about it, 'cause it seems to me that reducing
22 vehicular traffic actually seems to be good for
23 the environment.

24 NOAH BUDNICK: Yeah, anybody who
25 says that cycling is bad for the environment is

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wrong--

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Yeah.

NOAH BUDNICK: --it's pretty simple. And what I appreciate is the numbers that the Department of Transportation has put behind the impressive redesigns where they have removed lanes--9th Avenue, 8th Avenue have gone on what we call road diets where traveling is removed and they've showed that the impacts to drivers haven't been tremendous--the same number of cars are moving down these streets, the travel times are the same. And what's interesting is that they say the same number of cars move, but in fact, the streets now move more people, and I wish Marty was here to hear this, but we're talking about moving people and by putting in bike lanes, we're making more efficient use of the space, 1st and 2nd Avenue are a great example, you have buses on one side, you have room for cars, and you have the bike and pedestrian improvements on the other side. And with good loading regulations, those streets are really models, not just for New York, but we think for the country in terms of how you move people and goods efficiently in a dense urban

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2 environment.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: And

just one more question, Mr. Chair. I was on

Community Board 2 in Queens before I got elected

and was very proud to vote in favor of bike lanes

and, I'm not going to lie, there was some

discussion and disagreement over that issue, but

I'll just say that I won the neighborhoods with

the bike lanes by the largest margins in my

district, so I think that speaks for itself.

But I wanted to just ask you to

talk a little bit about it 'cause there's a lot of

discussion about Community Board involvement in

the process and so I'm interested to hear your

thoughts about that, because obviously you know

where I stand on this issue, but it's always good

to have an open dialogue and make sure that

there's buy-in and people feel included in the

process.

NOAH BUDNICK: Sure, I'll just say

something briefly, but Christine Berthet is

actually on Community Board 4 and can--

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER:

[Interposing] In Queens?

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CHRISTINE BERTHET: No.

2

NOAH BUDNICK: In Manhattan, but

3

I'll just say--

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: No--

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[Crosstalk]

6

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Manhattan.

7

NOAH BUDNICK: Just quickly, on the

8

record, we fully support the process of Community

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Board involvement, the Council has legislated

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this, we think it's a good mechanism and that it

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should be followed up on, that's Local Law 90 from

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last year, and it's a great way for the agencies

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to teach the public about new designs, our streets

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haven't changed in 50 years, so these are very new

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ideas, but also to collect feedback to make the

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designs work better, we think that that's an

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important part of making these changes last for

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generations. And Christine will...

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CHRISTINE BERTHET: Yes, we have

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9th Avenue bike lane and 8th Avenue bike lane on

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the west part of Manhattan and, indeed, when the

22

9th Avenue, the first one, was installed, it was a

23

little rough and the process was not very good.

24

But after that, the process was very good of

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1
2 consultation, going out, putting leaflet, asking
3 people to come present. Where the process could
4 be improved, I think, is after a bike lane has
5 been installed, follow up, come back, and see what
6 doesn't work, what needs to be fixed, because, you
7 know, as you would do an apartment, you do the
8 bike lane, and then you say whoops, this doesn't
9 work. So there is a little bit of a follow up
10 process that could be improved, but this is really
11 marginal and it works really well with the
12 Community Board.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank
14 you.

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
16 thank you.

17 ERIC MCCLURE: If I may, to Mr. Van
18 Bramer's question, in--

19 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
20 Well I'm going to have to move this now.

21 ERIC MCCLURE: Okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Just for the
23 record, Noah, can I ask you can you give us an
24 estimate how many people use bicycles on a daily
25 basis in New York City?

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2 NOAH BUDNICK: Our estimate is over
3 200,000 people ride bikes every day in New York
4 City, and that's increased 123 % in the last 10
5 years.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Council
7 Member Brad Lander, quickly.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: First I
9 want to thank Mr. McClure for the way you've
10 brought sort of data to the Prospect Park West
11 conversation. My question is for Mr. Budnick.
12 You heard from my colleagues earlier the
13 enforcement concerns that we have and I think a
14 thing that just we haven't been able to address
15 enough today 'cause we haven't had the NYPD here,
16 and this goes both on cars, but on cyclists as
17 well, is that 123 % increase in the cycling rate
18 is great, my hunch is we haven't had an increase
19 in cycling enforcement or in car enforcement as
20 well and I wonder what you think we can do to
21 increase enforcement of street safety to match the
22 evolution of our streets.

23 NOAH BUDNICK: We would love your
24 help in that. It's the reason why we started our
25 Biking Rules campaign, we distributed, I think,

1
2 over 50,000 of these booklets, we're having it
3 translated into Chinese and Spanish, we're working
4 on a business version as well. We really think
5 that empowering cyclists to be the role models and
6 to act, behave safely on the streets they can set
7 the tone.

8 But cyclists aren't an anomaly when
9 it comes to the behavior on New York City streets,
10 there's over a million red lights run every day,
11 our research shows that 40 % of motorists speed,
12 and find me somebody who's never jaywalked here
13 and I'll buy them whatever they want. But where's
14 the NYPD? Where were they at this hearing? Where
15 were they at the hearings on the bills for better
16 data transparency, which we strongly support.

17 And maybe it's not going to be a
18 top-down thing, maybe it's working with the
19 precincts, our volunteer committees have been
20 trying to work with precincts and had some decent
21 reception. So we're open to all ideas on engaging
22 the police department.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And I have to
24 note for the record, and I commend Transportation
25 Alternatives for their efforts to educate the

1
2 public about going slower and looking at the speed
3 limit to see if we can do something about the
4 speed limit and I support your efforts and I thank
5 you for your work in that regard. Council Member
6 James.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Noah, there
8 were suggestions earlier from some colleagues who
9 have left, they've introduced some bills with
10 respect to regulation, registration, licensing of
11 cyclists. What's your thoughts?

12 NOAH BUDNICK: We're staunchly
13 opposed to any form of bicycle licensing. You can
14 register your bike with your local precinct, we
15 think that's a good idea, it can help if your bike
16 is ever stolen and you have renters insurance or
17 homeowners insurance, it helps you make a claim.
18 It also can help you get the bike back if they
19 find it. But licensing is a barrier to cycling
20 and it's one more step that people would have to
21 go through to get on their bike and that
22 undermines the safety in numbers effect. I think
23 that it also introduces a number of equity
24 questions about affordability of licensing. I
25 mean, the beauty of bicycling is it's a form of

1
2 transportation anybody can basically afford and it
3 also asks questions about the age, how much a
4 program like that would cost, who's going to
5 administer it. It just kind of goes on and on--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Right.

7 NOAH BUDNICK: --and so you have to
8 ask what the end goal is.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: And you
10 don't have the same position as it relates to
11 commercial cyclists, right?

12 NOAH BUDNICK: Commercial cyclists
13 have a number of laws that they're supposed to
14 follow. They're supposed to have identifying
15 apparel on with the--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Right.

17 NOAH BUDNICK: --business, the
18 phone number, a number of the cyclist, and we
19 support those bills. We think that businesses
20 should be held accountable for the--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Right.

22 NOAH BUDNICK: --behavior of their-
23 -

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Right.

25 NOAH BUDNICK: --delivery people

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and this unfortunately comes back to the NYPD.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: So it comes down to enforcement. Thank you. I know the chair has to move on.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, thank you for this panel for your input. I want to welcome Borough President Scott Stringer. Call him up to now testify. [Pause] Yes, oh yes. [Pause] After Borough President Stringer, we will hear from--

[Crosstalk]

SCOTT STRINGER: So I heard.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --Steve--

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --after Borough President Stringer, we will hear from Nancy Gruskin, Steven Corson--

SCOTT STRINGER: [Interposing] He's with me, Council Member.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, he's with you, I'm sorry.

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Nancy Gruskin,

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2 Craig Hammerman, are you here?

3 [Off mic]

4 SCOTT STRINGER: Okay. I'm about
5 to.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Maybe outside?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: No, Craig
8 had to leave, he left testimony for the record and
9 he--

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, okay.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: --also left
12 the survey that's been referred to a few times for
13 the record.

14 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. So we'll
15 have Ms. Gruskin and we'll get two other people to
16 join her, but let me now introduce and welcome
17 Borough President Scott Stringer, we welcome you
18 and thank you for your testimony.

19 SCOTT STRINGER: Well thank you,
20 Chairman Vacca and Members of the City Council
21 Transportation Committee for the opportunity to
22 testify on New York City bike lanes. And I really
23 do commend you for addressing this controversial
24 issue and providing a much needed public forum for
25 a discussion of bike lanes.

1
2 This past fall, my office drew
3 broad attention to the issue of bike lane safety
4 with the release of an unscientific survey,
5 "Respect the Path, Clear the Lane," that found a
6 troubling 1,781 bike lane blockages and other
7 infractions during morning and evening rush hours
8 at 11 Manhattan locations.

9 Among the measured categories most
10 relevant to this legislation, observers noted 741
11 instances of pedestrians encroaching upon bike
12 lanes, over 275 occurrences of motor vehicle
13 blockage, among them police cars and school buses.
14 We saw 242 cyclists riding the wrong way in a bike
15 lane, 237 cyclists riding through red lights, and
16 42 instances where cyclists rode on the sidewalk
17 on streets with a bike lane. Observers even
18 noticed a collision between a cyclist and a
19 pedestrian in a midtown bike lane.

20 Clearly, as the report underscored,
21 Manhattan bike lanes are not yet operating at peak
22 efficiency. Enforcement has been lax and evidence
23 from our report and others suggests that the NYPD
24 may not be prioritizing bike lane regulation and
25 enforcement to the extent that many of us would

1
2 like to see. The result is anger and frustration
3 on both sides of the bike lane divide.

4 I'd like to be clear that I am a
5 staunch supporter of New York City bike lanes, I
6 believe in transportation alternatives. As the
7 bike lane network grows, it becomes exponentially
8 more useful, providing safety options for those
9 that wish to use an environmentally sustainable
10 and healthy mode of transportation. However, it
11 is undeniable that bike lanes have been
12 implemented at a rapid pace and many New Yorkers
13 are feeling confused by the changes to the
14 streetscape and disenfranchised by the City's lack
15 of public education and community consultation.

16 As bike lane networks continue to
17 expand, so should community outreach. The New
18 York City Department of Transportation must do a
19 better job engaging community voices. I was
20 encouraged to hear from my staff that DOT'S bike
21 lane coordinator listened to community concerns
22 firsthand at a recent transportation meeting
23 hosted by Community Board 12 in northern
24 Manhattan. This type of sincere citizen
25 engagement will go a long way towards tempering

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2 frustrations about new bike lanes.

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4 Public education also must be
5 stepped up. DOT should be commended for the
6 efforts that have been taken thus far to educate
7 the public on the 200 new miles of bike lanes that
8 have been rolled out in the last three years. My
9 office is optimistic that the "Don't be a Jerk"
10 public education campaign--although I would change
11 that name--will be a very helpful tool for
12 spreading information on bike lanes. But there is
13 more to be done.

14

15 The bulk of the City's public
16 education efforts on bike lanes has been geared
17 towards cyclists and not pedestrians and
18 motorists. This should be changed.

19

20 Additionally, significant concerns
21 about New York's new bike lanes have been raised
22 by people with disabilities and their advocates.
23 A dialogue should begin with this community right
24 away.

25

26 We included numerous other
27 recommendations in the report which I released.
28 Many of them are relevant today. One, there
29 should be increased signage alerting cyclists,

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pedestrians, and motorists to bike lanes.

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Two, we should launch a taxi cab public awareness campaign on the dangers of dooring. If we can have a "Pick the Greenest Taxi Cab" contest in the cabs, for God's sakes, let's take advantage of the taxi cab advertisement mechanism so that people learn that they shouldn't door a cyclist in the middle of a bike lane. This should happen immediately and I've been in touch with TLC Commissioner David Yassky.

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Three, the City should reserve parking spots for delivering along commercial streets to discourage bike lane blockages.

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And, four, where possible, we should steer clear of bike lanes that mix cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists together.

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Last, but not least, the City should make available data related to bike safety and conduct regular surveys like this one so we know if New York City bike lanes are functioning at maximum potential.

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And finally, I am disturbed to learn that 311 does not have a specific category for bike lane complaints in their monthly reports.

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Rather, 311 appears to organize bike lane complaints in the NYPD quality of life section under the broad heading "bike/roller skate chronic." Bike/roller skate chronic. So what does that mean? So we should change that. Several constituents have reached out to my office to complain that 311 operators are unavailable to file their complaints about bike lane misuse and obstructions. In reaction, staff from my office have also inquired with 311 and have had difficulty engaging the operators on bike lane specific complaints. Gale Brewer, the New York City Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications should add new bike lane specific complaint categories to 311 to ensure that policy makers have new empirical measures of community sentiment on bike lanes.

I want to thank this committee and especially you, Chairman Vacca. Not a day goes by that you don't patrol what's happening out on our streets as Chair of Transportation and this hearing really gives us a unique opportunity to figure out a way that we can balance the transportation alternatives that this city

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2 desperately wants and needs, but also let's be
3 practical in making sure that there's a real
4 safety mechanism in place, that we don't get so
5 far ahead of ourselves that we can't pull back and
6 then we have a hearing because there was a
7 tremendous or terrible tragedy that could have
8 been prevented if we were able to get the
9 Department of Transportation, the Taxi and
10 Limousine Commission, all the stakeholders around
11 your table, Mr. Chair, to figure out a safety
12 protocol that will go a long way to making this a
13 very successful transportation hub. So I want to
14 thank both of you.

15 And I'm not--

16 [Crosstalk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --song?

18 SCOTT STRINGER: --I'm not--

19 [Laughter]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: You have to
21 end with a song.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I don't think
23 Borough President Stringer is aware of our
24 serenade before, but we welcome you--

25 SCOTT STRINGER: You know, I love--

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --we welcome
3 you without--

4 [Crosstalk]

5 SCOTT STRINGER: --I love and
6 respect the Brooklyn Borough President, but we
7 roll a little differently on getting our point of
8 view across.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: We welcome you
10 without a serenade. I do want to say--

11 SCOTT STRINGER: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --that the
13 point you're making about 311 and the reality that
14 we are behind the times--we just heard from
15 Transportation Alternatives, we have 200,000, they
16 estimate, using bicycles and how that information
17 is not aggregated on 311 in a way that can help
18 policymakers and in a way that can help
19 pedestrians and bicyclists and motorists all
20 alike, I think that's a very appropriate point and
21 it's something that my committee will explore, I
22 want to look into that further.

23 SCOTT STRINGER: Thank--

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I always thank
25 you for your testimony, it's always very--

1

SCOTT STRINGER: Thank you.

2

3

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --appropriate
and very well done.

4

5

SCOTT STRINGER: It's nice having a
chair that understands these issues and it's
really great working with all these Council
Members and Council Member James and Council
Member Brewer and--

6

7

8

9

10

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

11

[Interposing] We're getting him a bicycle for
Christmas, the Chair.

12

13

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: That's what she
says, don't listen to her.

14

15

SCOTT STRINGER: Yeah, this is a
very tough committee, that's why Marty had to sing
for his life, right? Okay. Thank you, have a
wonderful--

16

17

18

19

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, Mr.
Borough President.

20

21

SCOTT STRINGER: --have a wonderful
holiday season, thank you.

22

23

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: The best of
holidays to you.

24

25

SCOTT STRINGER: Thank you very

1

2 much.

3

4

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Nancy Gruskin, Nancy Gruskin, Jack Brown--

5

MALE VOICE: Bye bye.

6

7

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --Mel Wymore, Community Board 7 Manhattan.

8

[Off mic]

9

[Pause]

10

11

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, you don't think he's here, Gale?

12

13

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, I don't think so.

14

15

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Is Mel Wymore here? Because, if not, I will call another name.

16

17

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: There's a little kid--

18

[Pause]

19

20

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh please, did they sign up, did the little ones sign up?

21

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Come up.

22

23

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Come on up, just come on up and then you tell us your name when you get here. Did you sign up?

24

25

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yes, he

1

2 did.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Sir, okay, when you sit down, you tell us, you sit down there first. Sit down next to Ms. Gruskin. And I called one other name. Oh, you're Jack Brown, okay, good, okay, you I--okay. Let me first hear from Ms. Gruskin. Everyone, I do appreciate your attention and keeping the noise non-existent. The people who testify really do deserve your attention. Thank you for your help. Ms. Gruskin.

NANCY GRUSKIN: My name is Nancy Gruskin, I'm the President of the Stuart C. Gruskin Family Foundation. For those of you who don't know my story, my husband, Stuart, was fatally struck by a bicycle rider going the wrong way down the street in Midtown last year. He died of a massive brain injury four days after entering the hospital and he left behind 12-year-old twins at the time. While I understand that dying at the hands of bicycle is a rare occurrence now, this type of a tragedy has the potential of escalating with the burgeoning cycling movement. We must recognize the issues we currently have and take steps to fix them.

1
2 I will speak here about the bike to
3 the pedestrian link as it is the missing link in
4 the transportation triangle. While there are many
5 issues to contend with, the first priority, as I
6 see it, is the lack of accurate data regarding
7 cyclist-on-pedestrian incidents. Right now, it
8 does not publicly exist. How can we make sound
9 policy regarding cyclists and pedestrians and the
10 infrastructures that protect them if we don't know
11 what is happening on our city streets? We know
12 that the NYPD has this data in its incident
13 reports and the DOT has access to this data, but
14 this is not being released to the public.
15 Accurate information involving the incidents
16 between the cyclist and the pedestrian is a real
17 missing link in the transportation triangle and
18 the public must demand accurate information before
19 moving ahead with any future policies and
20 programs.

21 With the doubling of the cycling
22 movement since 2006, I guess Sadik-Khan says, it
23 is evident that the real challenge is to change
24 the behaviors of the drivers, the bikers, and
25 pedestrians in this dense environment. Real

1
2 change happens slowly, but it can happen with a
3 strong foundation of education and enforcement.

4 If it was mandatory that delivery
5 cyclists go through a training and education
6 program to educate them on how to drive and
7 operate their bicycles properly and lawfully, this
8 would go a long way towards advancing public
9 safety and changing public perception in general
10 towards cycling. But this will not happen without
11 serious, practical, and responsible enforcement,
12 as well as the understanding by the city and its
13 agencies that, without this serious enforcement,
14 any educational or PR campaign will lack true
15 effectiveness.

16 I am really done now. I urge the
17 city and its agencies to create a task force that
18 could include many agencies and pedestrian
19 advocacy groups to establish a comprehensive and
20 balanced approach to a responsible transportation
21 culture that works for all New Yorkers.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Let me
24 interject--thank you--let me interject here.
25 First, I'm very sorry for your loss.

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NANCY GRUSKIN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: My attempt at this hearing today is to effectuate that type of a balanced approach to this issue. Anyone who drives or bicycles dangerously is a danger to you and to me and to the whole city. We've got to do something to reign in anyone who engages in dangerous conduct. This hearing today is designed to get a handle on where are we going with transportation policy vis-a-vis pros and cons of our current policy. You bring up some good points. The task force was something I mentioned before, I mentioned that I did see a need for an interagency task force, Commissioner Sadik-Khan did not, she said that she already has contact with other agencies, yet today, when I asked for information from other agencies, it was not readily available. When I say interagency formal task force, I did not mean a telephone conversation, I meant a planning group that meets regularly that includes advocates on both sides of the question, as your testimony indicates. And I will press ahead with that and that is something that if the city does not do that

1
2 administratively, that is something that I will
3 consider doing legislatively, I feel that strongly
4 on the topic.

5 So I thank you for your testimony.

6 NANCY GRUSKIN: Thank you very
7 much.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. Mr.
9 Brown. Oh no, I'm sorry, the young man, I thought
10 you were Mr. Brown, you're Mr. Brown.

11 JACK BROWN: I'm Mr. Brown.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Would you
13 introduce yourself, please, sir?

14 CLARK VACCARO: All right, my name
15 is Clark Vaccaro, I live on the Upper East Side
16 and go to school on the Upper West Side. I'm 13
17 years old, and since I was 8, I've traveled mainly
18 by bike. Thank you for this chance to explain why
19 protected bike paths are so important to me and
20 other teenagers.

21 Bicycling is the best way to travel
22 and explore the city. My trip to school takes
23 half as long by bike as by bus or subway, and when
24 I'm riding, I meet people I know and learn the
25 neighborhood in a way I never could by taxi or

1
2 bus. I've even stopped by a few times to visit
3 Council Member Brewer, whose office is on my way
4 to school.

5 On the weekends, our family bikes
6 all over the city, to places like Coney Island,
7 the Hall of Science, Wave Hill, Arthur Avenue,
8 Snug Harbor, and Neponsit Beach. I don't play
9 sports much either, so bicycling is very important
10 for keeping me healthy and focused. Many other
11 New York families also rely on bikes for
12 commuting, touring, and exercise.

13 Families need protected bike paths.
14 Even when I was young enough to bike legally on
15 the sidewalk, I used the roadway because
16 pedestrians didn't want me there, but riding on
17 the roadway is dangerous and unpleasant because
18 motorists too often tailgate, honk, and pass at
19 unsafe speeds. I use unprotected, painted bike
20 lanes when they're safe, but too often they're
21 blocked by opening car doors, double-parked
22 vehicles, and pedestrians. Only physically
23 separated, protected bike paths give cyclists a
24 safe, clear right-of-way.

25 The new protected bike path on

1
2 Columbus Avenue has made a huge difference in my
3 daily commute to school. I don't have to look out
4 for opening car doors or motor vehicle traffic
5 from behind. Up until now, I have only ridden
6 with my father or other adults, however, more
7 protected bike paths mean that I can soon begin
8 riding on my own.

9 On behalf of the children and
10 teenagers of New York, I ask the committee to
11 support the continued construction of protected
12 bike paths.

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you very
14 much, I appreciate your testimony. Where do you
15 go to school?

16 CLARK VACCARO: I go to school at
17 the Calhoun School.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And what grade
19 are you in?

20 CLARK VACCARO: I am in seventh
21 grade.

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Seventh grade,
23 great. Well one day you'll be in the City Council
24 I hope. That'll teach you. But thank you very
25 much.

1
2 CLARK VACCARO: You're welcome,
3 thank you for your time.

4 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Please, you
5 could stay in case we have questions. Mr. Brown.

6 JACK BROWN: My name is Jack Brown,
7 I'm a former owner of the Hi-Ho Cyclery, 165
8 Avenue A in the Lower East Side, and I'm currently
9 the spokesman for an organization called Coalition
10 Against Rogue Riding, referring to the reckless
11 riding.

12 It feels like we may be at the
13 point toward a responsible bike culture in New
14 York that was reached at the end of Phillip Roth's
15 celebrated novel "Portnoy's Complaint." Portnoy's
16 psychiatrist, after listening to his catharsis,
17 says, "Ah, now we may begin." This oversight
18 hearing can form the basis for a coordinated
19 effort to address the various concerns of the city
20 agencies that go into forming a functional,
21 productive bike culture. The effort must be
22 cooperative, consistent, and considered--
23 everything that it has not been up to now.

24 The Coalition Against Rogue Riding
25 advocates responsible enforcement as the backbone

1
2 of a law abiding cycling community. It is the
3 bottom line where responsible bike communities
4 work. Why not here?

5 By withholding the services of the
6 NYPD, it merely increases the sense of impunity on
7 the part of irresponsible bike riders and
8 undermines the credibility of the police
9 department--in my opinion, a lose-lose situation.

10 When I see adults cycling with
11 youngsters on their bikes without helmets and
12 against the flow of traffic, that constitutes
13 child welfare endangerment. When I see cyclists
14 on battery powered bikes riding every which way
15 but right, I know something needs enforcement.
16 It's time to establish a task force to consider
17 the various and increasingly urgent issues
18 necessary to promoting a responsible bike culture.
19 Clearly, the scattershot approach currently
20 employed is a significant failure. An exercise in
21 zealotry. It is time that a callous disregard for
22 public safety is recognized for what it is and not
23 conflated with a green ideal going toxic.

24 I urge the Transportation Committee
25 to exercise whatever powers it has to formally

1
2 establish a task force to pursue this goal in a
3 considered and knowledgeable fashion. It is my
4 belief that the public would respond with
5 appreciation that a coalition of elected public
6 officials will bring to bear the resources of
7 their offices to advance such a process.

8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
10 thank you both.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I very
12 quick.

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes, Gale
14 Brewer.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Very quick,
16 Clark, what would you suggest doing to try to get
17 more people to use the bike paths, not go down on
18 the wrong side of the street, and obey the laws,
19 what do you suggest?

20 CLARK VACCARO: Well I haven't
21 really thought about that, but I--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
23 [Interposing] Think about everything, go ahead.

24 CLARK VACCARO: All right, I
25 definitely think that the police department should

1
2 step up encouraging people to not bicycle the
3 wrong way or counterflow because that's just
4 really very dangerous and it is very bad for
5 cycling in general and the people who aren't
6 biking who might get hit. But I just think that
7 if the police department could enforce that more,
8 that would be great, actually.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you
10 very much.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
12 thank you both. Our next panel, Elizabeth Brody,
13 Barry Benepe, Ken Coughlin.

14 [Pause]

15 MALE VOICE: Here.

16 [Pause]

17 [Off mic]

18 BARRY BENEPE: I know, it's getting
19 ready for Christmas.

20 [Off mic]

21 [Pause]

22 BARRY BENEPE: Need one more chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Who should go
24 first? Let me see if I get somebody to go first,
25 who--

1

[Crosstalk]

2

[Pause]

3

ELIZABETH BRODY: Okay.

4

[Off mic]

5

ELIZABETH BRODY: Sorry.

6

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I will ask Ms.

7

Brody to go first, please.

8

ELIZABETH BRODY: Okay. Well I'll

9

make a contrast. My name is Elizabeth Brody and

10

I'm a contrast but in complete agreement with that

11

13-year-old, remarkable. I'm a resident of

12

midtown Manhattan who bicycles for recreation, but

13

also for traveling around the city. I've never

14

been a bold rider, but nowadays, as an older

15

cyclist, I'm especially grateful for the City's

16

new style of bike lane that protects cyclists from

17

moving vehicles with a buffer.

18

I went on a recent group bike trip

19

to Brooklyn on a Saturday. My harrowing ride

20

southbound on 2nd Avenue palpably eased when we

21

reached the safe confines of the protected bike

22

lane at 34th Street.

23

I also appreciate the City's recent

24

improvements from my experience as a trustee of

25

1
2 the East Coast Greenway Alliance. Our task is to
3 find a safe and accessible trail, preferably off-
4 road, for cyclists and walkers all up and down the
5 eastern seaboard. We use existing paths going our
6 way of waterfront promenades, rail-trails, and
7 such, and then encourage local officials to close
8 the gaps between them.

9 I'm familiar with greenways all
10 along our 3,000 mile route, from Maine's new Down
11 East Sunrise Trail to stretches along Florida's
12 Atlantic Ocean, but I can safely say that New
13 York's network of biking facilities is still the
14 jewel in our necklace. We have two routes through
15 New York, almost all off-road is the western
16 route, from the Westchester border through
17 parklands across the north Bronx and then south
18 along the Hudson River Greenway to a ferry or PATH
19 train to New Jersey.

20 Our eastern route, by the way, runs
21 along the Bronx River Parkway and the East River
22 Esplanade. That is why we actively support the
23 effort to close the gap on the East River in
24 midtown Manhattan.

25 Thank you.

1

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

2

Sir.

3

BARRY BENEPE: Yeah.

4

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Introduce
yourself for the record.

5

6

BARRY BENEPE: Boy, that was really
a comprehensive view, I'm really proud to follow
you.

7

8

9

Good afternoon, my name is Barry
Benepe, I live at 49 Jane Street, Manhattan, and I
asked somebody this morning, how do I get to City
Hall and they said get elected, and fortunately,
you all did and, fortunately, I didn't. But so
I'm happy to take advantage of your courtesy to
speak to you today.

10

11

12

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16

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
You put it very well, sir, you're very, very
diplomatic.

17

18

19

BARRY BENEPE: Thank you. I want
to sort of give a larger view to this issue, it's
more than bike lanes, it's what we do with our
streets.

20

21

22

23

I'm here to support the sensible
reallocation of street space to safeguard both

24

25

1
2 pedestrians and bicyclists while making the city a
3 more delightful, human, and safe place in which to
4 live.

5 I once cycled in Manhattan, having
6 had a severe collision with a truck passing
7 through a red light at 10th Street and Greenwich
8 Avenue in 1987. I was nearly killed and,
9 fortunately, I was only two blocks from St.
10 Vincent's Hospital and 100 stitches in my head
11 helped me recover, and I'm glad my bicycle, which
12 was demolished, was not one of the ghost bikes
13 referred to by Councilperson James.

14 I have walked the streets all my
15 adult life with an eye toward their improvement as
16 public spaces and have devoted most of my
17 professional career as a planner writing about and
18 planning for a safer, more attractive, legible,
19 and convenient street system.

20 Bike lanes are only one minor part
21 of our street system. Streets, including their
22 sidewalks, form the only public space which all of
23 us use on a daily basis. They shape the city by
24 providing views of our built environment. They
25 define our movement and connect us with our rail

1
2 and bus transit. Everyone who walks out of this
3 room is going to be a pedestrian.

4 The current Department of
5 Transportation--may I continue? Thank you--has
6 followed the precedents established by both the
7 late Mayor John Lindsay, who initiated the
8 temporary closings of Madison and Sixth Avenues
9 and the automobile park drives originally designed
10 for horses and carriages in Central and Prospect
11 Parks, and former Mayor Edward I. Koch who
12 permanently reclaimed pedestrian space along Sixth
13 Avenue in Soho. The street--

14 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]

15 Let me say this.

16 BARRY BENEPE: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I will let you
18 continue, but I didn't see how long your testimony
19 was, so can you condense?

20 BARRY BENEPE: Yes, sir.

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Because I have
22 to be--

23 BARRY BENEPE: Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --consistent.

25 BARRY BENEPE: I will really

1
2 summarize, I think the Commissioner's done a
3 terrific job of designing our streets, making them
4 beautiful, making them walkable, especially go
5 walk in Times Square and see the beauty of the
6 pavement alone, people have displaced all these
7 screaming taxis, it's now a human place at Times
8 Square.

9 And finally, I want to throw in one
10 bombshell and that is, it's an issue which no one
11 has wanted to deal with over the past 50 years,
12 but the free parking provided that some 2 million
13 cars throughout the city at no cost for private
14 vehicles, for privately owned vehicles. This
15 space could create a potential fund of over a
16 billion dollars a year in gross income of the
17 City, net whatever it costs to police it and
18 collect the fines. So I urge you to look into
19 that.

20 DOT has started a process of taming
21 our streets to make life better for those who live
22 and visit here. Let's continue and achieve some
23 goals. Thank you.

24 [Pause]

25 KEN COUGHLIN: Is this on? Yes.

1
2 My name is Ken Coughlin, I'm a member of Community
3 Board 7 in Manhattan. As you've heard, this past
4 summer, the Department of Transportation installed
5 physically protected bike lane along one mile of
6 Columbus Avenue in our district. Our Community
7 Board chose this site.

8 In response to pleas from residents
9 for safer streets for all users, our board passed
10 by a decisive margin a resolution in October 2009
11 asking the DOT to come up with a plan for
12 protected bike lanes on Amsterdam and Columbus
13 Avenues.

14 DOT returned to us this spring with
15 a detailed design for a bike lane on Columbus, as
16 well as for pedestrian refuge islands to make
17 crossing the avenue less perilous. As our board
18 and community members evaluated the proposal, DOT
19 was diligent in responding to concerns, including
20 holding a meeting for businesses. Our board
21 ultimately voted to approve at a meeting attended
22 by more than 100 community residents, nearly all
23 of whom supported the street redesign. This was
24 hardly a case of an imperial administration
25 foisting bike lanes on a district with no

1

2 community input.

3

4 Our streets have not changed in any
5 meaningful way in the past 50 years. During that
6 time, manmade climate change has become a part of
7 our lexicon. We've learned that our supply of
8 fossil fuels is not infinite and many world-class
9 cities, such as London, have devised more
10 efficient ways to use their street space and have
11 dramatically reduced the carnage caused by motor
12 vehicles. But despite these discoveries and
13 advances, up 'til now New York City's streets have
14 remained essentially untouched.

14

15 Any business that had resisted
16 change for decades would have vanished long ago.
17 Yes, there is an imbalance on our streets: They
18 are a monoculture of cars. The cause of this
19 imbalance has been our unwillingness to move
20 forward.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I thank you
22 very much. You made some reference to several
23 items and I wanted to comment. You know, our job
24 here at the committee on the Council--

24

25 KEN COUGHLIN: Yes.

25

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --our job is to

1
2 ask probing questions, it doesn't mean that we're
3 for or against something, but we have an oversight
4 responsibility.

5 KEN COUGHLIN: Sure.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: When Borough
7 President Markowitz was testifying concerning DOT
8 and that sometimes DOT is using methods that are
9 out of the box to address speeding issues, and
10 bike lanes are one of them, I disagree with him.
11 I think some of the tools DOT has in their arsenal
12 to address issues, such as traffic speed, are the
13 ones you referred to, and I think many of them
14 have worked. I think the [off mic] sometimes, I
15 think the pushing curbs out, I mean, I see them
16 all and I worked with DOT, and I do think some of
17 them are creative. You know, we cannot ask for a
18 stop sign or a traffic light on every block, we
19 have to look at areas that sometimes defy solution
20 and try to think of what we can do. I appreciate
21 you mentioning those things because, more than
22 bike paths, I think we have to look at
23 transportation in the context of pedestrian
24 safety, and that is my concern. You know, a
25 pedestrian is always right, even when they're

1
2 wrong. I've said that and I mean it because, even
3 if they're wrong, I think Commissioner Sadik-Khan,
4 or was it Borough President Markowitz, one of them
5 said everyone jaywalks, well they're wrong, but
6 they're right because they still should be safe
7 even if they jaywalk, even though jaywalking is
8 wrong. The pedestrians got to be our priority.

9 All right, I don't want to make a
10 speech, but I wanted to comment. All right, thank
11 you all very much, thank you.

12 Our next panel, Dr. Benjamin
13 Shepard, Linda Linday, Karl Roeslev.

14 [Pause]

15 MALE VOICE: Hey.

16 [Pause]

17 [Off mic]

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Sir, would you
19 please start.

20 BENJAMIN SHEPARD: Yes, sir. My
21 name is Benjamin Shepard, I am the author of "The
22 Beach Beneath the Streets, New York's Contested
23 Public Spaces." By day, I'm a college professor
24 at New York City College of Technology.

25 Every day I ride my bike to work, I

1
2 zig and zag down Smith Street, across Jay, and
3 you'd think that the bike lanes there were parking
4 lanes because there's so many cars parked there
5 and it creates a very dangerous situation to try
6 and ride my bike just to work.

7 My testimony here today says people
8 should not take their life in their hands because
9 they want to ride a bike in New York City. Riding
10 a bike is fun, it's a healthy thing for urban
11 living.

12 For the last five years, I've
13 participated in bike lane liberation rides as a
14 member of Times Up New York. We have witnessed
15 cars double parked in bike lanes, police cars in
16 bike lanes, loading trucks parked in bike lanes,
17 delivery vans parked in bike lanes. Yet, never
18 have I seen a policeman arresting or ticketing a
19 car in a bike lane. Is this a parking lot or a
20 bike lane we often ask. According to a Hunter
21 College Study, there is a 60 % chance of a cyclist
22 being obstructed by a car in a bike lane.

23 Another part of my experience is
24 that I'm the father of two daughters that go to
25 school on Prospect Park West, they ride bikes.

1
2 I've seen more of their friends riding bikes to
3 school and it's fun and safe and I want those kids
4 to be safe. And my concern is there's increased
5 traffic on Prospect Park West because we lost a
6 bus line, so people are having to drive, MTA isn't
7 helping us with this project.

8 But don't just listen to my
9 testimony. According to the New York City
10 Department of Health there have been 225 bike
11 fatalities in the last 10 years in New York City.
12 Nearly all bike fatalities occurred as a result of
13 crashes with motor vehicles; 94 % of the
14 fatalities involved poor driving of bicycle riding
15 practices, particularly driver inattention and
16 disregard of traffic signals and signs.

17 In conclusion, biking is a solution
18 for a global city. It reduces traffic and opens
19 up the city for new perspectives, connecting the
20 boroughs, bridging streets and people,
21 communities, and individual riders, yet the
22 program will never reach its full potential as
23 long as there is no enforcement of traffic laws
24 prohibiting cars from parking in bike lanes.

25 I applaud the City for the

1
2 increased bike lanes, I now ask for assistance
3 from you in supporting safe, non-polluting
4 transportation.

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

6 BENJAMIN SHEPARD: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Please
8 introduce yourself.

9 DR. LINDA LINDAY: I have to press
10 this? Hi, my name's Dr. Linda Linday, I live on
11 West 55th Street, where I have lived for 28 years.
12 I do clinical research, I'm used to dealing with
13 data.

14 I think that the situation with
15 lack of data is critical because if we--for
16 instance, I tried to file 311 complaints, it's a
17 nightmare. So you do not need to just be able to
18 file a 311 complaint about a bike lane, what about
19 bike riding on the sidewalk? I hurt my knee this
20 summer, I had a huge brace, I had an orthopedic
21 cane, I was actually afraid to walk out my door
22 because I had to look both ways to walk out the
23 door because of bike riding on the sidewalk. I
24 don't think that's acceptable.

25 Furthermore, I don't understand how

1
2 the Department of Traffic is monitoring the
3 situation. I have asked for cameras so that we
4 can monitor bike lanes. I've filed 311 complaints
5 about running red lights, two-way riding in a one-
6 way lane. All of these things have been
7 mentioned, they are extremely dangerous. I work
8 with the Midtown North Community Council where the
9 police have been very receptive to our concerns.
10 I'd like to know how the Department of Traffic is
11 monitoring the success of the bike lane. When I
12 came here, I walked across Broadway at 55th
13 Street, no pedestrians in the pedestrian plaza, no
14 bikes, no pigeons.

15 As a passionate pedestrian, I am
16 very willing to move over, but I don't want to be
17 run over. Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, and
19 you raise important issues, thank you. Yes, sir.

20 KARL ROESLEV: Good afternoon, I
21 thank all those remaining for their stamina and
22 dedication.

23 My name's Karl Roeslev and I'm an
24 Athletic Director for a nonprofit organization
25 called I Challenge Myself. We're a youth

1
2 development program here in the city that works
3 with four public high schools.

4 Like many of those here today, I
5 could talk about my commute or the changes I've
6 seen on bicycle paths over the years, I could talk
7 about how intricate cycling is to my experience in
8 New York, but I feel it's important to speak on
9 behalf of ICM [pause] I feel it's important to
10 speak on behalf of ICM and its students'
11 experience on bicycles.

12 Over five years ago, I Challenge
13 Myself set out to address a health epidemic in
14 communities by getting high school kids active.
15 This fall, ICM students from four schools cycled
16 539 miles of New York City bike lanes and paths.
17 Over the year, 180 students will improve their
18 cardiovascular fitness, learn about nutrition, and
19 build healthy habits. They will develop trust and
20 collaboration, and find pride in their ability to
21 cycle this city. They'll develop socially and
22 personally, improving relationships with peers and
23 teachers, while increasing attendance and
24 improving grades at schools. They'll cycle over
25 1,500 miles this year and writing essays on

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2 historic places and sites they see throughout the
3 city. They'll cross gaps broader than our
4 bridges, and learn about the many neighborhoods
5 and cultures that make up our city. They'll do
6 this on newly established bicycle lanes, on
7 properly maintained bicycle lanes, and while it'd
8 be a good year for these students, I hope they
9 have the opportunity to ride safe lanes in their
10 communities in Northern Manhattan and the Bronx.

11 In short, cycling has provided an
12 opportunity for these students to broaden their
13 horizons. In kind, these students have become
14 advocates for cycling and advocates for healthy
15 lifestyles. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
17 thank you all. Samantha Mekrut.

18 FEMALE VOICE: She had to go to
19 work.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: She had to go
21 to work? Okay. Mel Wymore, Melanie Canon, M.D.,
22 [off mic] oh, John Krause, Atlantic Avenue
23 Brooklyn. John Krause, are you here?

24 [Off mic]

25 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: He had to

1
2 leave, okay, no problem. Joanna Oltman Smith,
3 Brooklyn, New York. Come on up. Mr. Wymore,
4 would you start?

5 MEL WYMORE: I will, thank you.
6 Thank you, Chairman Vacca, for the opportunity to
7 speak. I'm chair of Community Board 7--

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [Interposing]
9 I'm sorry, Mr. Wymore, another person did not
10 come. Robert Moore, are you here?

11 ROBERT MOORE: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Would you come
13 up, please. Okay. Mr. Wymore, I'm sorry.

14 MEL WYMORE: No problem. I'm chair
15 of Community Board 7 and you heard testimony
16 already that we passed the bike lane on Columbus
17 Avenue for a mile stretch.

18 [Crosstalk]

19 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --name.

20 MEL WYMORE: Mel Wymore is my name.
21 The first thing I want to say is that I've been on
22 the board for 14 years and there's only one issue
23 that we face that's more controversial than bike
24 lane or seems to heat people up more than bike
25 lane and that's dog runs.

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And I was trying to figure out what's the commonality between dog runs and bike lanes and what it is, is that's asking people to share and when you've done something and you have a space that you've controlled for years and decades and decades and decades and all of a sudden a new player comes in town and says can I play too, I want to share, it's a hard thing to do. It takes time and it takes effort to share the space.

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What's happening now is we're going through a very big cultural change, 'cause bike lanes is a whole new way of thinking about transportation for the city. I would caution to not be reactionary in our way of looking at the bike lanes from the outset. It takes time to figure these things out and we need two things: We need objectivity, and that means real data, the other person that spoke before me talked about real data. DOT is giving us real data, they're measuring these data. You can look on a bike lane and you stand there for a while and see one little rider go by and you say, oh, these bike lanes are not being used, but the percentages of use are

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2 growing at unbelievable rates, high exponential
3 rates, so that person, that one bicycle is going
4 to turn into two, four, eight, geometric increase
5 over time, that's number one.

6 And you want to look at that
7 objectively because I sat in front of our new one
8 mile bike lane that's not attached to anything and
9 in one hour there were 26 riders that went down
10 that lane, it didn't look like a lot, but there
11 were many.

12 Secondly, patience. When you put
13 together a component of a system and not all--
14 permission to continue?

15 [Off mic]

16 MEL WYMORE: Thank you. Not all
17 the components are in place, you can't expect the
18 system to work. Only through the connected
19 network of bicycle lanes that allow people to do
20 their business on bikes will the bike lanes
21 succeed.

22 So while I understand that this is
23 a controversial issue, number one, I would not let
24 complaints dictate whether or not to have the
25 lane. Complaints dictate how the design of the

1
2 lane should work, not the decision whether or not
3 to have them. What we should do is work with DOT
4 and they're working very hard to work with us. As
5 a Community Board chair, I can tell you they have
6 tried very hard to accommodate our every request.

7 Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, Mel.

9 JOANNA OLTMAN SMITH: Good

10 afternoon, my name is Joanna Oltman Smith, I'm a
11 resident of Park Slope Brooklyn. I've been here
12 since 8 o'clock this morning and so I wanted to
13 thank Chairman Vacca and his staff for today's
14 lesson in how our democracy really works; whereby,
15 well connected, powerful, very important citizens
16 representing their own personal opinions get
17 priority and are encouraged to buck the rules of
18 public testimony, while earnest, early bird,
19 little nobody citizens like the rest of us are
20 made to wait for hours. So I am left to wonder
21 whether the committee who is no longer present
22 really cares about how the rest of us feel about
23 biking in New York City.

24 In case you do, for the record, I
25 will say that I firmly believe that my children's

1
2 health and happiness and that of all New Yorkers
3 depends on improving and increasing the number of
4 bike lanes in our city's system--and I'm talking
5 about protected bike lanes and I also direct you
6 to my sincere written testimony, which I am now
7 too disheartened to deliver.

8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I was going to
10 say thank you after I heard the first couple of
11 words, but then I said I should say no thank you.
12 But that's okay, I respect your opinion and I
13 thank you for coming.

14 These hearings sometimes go on and
15 we try to be fair as much as we--we try to be as
16 fair as possible. Sir.

17 ROBERT MOORE: My name is Robert
18 Moore, I am a private citizen, I live close by on
19 Reade Street in this neighborhood.

20 I support the development by the
21 New York Transportation Department of conditions
22 for the encouragement of safe bicycling in New
23 York City. I have been bicycling myself in New
24 York City for over ten years.

25 Bicycling is an environmentally

1
2 efficient means of transportation in urban areas.
3 It's a healthy activity for people which combines
4 the utility of transportation with healthy
5 exercise, which is almost universally recommended
6 as having a therapeutic effect.

7 Bikes are a valid form of
8 transportation and have as much right as cars to
9 be on the roads. Bike riders have the same
10 obligations as any other road user to obey traffic
11 laws and expanding bicycling facilities in the
12 city does nothing to lift that obligation from a
13 cyclist as a road user.

14 Providing a special area for bikes
15 to be ridden makes bicycling safer for all users
16 of the sidewalks and streets. If pedestrians,
17 motorists, and other street users are aware of
18 where bicycles operate, then all should be able to
19 share the streets.

20 I lived for a period of one year in
21 the Netherlands, where bicycling is a way of life
22 and where, through careful street management,
23 bicycles, cars, buses, trams, and pedestrians are
24 all able to share the streets. And I'd like to
25 remind you that this use to be called New

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Amsterdam, so perhaps we can do it here, too.

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Following the regrettable failure of congestion pricing to pass the City Council, an expansion of alternative forms of transportation by providing safe, appropriate, and adequate facilities will encourage a proportion of car users to use the alternative means and, thus, reduce congestion, pollution, and accidents, as well as improving quality of life.

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In other cities and also in areas of New York, local traders, restaurateurs, and other business people have found that a reduction in motor traffic has in fact improved business. Any expansion of bicycling facilities should be discussed with local community boards and groups, accompanied by enforcement, and placed in relevant positions to assist bicyclists getting to and from centers of activity.

20

Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. The more and more this hearing goes on, I think all of us who think we don't agree really do agree on a lot of things, it's just a question of getting it to--

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ROBERT MOORE: Absolutely.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --jive

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together. But I thank you for your opinions.

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Okay. Now I do want to note for the record that

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all of this is being recorded visually and by

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audio, so it could be watched by anyone. My

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fellow committee members who are not here will

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have a copy of the record at their disposal and

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I'll be watching this and seeing how all of you

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snarl at me during the hearing and everything, so

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don't snarl.

13

All right, next. Thank you.

14

[Off mic]

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, Pedro

16

Morales of Brooklyn, New York; Scott Cavanaugh,

17

Brooklyn; Stephen Vaccaro, Transportation

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Alternatives.

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[Pause]

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Two more? They

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all here?

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MALE VOICE: No, one of the people

23

seem to have left.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Henry Rinehart-

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HENRY RINEHART: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --of [off mic].

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[Long pause]

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Mr. Rinehart,

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would you start?

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HENRY RINEHART: Yes, thank you.

7

Good morning and thank you for hearing me. My

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name is Henry Rinehart, I am the owner of a

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restaurant, HENRY'S on Broadway and 105th. Thank

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you for affording me time to speak before you and

11

for your continuing efforts to improve the quality

12

of life in New York City.

13

I am here this evening to voice my

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support of the tremendous improvements made in our

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city with the shared use of our roadways. I

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appear before you as a member of the community

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since 1979, as the owner of a local business

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serving the Upper West Side since 1999, as a

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father with a child attending New York City public

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school, and as a son of parents in their golden

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years living on Central Park West, as a local car

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owner, as a local avid cyclist. Additionally, I

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am a retired bicycle messenger. I speak on behalf

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of many of your constituencies.

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2 Protected bike lanes are necessary
3 for safe, shared streets. Protected bike lanes
4 allow parents like me to safely bring our children
5 to school by bike. The concrete pedestrian
6 islands allow children and older New Yorkers like
7 my parents to cross wide avenues safely by calming
8 traffic and shortening crossing distances. These
9 features also give pedestrians a safe place to
10 wait that is clear of bicycle and motor vehicle
11 traffic, and keep cyclists, including my
12 restaurant's employees who deliver meals
13 throughout the Upper West Side, off the sidewalk.

14 Once we all get used to the
15 proposed changes, we will notice that our streets
16 will be more than just a thoroughfare, they will
17 be a viable part of our neighborhood again.

18 As a business owner, I can also say
19 that bike lanes do not interfere with the smooth
20 operation of business. I have observed that the
21 DOT has in many cases actually improved curbside
22 deliveries with dedicated loading areas. And
23 without question, protected bike lanes like my
24 sidewalk--may I proceed? And without question,
25 protected bike lanes make my sidewalk cafe even

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2 more pleasant, pedestrian-friendly, and
3 successful.

4 While I regret any loss of on-
5 street parking for myself and my guests, no one
6 can deny that we as a city have given car free or
7 low-cost curbside parking an unfair priority over
8 other uses for far too long.

9 For all these reasons, as a parent,
10 son, and business owner, I strongly encourage you
11 to defer to the Department of Transportation's
12 long overdue redesign of our streets to allow
13 shared, safe use for everyone. It may not seem
14 like much, but encouraging active transportation
15 over car use will do a great deal to improve the
16 health and quality of life of all New Yorkers.

17 Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.
19 Introduce yourself, please, sir.

20 SCOTT CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr.
21 Chairman. My name is Scott Cavanaugh, I'm the
22 Business Development Director for Bike and Roll
23 New York City. Bike and Roll is a bicycle rental
24 and tour company operating in major cities across
25 the country. Bike and Roll first opened in New

1
2 York City in June of 2007. At that time, we
3 started with one location in Hudson River Park, we
4 had a fleet of a little over 100 bicycles and a
5 handful of employees. This past year, in just our
6 fourth season, we operated at eight locations in
7 the city with a fleet of over 1,200 bicycles. We
8 employed over 100 people hailing from all five
9 boroughs, many of them were young people for whom
10 working with Bike and Roll was their first job.
11 The growth of our business has been robust, and it
12 is no coincidence that the growth has paralleled
13 the growth of bicycling infrastructure in New
14 York.

15 We are not alone. [Clears throat]
16 Excuse me. Every year we have operated, we have
17 seen more competitors join the landscape. In a
18 time when the economy is struggling, the past few
19 years have seen the emergence of New York's
20 multimillion dollar bicycle tourism industry. Let
21 there be no doubt that the building of bike lanes
22 and paths have made building these businesses
23 possible.

24 Our typical customers are not
25 thrill-seekers. A mom visiting the city is not

1
2 going to take her two kids on a bike tour if she
3 thinks she's putting them into danger. All of our
4 customers listen to a safety briefing and are
5 offered a helmet free of charge, but that alone
6 does not make for a safe bicycle ride, there has
7 to be safe places to ride.

8 The expansion of bicycle lanes and
9 paths of the past few years has given tourists and
10 residents alike a fun, green, and active
11 alternative to exploring New York by tour buses
12 and by automobiles.

13 As you've already heard today,
14 there are a lot of reasons why improving bicycle
15 infrastructure in New York has been good for the
16 city. Our message is that among these many
17 reasons is the significant and tangible economic
18 benefit.

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

21 Sir.

22 STEPHEN VACCARO: Thank you, Mr.
23 Chairman. My name is Steve Vaccaro, I'm a
24 lifelong New Yorker and I'm also the very proud
25 father of Clark Vaccaro, the seventh grader who

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you heard testify earlier this morning.

I'm also the chair of the Transportation Alternatives East Side Committee. We're an all-volunteer group of East Siders who work at the grassroots for improved safety and quality of life in our streets. And in that role, and as a daily cyclist, I've spoken at nearly 20 Community Board meetings over the last couple of years on cycling and pedestrian improvements.

The DOT takes community input on street improvements very seriously. I watched as DOT delayed its Union Square redesign three times to allow maximum community input and then, heeding that input, removed several of the cycling and pedestrian improvements from its initial plan.

The only case I'm aware of in which DOT has acted unilaterally was in its indefinite postponement last June of improvements on 1st and 2nd Avenues north of 34th Street after Community Boards 6, 8, and 11 all voted in favor of completing those improvements this year. Our East Side Committee collected over 2,500 hand written letters to the Mayor asking for completion of those improvements all the way to 125th Street as

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2 originally planned by the end of 2011, but DOT has
3 not stated when, if ever, it will do so.

4 But even with this broad support
5 for these street improvements, Community Board
6 votes will, of course, not be unanimous.
7 Motorists who park at the curb get a free benefit
8 from the City worth hundreds of dollars each
9 month. So don't be surprised that some of them
10 oppose bike paths that could eliminate parking
11 spaces. And you can expect that motorists who've
12 grown accustomed to driving 40 miles an hour or
13 faster down broad six lane avenues will protest
14 traffic calming devices, like narrowed lanes and
15 pedestrian refuge islands. So while Borough
16 President Markowitz views this as a quality of
17 life issue for the drivers, for me it's a question
18 of my family's safety. These objections are no
19 reason to stop the reallocation of a modest amount
20 of roadway space for the safety of pedestrians and
21 cyclists who, after all, are the majority of New
22 Yorkers. [time bell] I urge the Committee to
23 allow DOT to proceed with these safety
24 improvements, for me, my family and the majority
25 of New Yorkers who support them.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you very
3 much. All of you, thank you. And you must be
4 very proud, your son did very well. Douglas
5 Gordon, Robert Casaro, Casara [phonetic]? Barbara
6 Katz-Rothman. Is Barbara Katz-Rothman here? No.
7 Dave Kulik [phonetic], Flushing, New York? Alex
8 Rothberg, Brooklyn Greenway Initiative.

9 STEPHEN VACCARO: Yeah, he's here.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay.

11 [pause]

12 DOUGLAS GORDON: Go ahead?

13 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes, please
14 proceed. Introduce yourself.

15 DOUGLAS GORDON: My name's Doug
16 Gordon, and I will identify myself as a father.
17 My daughter's just 13 months old, but before long
18 I will begin to make the kinds of decisions with
19 which any parent here is familiar, where to go to
20 school, doctors, babysitters, where to live. For
21 each of these questions I will rely on facts, I
22 will rely on statistics. Which school district
23 has the highest test scores? Which doctor rates
24 the highest? I also rely on facts and figures
25 when it comes to my daughter's safety, and I hope

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2 that those charged with making our streets safer
3 do the same. You can notice things, but you can
4 also study things, and I hope that they do. I
5 live in Brooklyn, here's some anecdotal evidence,
6 and despite the fact that the speed limit is 30
7 miles per hour, 4th Avenue where I live speeds of
8 50 miles an hour are the norm, it creates
9 enormously dangerous conditions. Those conditions
10 are recreated everywhere. Every time I cross a
11 street, I hope that I do not become a statistic
12 that some other father can use when determining
13 where he and his family should live. But we're
14 here to discuss bike lanes. Bike lanes make
15 streets safer, period. The bike lane on Prospect
16 Park West, for example, has done what no level of
17 police enforcement could do. You could put a
18 hundred cops on a hundred separate blocks, and you
19 would not get the traffic calming measures that we
20 have seen on Prospect Park West. It is safer.
21 Streets with bike lanes have led to a 40 percent
22 decrease in crashes for pedestrians, lower rate of
23 speedings, shorter crossing distances, and that's
24 especially important as I push a stroller and I
25 know it's especially important for the City's

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2 growing elderly population. Far from unleashing
3 renegade cyclists on helpless pedestrians, streets
4 with bike lanes make bicyclists comply with the
5 law, and they make their behavior predictable.
6 Again, at Prospect Park West, we've heard sidewalk
7 riding dropped from 46 percent to four percent, no
8 police officer could do this. This was free, by
9 City standards. I'm a father, a husband, a voter,
10 a taxpayer, a subway and bus rider, a pedestrian
11 and a driver, but I also ride a bike. I don't run
12 red lights, [time bell] I'm safe, I'm polite, I
13 yield to pedestrians always. Do I not deserve a
14 safe place to ride? I don't want the debate to be
15 held only among those who break the law. Those of
16 us in this room who really care about this are
17 good, safe, responsible citizens. Thank you.

18 BOB CASARA: Have to push this.
19 There you go. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman,
20 ladies and gentlemen. My name is Bob Casara. I'm
21 a lifelong resident of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. One
22 of the more vexing problems that I have seen over
23 the years is the increased traffic, including
24 trucks and speeding vehicles on my block, Bay
25 Ridge Parkway, which is not a truck route; as well

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2 as the other major arteries. Typically, in the
3 morning hours, between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m., there
4 will be around 1,600 vehicles per hour of which
5 seven to eleven percent are commercial vehicles.
6 These are numbers that I accumulated back in 1997,
7 and I have been advocating for years to remove the
8 through commercial truck traffic, and to abate the
9 speeding vehicles; but to no avail. Traffic
10 continues unabated and rising with no real help
11 from the City's DOT or Police Department. Yes,
12 the Police Department come out once in a while to
13 stop the trucks, but it's spotty and doesn't have
14 any real impact on traffic. Recently, our
15 community was informed that Bay Ridge Parkway
16 would be getting a dedicated bike lane, extending
17 from Shore Road to Bay Parkway, thus facilitating
18 a necessary addition to the bike network in
19 southwest Brooklyn. I was elated to hear that the
20 DOT was finally going to do something that would
21 actually calm the traffic. However, my hopes were
22 short lived because a few ill-informed peopled in
23 our community made a stink about the proposal, the
24 proposed installation of the bike lanes. They
25 claimed that, that the bike lanes would be

1
2 dangerous for bikers and pedestrians. What they
3 really want is to be able to double park and to be
4 able to move along Bay Ridge Parkway at a good
5 clip. The installation of bike lanes has been
6 delayed because Community Board Ten sent a letter
7 to DOT requesting a delay so they can study it
8 further. The problem, as I see it, is that the
9 DOT has not done a good job in selling the idea of
10 bike lanes to the public. From what I have been
11 told, the DOT supposedly works out details of a
12 [time bell] proposed bike lane--can I continue?
13 Bike, bike lane installation in conjunction with
14 the community in which it wants to place the
15 lanes. As a community board member, I can say
16 that I do not recall any time that the DOT came
17 out before the Traffic and Transportation
18 Committee to discuss this matter and to get our
19 input and buy-in. One cannot justify, one cannot
20 just come out into a community and say we are
21 going to put a bike lane on XYZ Street and expect
22 that it would automatically be accepted. But this
23 is what, in fact, they have done in Bay Ridge.
24 That being said, I am in favor of the City's
25 efforts to install bike lanes throughout all five

1
2 boroughs. These bike lanes need to be extensive
3 and fully integrated bike way network to fully
4 realize the benefits of biking to the community at
5 large. As much as I agree with the idea of
6 traffic calming, and decreasing auto emissions,
7 biking has a much greater benefit. It has the
8 potential of positively impacting the health of
9 everyone and consequently reducing our over health
10 care expenses, which we all know is rising and
11 growing. We are told that this is crucially
12 important to all of us to have regular exercise.
13 The daily physical exercise of walking, cycling,
14 for practical travel, burns up calories and helps
15 avoid the problems of overweight and obesity. And
16 according to the American Medical Association in
17 1999, whether normal weight, overweight, obese,
18 physically inactive persons are two to three times
19 more likely to die prematurely. Obesity trends
20 among New York adults is--

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You have to
22 conclude.

23 BOB CASARA: Okay. I will
24 conclude. In closing, properly designed,
25 installed bike lanes, biking networks will have a

1
2 positive health effect for New Yorkers. But this
3 has to have, but for this to happen, the City
4 needs to have policies that make cycling, walking,
5 more convenient, faster, more pleasant, more
6 attractive and also make cycling and walking safer
7 for everyone. The City needs to do a better job
8 in communicating the benefits of all, to all.

9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, sir.

11 Next.

12 ALEX ROTHBERG: Hi, my name's Alex
13 Rothberg, and I'm here representing the Brooklyn
14 Greenway Initiative. Thank you for letting me
15 speak. In an effort to just narrow it down a
16 little bit, I'm going to refrain from expanding a
17 lot of the points that have already been made.
18 Mainly, that the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative
19 highly supports those benefits that relate to
20 health, safety, particularly physical urban
21 design, beauty, that these protected bike lanes
22 provide in the City. Just some quick points that
23 I would like to know, I haven't heard quite yet.
24 Bike lanes, with increasingly high real estate
25 prices around subway stops, bike lanes, they're--

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2 bike lanes promote or allow people who are looking
3 for more affordable living options to not depend
4 on having to be near a subway, and do not have a
5 car, either. So that's one thing I'd like to
6 point out. I was recently humored when I was
7 browsing through the American Heart Association
8 website. They recommend 30 minutes daily of
9 medium, medium intensity aerobic exercise, which
10 basically just means raising your heartbeat a few
11 beats per minute. Now, one thing that they
12 recommended for doing this was for adults who
13 particularly complain of exercise not being very,
14 they don't want to exercise because it's not fun,
15 and they don't have time. So, what they suggest
16 is that they start doing more active play
17 videogames. Now, noble as this effort is--this is
18 listed right on their website--noble as this
19 effort is, I think it's a lot, much more of a
20 progressive way of promoting health by these bike
21 lanes, it allows people to be much more in touch
22 with their city and their neighborhood. So,
23 that's that. One thing I'd just like to reiterate
24 that's been brought up already a bunch, is the
25 fact that historically speaking, bike lanes on

1
2 this scale is a relatively new New York City;
3 pedestrians, bikers and cars are not, still not
4 used to sharing the space on this scale. Bikers
5 need to solidify their identify as a unique type
6 of transport, as a vehicle, they still sometimes
7 don't understand [time bell] they're not
8 pedestrian or car. Signs and indicators that
9 accompany many of the designs need to be
10 recognized on both sides, and this is going to be
11 enhanced through education. Thank you very much.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
13 thank you all. Our next panel: Gene Aronowitz
14 [phonetic], Brooklyn, New York, 45th Street; Wayne
15 Bailey, Brooklyn, New York, Dean Street; Gene
16 Cahn, Windsor Place, Brooklyn, New York. [pause]
17 [off mic] Are all three here?

18 MALE VOICE: Yes, slips, from here,
19 not--

20 [long pause, background noise]

21 GENE ARONOWITZ: Thank you for the
22 opportunity of speaking with you. My name is, is
23 Gene Aronowitz. I'm, I'm 73 years old, with
24 severe arthritis in both knees. One of many older
25 people with this condition. Running is out of the

1
2 question, even walking can be painful, difficult
3 and distressing, but biking is not. It's a great
4 exercise, keeps my weight down, crucial because of
5 my knee problems. Produces an acceptable aerobic
6 effect, and except for the very beginning is pain
7 free. Unlike being on a stationary bike to get
8 these benefits, I can be outside and can ride with
9 family and friends. I love to ride through
10 Central Park and Prospect Park, and to ride the
11 spectacular greenways along the waterfronts. Of
12 course, I must ride through City streets to get to
13 these glorious locations. And by the way, to do
14 my shopping, banking and visiting. Am I entitled
15 to ride on the streets, yes, of course I am.
16 Should I be able to do this safely, I think that's
17 a reasonable expectation. Can I expect the New
18 York City government to make biking safe? Yes. I
19 expect the City to do that. The City must
20 continue to create bike lanes and bike paths.
21 Bike lanes facilitate safety, because they provide
22 a predictable, and noticeable place for cyclists
23 to ride. Their existence says to drivers and
24 pedestrians that bikers belong on those streets,
25 just as they do. I'm not only a biker, I have a

1
2 car, so I'm also a driver. I understand how
3 drivers feels when parking spots and driving lanes
4 give way to bike lanes and pedestrian malls. But
5 I think that adding a little time to get
6 somewhere, or to find a place to park, is a very
7 small price to pay to create equitably [time bell]
8 usable safe streets for all of us.

9 STEVE FAUST: --off, okay. Name is
10 Steve Faust. I'm a professional transportation
11 planner, retired from the Federal Transit
12 Administration, where I was responsible for bus,
13 subway and commuter rail projects throughout the
14 New York region. I've also served on the
15 Transportation Research Boards, Committee on
16 Bicycles and Bicycle Facilities, member of the
17 Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle
18 Professionals. I've done, been a bicycle rider
19 since the early 1950s. I've been a bicycle
20 commuter since the late 1950s, so that's probably
21 about 55 years of commuting here in the City.
22 I've toured and used a bike as transportation for
23 many years before I learned to drive when I was
24 taken in by the Army and given a jeep. I have
25 been a member of the Five Borough Bike Club since

1
2 the early '60s, that's when it was American Youth
3 Hostels. And as part of the Five BBC, I've been
4 one of their officers. We have been doing
5 training, education and outreach to cyclists for
6 all these years, as best we can. I can basically
7 say that all the speakers have had some very good
8 things to say, but I think that the issue of
9 education has been grossly underrated. There's a
10 lot of enforcement talk, and for that I really
11 hope you guys can bring in the Police Department.
12 Ray Kelly is actually, I think, I'm going to just
13 say this professionally, I think he's part of the
14 problem, not part of the solution right now. He
15 needs to be worked with. But there is almost zero
16 education. And I have to commend Jeanette Saticon
17 [phonetic]. I worked with her when she was at
18 DOT, I have complete confidence in her, even
19 though I don't always agree with everything that
20 she and DOT do, I have complete confidence in her
21 [time bell] And it's really kind of upsetting
22 that the DOT has had to take on this education
23 role, because the New York State Education Law
24 mandates bicycle safety education for elementary
25 and intermediate school students, and it's

1
2 ignored, it's been ignored for decades. DOT does,
3 supposed to do engineering. They're now doing
4 education, and I think they'll probably do a
5 pretty good job as best they can. I know the City
6 Health Bureau, Health Department, is seriously
7 looking into supporting bike programs. So, the
8 two big players in here are education and the
9 police, that have really not gotten with the
10 program. So, thank you. [laughter] Wait a
11 minute--

12 Thank you.

13 STEVE FAUST: --I think I'm in your
14 district, also, I'm at 6th Street.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: No.

16 STEVE FAUST: No? I'm out of it,
17 dang. Okay, just missed, that's right.

18 I'm sorry, okay, thank you.

19 STEVE FAUST: Yeah, bye.

20 ROBERT MADSEN: Councilwoman James,
21 it's nice to see you, always. [background noise,
22 technical] Yes, Robert Madsen [phonetic], in
23 Brooklyn, Community Board Nine. And I'm a
24 cyclist. I'd like to put the issue of safety in a
25 little context. In the five boroughs of New York

1
2 City, 266 people were killed in traffic fatalities
3 in 2009. This is according to the National
4 Highway Traffic Safety Administration. My
5 question would be for the City, are those deaths
6 too many or are they too few? In the 15 years
7 from 1994 through 2009, 5,746 people were killed
8 in the five boroughs of the City in motor vehicle
9 accidents. Is that too few or is that too many?
10 How many more people need to be die--need to die,
11 to be killed in traffic accidents before we take
12 aggressive steps to make our streets safe. And a
13 little context, it seems that we went to war in
14 Afghanistan with fewer people dead than that.
15 Personally, I believe these fatalities were
16 needless and are entirely unacceptable. And for
17 this reason, I support New York City's DOT for
18 making changes to City streets that decrease
19 injuries and save lives. Projects that result in
20 safer streets by the creation of pedestrian areas
21 in Times and Herald Squares, the redesign of Park
22 Circle and Prospect Park West in Brooklyn, the
23 installation of bicycle lanes citywide, and the
24 wide use of modern traffic engineering to protect
25 citizens' lives, health and wellbeing. These are

1
2 an unambiguous benefit to New York City, when
3 measured in irreplaceable lives. There are those
4 who might argue we are moving too quickly with
5 safety improvements. [time bell] But if we
6 consider the death toll, the question is not "Are
7 we moving too fast?" but rather, "What is taking
8 so long?" 5,746 deaths over 15 years is too many.
9 We do not need more people to die on the streets,
10 we need fewer dead, we need safer streets, and we
11 need them fast. Thank you.

12 [pause, background noise]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.

14 Michael Rosenthal. Maya Davis. Environmental
15 Defense Fund? Georgia Beam. Charles Rose. Oh, I
16 c--you live on East Sixth Street, B. Hardendort
17 [phonetic]? Mr. Schwartz. [background voice]
18 Okay. Thank you, Mr. Schwartz. Marcus Wollen
19 [phonetic], we got a panel.

20 [pause, background noise]

21 LINDA PRINE: --get on this, oh
22 there we go. I also submitted a petition that
23 came from 150 physicians from around New York
24 City, in support of the bike lanes, that was
25 Melanie Cannon's testimony, who didn't make it in,

1
2 actually, there were so many people lined up to
3 testify that a lot of people didn't get in at all.

4 So, this is my testimony, though. I'm a family
5 physician, I practice in lower Manhattan, in a
6 federally qualified health center, one of the
7 safety net practices that's expected--Oh, sorry,
8 Dr. Linda Prine [phonetic]--one of the safety net
9 practices that's expected to expand and double in
10 capacity under healthcare reform. In healthcare,
11 we're dealing with an obesity epidemic that is
12 killing many thousands of people every day, way
13 more than car accidents, but could substantially
14 be affected by the way we plan our streets.

15 Obesity contributes to diabetes, heart disease,
16 high blood pressure, joint problems, depression,
17 so on and so on. And New York City medical
18 community, we've watched the health benefits of
19 what the, the City Council and Mayor have done
20 around smoking, and it's been far more than
21 anything we could ever do in our one-on-one
22 interactions with patients. We're not very
23 successful at being able to tell people to stop
24 smoking and have them do it, and we're not very
25 successful at being able to tell people to

1
2 exercise and have them do it. But when you create
3 a situation where people can't smoke, or you
4 create a situation where people can't drive, then
5 they've got to do something else. So, driving two
6 miles to work, back and forth every day, is
7 creating fat people. And that's not healthy. I
8 mean, really, it's a public health problem, the
9 way that people are living today, and we need to
10 make systems changes if we're going to have a
11 healthy population. So, we've done some great
12 systems work with smoking, we need to do some
13 great systems work around obesity. Bike lanes is
14 just the tip of the iceberg in terms of things we
15 could do. We should be doing congestion pricing,
16 parking spaces should be expensive, I have a whole
17 list in my testimony, of shared bikes, car free
18 parks, [time bell] bike racks on buses, bike
19 parking lots, speed cams, lower the speed limits,
20 on and on and on. These are the kinds of things
21 that a city that wants to be a model city needs to
22 do. We know from looking at Europe that there's a
23 correlation between how much people bike and the
24 obesity rates. The more people bike, the less
25 they get fat. So, we could really do something

1
2 here about the public health of New Yorkers and be
3 a model city for America, by promoting all of
4 these ways that'll encourage people to bike or
5 walk to work, which we know reduces their
6 overweight issues. And also reduces the obesity,
7 the joint problems, the heart disease, the
8 diabetes, the high blood pressure, the high
9 cholesterol, all of those things are addressed by
10 walking and biking. Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you, I
12 appreciate that, and as one who represents an
13 individual which is often referred to as a asthma
14 belt, underneath the BQE, I totally agree. The
15 Chair is back.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
17 Council Member James, for your help. Sir?

18 [pause, background noise,
19 technical]

20 MALE VOICE: I sat through a
21 Council meeting last spring where James Vacca
22 heard the police captain testify that they had
23 insufficient funding to compile statistics
24 requested by the Department of Transportation.
25 I'm here to talk about enforcement, and what I

1
2 believe is a vendetta the Police Department has,
3 whether voiced or not, against bicyclists. So, it
4 was very gratifying here to hear the Department of
5 Transportation spent \$2 million on a bike network
6 in the last six years. Brought in another \$6
7 million of federal funding, created jobs, created
8 a better environment. In that same period, we saw
9 that the New York City Police Department spent a
10 million-and-a-half dollars and incurred another
11 million dollars of expense in just five days of
12 doing the ridiculous and using massive police
13 resources to attack bicyclists. I speak to the
14 reaction against Critical Mass. I certainly don't
15 disagree with the necessity of making a bicyclist
16 law abiding. But we saw them use helicopters to
17 chase bicycles at \$10,000 an hour. There's no
18 shortage of funding. I want to make four positive
19 recommendations here today, that are easy for the
20 Council to implement, and will result in higher
21 revenues and more safe bicycling. The bike lanes
22 have been quite successful and yet haven't
23 achieved their full potential because of the
24 failure to enforce. Double parking is not only a
25 block in the bike lanes themselves, but creates

1
2 and extremely dangerous situation where bicyclists
3 must swerve around those cars and enter the
4 traffic lane, a traffic lane that is no longer
5 expecting bicyclists because of that bike lane
6 being there. I see hundreds of bicycles on the,
7 in the--I'm sorry, hundreds of vehicles in the
8 bike lanes, double parked, driving, operating,
9 waiting, especially livery vehicles. I've
10 approached policemen and asked that they ticket
11 these people [time bell] or at least move them,
12 and I'm virtually laughed at. The positive
13 recommendations I have to make is one, that we
14 enable the traffic agents to give tickets to
15 vehicles operating in the bike lane, parked in the
16 bike lane, or double parked in the bike lane, and
17 that we direct them to provide this enforcement;
18 that we find a way to share some revenue from
19 tickets to these offenders with the Police
20 Department, so that they have sufficient funds to
21 conduct this activity, and to encourage the
22 officers to do their duty in, in enforcing the
23 biking laws. The pedestrian issues are
24 substantial. The bike lanes are constantly
25 crossed by pedestrians and simply erecting a rope

1
2 barrier or visual barrier or flexible pole that
3 would discourage their crossing into the bike
4 lanes would go a long way toward improving bicycle
5 safety. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Sir?

7 MARCUS WOLEN: Hi, there. Am I on?
8 [technical] Hello. Hi, there, my name is Marcus
9 Wolen, I live in Jackson Heights in Councilman
10 Dromm's district. I'm here to testify in strong
11 support of the growing bicycle network in New York
12 City, but I'm going to begin with a personal
13 anecdote. A year ago I was obese, and my doctor
14 said, "Do something." And I had recently moved to
15 Jackson Heights. I'm going to paraphrase, 'cause
16 we've been here a long time. [laughter] There
17 was a bike lane a block from my apartment, which I
18 found out led directly to the Queensboro Bridge,
19 thanks to Jimmy Van Bramer's efforts the year
20 before. I didn't know the bike lane existed, when
21 I started to look I realized I could get to my
22 office in Hell's Kitchen from Jackson Heights in
23 about 40 minutes, which is about the time it takes
24 me to take the subway there. So I started biking
25 to work, I bought a bike in March with my tax

1
2 refund, I've been biking there every day since.
3 And the one thing I really wanted to speak to is
4 the more lanes there are, the more the protected
5 lanes are, the more I feel comfortable and safe
6 traveling the streets of New York City. I love
7 traveling downtown, I love coming back up First
8 Avenue after a meeting or an evening event. And
9 then when I hit 34th Street and have to get from
10 34th Street to the Bridge, it's a nightmare, and I
11 feel unsafe, but I do it anyway, 'cause I want to
12 get home. [laughs] But I think New York City is
13 uniquely positioned to become a better bicycling
14 City. We have this great subway system which
15 compliments the bike network. If, as last night,
16 my office had its Christmas party, I didn't want
17 to bike home, so I took the subway home, left my
18 bike at the office. I want to see, however, these
19 bike lanes continued, and especially close the gap
20 in midtown. Coming up the Queensboro Bridge,
21 getting to Hell's Kitchen, there's no good way.
22 Every way I take is clogged with traffic, there's
23 lots of double parked cars, there's no bike lane.
24 There's a 20th Street and there's a 72nd Street, I
25 think, there's nothing in the middle. So in

1
2 addition to creating the First and Second Avenue
3 corridors, I really would like to see a crosstown
4 connection. Thank you very much.

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You didn't tell
6 us how you lost the weight? Was it the bicycle?

7 MARCUS WOLEN: Biking, nothing
8 else, changed nothing else.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: [off mic]
10 How much did you lose?

11 MARCUS WOLEN: 30 pounds so far.
12 [background noise] I have a, I forgot to give you
13 this, I have little before and after pictures,
14 which--

15 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I wanted to--

16 MARCUS WOLEN: --will be passed on.
17 [laughter, applause]

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I want to give
19 you all of this and I want to see this.

20 MARCUS WOLEN: [laughter]

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, great.
22 [laughter] What a--well, you had to diet, too,
23 didn't you diet?

24 MARCUS WOLEN: No.

25 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You can eat

1

2

what you want and you--[laughter, cheers] I am

3

going to get a bicycle after all! [laughter] Oh,

4

if I can eat well, well what I consider well.

5

Look at this here. Good job.

6

MARCUS WOLEN: It's six-and-a-half

7

miles each way.

8

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Bye-bye carrots

9

and fat free yogurt, bring on the food.

10

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Jimmy gets -

11

- [laughter]

12

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, thank you,

13

lotsa luck to you. Thank you, thank you all.

14

Thank you. [pause, background noise] Mary Beth

15

Kelly, Roberta Gratz [phonetic], Anthony Traverso

16

[phonetic]. Now, who is not here? Anthony's not

17

here, I see. Michael Rosenthal? Dita Awl

18

[phonetic], Dita Awl, LaSalle Street? Okay, Dita,

19

you come up. I see the other young lady is here,

20

Mary Beth, and this is Heidi, Heidi Untener

21

[phonetic]. Untener. Come up. [pause,

22

background noise] Would you please go first,

23

young lady?

24

MARY BETH KELLY: Okay, I was going

25

to say, the last man standing, and then Letitia

1
2 came back you still would've been the last man
3 standing, but had I known you were going out, I
4 would've said "Bring one of those yogurts back for
5 me, please." It's been a long morning. So, I
6 hope that--

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

8 MARY BETH KELLY: --you will
9 listen. Letitia, it's good to see you again. My
10 name is Mary Beth Kelly, and I live on the Upper
11 West Side of Manhattan. I love to walk. I
12 particularly love to walk this City. I call it
13 urban hiking. Before I go through a turnstile or
14 board a bus, or get on a bike, I walk. We are all
15 pedestrians. This is why I love protected bike
16 lanes. When I'm walking in a neighborhood where
17 protected bike lanes exist, as a pedestrian I
18 don't only feel safer, I know I am safer. On
19 Eight and Ninth Avenue, we have 56 percent
20 reduction in serious injuries in the last three
21 years since these protected bike lanes have gone
22 in. That's a priceless gift of life to those
23 neighborhoods. That percentage isn't just a
24 number. Think about that for a moment, and
25 imagine what it'd be like if someone you love lost

1
2 his or her life on a city street and you knew it
3 was easily preventable. I unfortunately don't
4 have to use my imagination, because I watched as
5 my husband, Dr. Carl Henry Nacht [phonetic] was
6 run down by a truck. I know what it looked like,
7 sounded like, and what life without him continues
8 to feel like. I lost the man I love through a
9 meaningless act of negligent vehicular slaughter.
10 You could be me, you could be him. Everyone at
11 this hearing today, listen up. This is not about
12 the bike, it's not about cyclists, this is about
13 our becoming a more knowledgeable and
14 compassionate city. Compassion, because society
15 is judged not by how fast it moves its traffic,
16 but by how it treats its most vulnerable members.
17 [time bell] Here on the streets of New York--I'll
18 be quick--our elderly, our children, seven million
19 pedestrians, and 201,000 daily cyclists are our
20 streets' vulnerable users. It took two-and-a-half
21 years of sober fact finding and educating in
22 public outreach to finally see one mile of a
23 protected bike lane laid on Columbus Avenue. I
24 was part of that process for two-and-a-half years.
25 Like watching paint dry, it was democracy, a slow,

1
2 laborious process, with input and voting from all
3 parts of our community. We must stay the course,
4 not only must we keep the current protected bike
5 lanes, but we also must build and infrastructure
6 of livable city streets, throughout all five
7 boroughs. For this, our fabulous city, to be the
8 best that we can make it. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, and
10 we are, of course, sorry for your loss. Yes.

11 DETA AWL: Hi, my name is Deta Awl
12 [phonetic], I'm from West Harlem. So, I started
13 biking two-and-a-half years ago. I had a knee, I
14 had some surgeries on my knee that didn't go well,
15 I had to be on crutches for a long time, in a
16 brace. At the end of that period of time, my leg
17 was a piece of jello. And the only thing
18 recommended to me was biking. I couldn't do any
19 weight bearing activities, even walking. And I
20 didn't want to be on a stationary bike inside, so
21 I got a bike, I started doing tiny little rides.
22 You know, I was lucky enough to live near the
23 Hudson River path. You know, without that, I
24 don't think I would've started biking. But I
25 could go in, I could go a very short distance on

1
2 the streets, and then get onto a safe path. I'm
3 also lucky enough to live near Central Park. I
4 think these two things in the beginning
5 facilitated my biking. Now, I will go on the
6 streets. But even today, coming here, 23 degree
7 weather along the Hudson River, you have an added
8 wind chill more significant than the rest of the
9 City. I biked out of my way to go down the Hudson
10 River, and then biked back across town. I
11 would've greatly preferred to just go down
12 Columbus Avenue, and then Ninth Avenue, but it's
13 not safe, there's one mile of a bike lane for one
14 stretch, further down at 31st Street to 15th
15 there's another three-quarters of a mile. And
16 from my eyes, I mean, not everyone's going to be
17 hardcore like me, and bike in all kinds of
18 weather. But we need these network of protected
19 bike lanes, so that New Yorkers can get out there
20 and bike. When I worked in Flushing, I biked to
21 Flushing. You know, that's pretty far. So I do
22 challenge the mentality that biking in the outer
23 boroughs can't, you know, can't happen. [time
24 bell] There will be some people who choose to
25 bike 15 miles each direction. There will be other

1
2 people, though, if biking is made safe for them,
3 will choose to do that two mile errand to some
4 grocery store by bike. And I did, I know a young
5 family on the Upper East Side who bought bikes
6 this past fall. The mother's overweight, the son
7 is nine years old, their school is two miles away,
8 they could bike it if there was a safe way. But
9 you know, as it is, they only use their bikes
10 recreationally in Central Park. But, and the
11 father who works from home, but he, he could be
12 doing errands on his bike. You know, it, I just,
13 I really encourage the City Council to let the DOT
14 go ahead with as fast a program as possible, for
15 putting in protected bike lanes.

16 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

17 Yes.

18 HEIDI UNTENER: Hi, thank you very
19 much. My name is Heidi Untener, I live on the
20 Upper East Side, in Community Board Eight where
21 there's virtually no bike infrastructure. I've
22 lived at 68th Street and Second Avenue for twelve
23 years. My kids and I commute to and from school
24 about two-and-a-half miles daily, via bicycle,
25 weather permitting, from the Upper East Side to

1
2 the Upper West Side, so Second Avenue to West End
3 Avenue every day. I can't stress enough how
4 valuable bike lanes are for us. As I ride with my
5 four year old, Owen, on the back of my bike, I
6 fear I am not only putting us at risk every day,
7 but my eight year old Oscar, as well. If we ride
8 along the side of a traffic lane, we risk getting
9 hit by a passenger or driver opening up their car
10 doors; or worse, getting squeezed in my cars on
11 either side. If we play it safe, and ride in the
12 middle of the road, which is our right, we get
13 honked at by drivers. My son Oscar shadows us by
14 riding carefully on the sidewalk while we ride on
15 the road, because he's eight years old, unless
16 there is a safe bike lane that he can use. There
17 is something seriously wrong when pedestrians are
18 yelling at an eight year old riding his bicycle to
19 school that he should get off the sidewalk. Where
20 should he ride? Physically protected or well
21 buffered bicycle lanes would allow him to safely
22 travel in the road and eliminate the need for him
23 to ride on the sidewalk. Our family has owned a
24 car, but we chose, we choose to commute by
25 bicycle, because it is fun, healthy,

1
2 environmentally sustainable, and helps make our
3 neighborhood friendlier and less dominated by
4 traffic. We don't mind sacrificing a motor
5 vehicle parking lane or traffic lane in return for
6 a bike path, because the roadway space allocation
7 is skewed so heavily in the other direction right
8 now. When the choice is this clear between
9 promoting traffic or protecting the safety of
10 cyclists and pedestrians, DOT has to choose
11 safety. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I thank you
13 very much, all of you. Okay, our next three
14 speakers: Bob Houdak [phonetic], Bay Ridge
15 Avenue.

16 MALE VOICE: [off mic] He's not
17 here, he left.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, left, okay,
19 Charles McCorkle [phonetic].

20 MALE VOICE: No.

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Brooklyn, New
22 York? Charles Komanoff [phonetic], Dwayne Street,
23 New York? [background noise] No. Sorry. Ian
24 Dootin [phonetic]. Shirley Secunda?

25 SHIRLEY SECUNDA: [off mic] Yep,

1

2 right here.

3

4

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Do we have
three people coming up?

5

MALE VOICE: [off mic] We have two.

6

7

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Two, one more.
[pause] Tyler Dehumane [phonetic].

8

[pause, background noise]

9

10

SHIRLEY SECUNDA: Testing? Oh,
yeah.

11

[pause, background noise]

12

13

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay, Ms.
Dehumane, would you start?

14

15

16

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18

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25

TILA DUHAIME: All right. My
name's Tila Duhaime, I'm a co-chair of the Upper
West Side Streets Renaissance Campaign. We work
to improve the safety and quality of life in the
neighborhood, and we focus on the streetscape. We
also help to organize hundreds of supporters,
including dozens of businesses in connection with
the newly reconfigured section of Columbus Avenue
that you've heard about today. That features a
protected bike lane, and our public outreach was
extensive, it is ongoing on that lane. I'm happy
to talk to you a little more about that. But I

1
2 wanted to point out that one of the reasons were
3 able to garner such big support for the lane was
4 the growing body of data that better bike
5 infrastructure makes streets safer and healthier
6 for everyone on them. This includes the
7 pedestrians, the drivers and the passengers in the
8 cars. Our campaign pursued the project because
9 our members, who are by and large not avid
10 cyclists, ranked safe bike lanes among their
11 highest priorities for us. The City can and
12 should do more to put bike infrastructure in its
13 proper light. It is long overdue, it promotes
14 healthier lifestyles, and when designed properly
15 can help prevent hundreds of needless crashes and
16 casualties occurring on our streets every year.
17 And this is the first main challenge for biking in
18 New York City: correcting the misperception that
19 bike infrastructure is an annoying accommodation
20 to a small number of bikers, rather than an
21 essential public health and safety strategy
22 benefiting the public at large. Bike lanes should
23 be no more controversial than sidewalks and in
24 many ways serve the same function. We need to
25 point to the sea of data showing that bike

1
2 infrastructure encourages healthier living, that
3 it does not snarl auto traffic, but in fact helps
4 alleviate congestion, that it makes streets more
5 pleasant to live on and visit and shop on, that it
6 confers enormous safety benefits to all street
7 users, that bike infrastructure encourages lawful
8 cycling, that bike lanes are good for local
9 businesses, and that many people want to bike here
10 in New York City, and would do so if only our
11 streets were safer. For every improved street,
12 like Columbus Avenue, we gain more proof that this
13 is so, and we encourage the City to continue its
14 efforts to be a leader in this area. But there's
15 a second obstacle to successful bike
16 infrastructure in New York City, and that's the
17 lack of a unified, positive response on the part
18 of all City agencies, most notably the NYPD for
19 this kind of infrastructure. [time bell] While
20 there's plenty of room for debate on particular
21 street redesign on this or that block, or about
22 enforcement strategy, every City agency and every
23 person on every rung of City government needs to
24 be publicly and affirmatively supportive about
25 rebalancing our valuable street space to

1
2 accommodate the greatest mix of possible users,
3 including cyclists. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

5 Sir?

6 IAN DUTTON: I'll let Ms. Secunda
7 go first.

8 SHIRLEY SECUNDA: Oh. Oh, he's
9 gallant.

10 IAN DUTTON: [laughs]

11 SHIRLEY SECUNDA: I'm Shirley
12 Secunda, and I'm the Chair of the Traffic and
13 Transportation Committee for Community Board Two,
14 Manhattan, and I'm basically just going to share a
15 few thoughts and points of view on this. [off mic
16 comment] Can you hear me? Okay. Community Board
17 Two, Manhattan has been supporting a fair balance
18 between transportation modes for many years. In
19 New York City, the lion's share of street space is
20 given to motor vehicles, leading to inequities in
21 use of this space, to conditions threatening our
22 citizens' safe passage and wellbeing, to air
23 pollution, and to obstruction of business. With
24 traffic congestion overwhelming our streets and
25 increasing, we see that expanding the use of

1
2 alternative transportation modes--walking,
3 bicycling and public transit--while encouraging
4 less motor vehicle use, is the best way to reduce
5 these negative impacts. Therefore, we've welcome
6 the New York City Department of Transportation's
7 introducing more bike lanes, claiming vehicular
8 space for pedestrian plazas, instituting flexible
9 pricing for parking, and creating changes in
10 street geometry that more equitably apportions
11 space and increase safety for pedestrians,
12 bicyclists and drivers. DOT has created several
13 new bike lanes in the CB2 area, both crosstown and
14 north/south. And in every case has notified us in
15 advance of their plans, so that we could set up
16 public hearings in a timely manner and get
17 adequate community input. Besides CB2's
18 announcements of our hearings on these proposals,
19 DOT has posted its own four-color fliers throughout
20 our district, when they are doing these proposals.
21 In CB2's experience, when new invasions are
22 introduced, there's always a period of adjustment.
23 Adjustment by the community to the changes, and
24 adjustment of the changes [time bell] by the
25 initiating agency--almost done--when tweaking is

1
2 needed. These adjustments take time, but need to
3 have a chance to be worked out, and when, worked
4 out when there's a high potential for positive
5 results, as there is with DOT's new improvements.
6 CB2 believes increased education can help raise
7 awareness, and is pleased that DOT has a new
8 public education campaign, including its bike
9 smart handbook, addressing bicycle rules, and
10 mutual responsibilities of cyclists, pedestrians
11 and drivers. And the "Don't Be a Jerk" campaign,
12 with radio, television and billboard ads on
13 bicycle etiquette.

14 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay.

15 SHIRLEY SECUNDA: We also
16 encourage--

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Please
18 conclude.

19 SHIRLEY SECUNDA: Okay. This is
20 it.

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Please
22 conclude.

23 SHIRLEY SECUNDA: We also encourage
24 enforcement and welcome the stepped up NYPD
25 enforcement regarding bicycling related

1

2 infractions that has recently taken place.

3 Thanks.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,
thank you, thank you. Yes, sir.

6

7 IAN DUTTON: All right, and I like
8 Shirley, my name is Ian Dutton, and like Ms.
9 Secunda, I'm a member of Community Board Two in
10 Manhattan. And I Chair our Board's Bicycle
11 Strategy Subcommittee. This Committee, sort of
12 like this hearing, has taken the role of promoting
13 bicycling in general as a safe, neighborhood
14 friendly and healthy means of traveling around our
15 district, while exploring means to encourage
16 responsible, respectful and safe behavior from
17 cyclists, as well as drivers and pedestrians. In
18 this role, I work extensively with the Department
19 of Transportation and in our district we've had
20 the Eighth and Ninth Avenue bike lanes and Grand
21 Street bike lanes, which have all been
22 groundbreaking for being protected bike lanes in
23 the City. For decades, DOT had continuously moved
24 to accommodate more and more traffic through our
25 neighborhoods, pushing pedestrians to ever
narrower spaces and relegating community activity,

1 such as stickball, to the pages of history books.
2 The effects of rolling out the red carpet to motor
3 vehicles can be read in statistics: asthma and
4 obesity rates, lost productivity and pedestrian
5 fatalities. Only in the last few years have we
6 seen a DOT which is interested in sharing this
7 public space between all of the users of this
8 space. And they do so only after cautious steps.
9 Previews for elected officials followed by public
10 hearings at community board level, with many
11 rounds of design adjustments in response to the
12 input. And they do in fact deviate, as we heard
13 earlier, from their bike master plan, to meet
14 present conditions, as they have in our district
15 in several of their flagship installations.
16 Rarely, though, in the past would DOT ever look
17 for public input when taking space away from the
18 public in order to accommodate more lanes of
19 traffic, but in taking steps to make streets more
20 neighborhood friendly, DOT has even taken to
21 posting and hand-distributing information prior to
22 community meetings. Just to skip along, in my
23 personal life, I'm a commercial airline pilot, and
24 I travel extensively around to the very cities
25

1
2 that have become model cities for reducing traffic
3 and encouraging cycling: Amsterdam and
4 Copenhagen, where I happen to have been last
5 weekend; and more recently London and Paris.
6 Those cities have all gone through the same
7 growing pains that we are going through today, and
8 trying to resolve. But the key in those cities
9 has been to diminish the "us versus them." It's
10 not a fight between who has rights to do what.
11 And it really shouldn't be. It should be, "We're
12 all in it together." And those cities that have
13 been most successful are the ones where they
14 understand that their neighbors, their children,
15 their cyclists, they themselves [time bell] might
16 be drivers, but we're all in this together. So
17 let me wrap up by saying, a recent Wall Street
18 Journal article about cycling in New York quoted a
19 cyclist as saying, "I used to ride a lot more
20 aggressively because I felt unsafe. When I'm in a
21 protected lane, I feel I can take my time and say
22 'hi' to people." That was me, of course. And as
23 the city streets become less threatening for non-
24 motorists, I find myself being joined by other
25 like-minded riders. That's a turn of events with

1

2 positive outcomes for everyone in the City.

2

3

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you very
4 much, all of you.

4

5

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: [off mic]

6

Can I just say.

7

IAN DUTTON: Sure.

8

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: [off mic]

9

Before - - when he said he - -

10

IAN DUTTON: Yes. [laughter]

11

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: [off mic] I

12

thought you were in - -

13

IAN DUTTON: No. [laughs] No, no,

14

it's, I, I dress differently for work.

15

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: I see.

16

[laughter]

17

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Oh, yeah.

18

IAN DUTTON: I clean up well.

19

[laughter]

20

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

21

Well, our Sergeant-of-Arms, Nick and Gerry, now

22

want to get a bicycle, too, so. [laughter]

23

They're jealous of my getting one. So, I'll

24

include you both. We'll get a bicycle built for

25

three. [laughter] Next. Oh, here. Eli

1
2 Offenbacher [phonetic], Brooklyn, New York; Sharon
3 Phillips, Transportation Alternatives; Jeffrey
4 Lennat [phonetic]--

5 MALE VOICE: He's here.

6 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: --New Jersey.
7 Good. Nick Rosack [phonetic], Staten Island, New
8 York.

9 MALE VOICE: Yeah, he's here.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: And then after
11 that, let me see who we have after that, 'cause we
12 have our last panel! [laughter] Our last panel
13 before Tish and I faint from hunger. Rhonda Rose,
14 oh, Rhonda Rose is here, okay; Richard Stevens,
15 Bronx, New York! We have somebody from The Bronx!

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: [off mic]
17 Oh, my god he should go - -

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: What is this?
19 My, my borough! Jim Forvat, Forat [phonetic],
20 oaky, so we have, okay, we're all set for two more
21 panels, and then we will adjourn. [laughter] All
22 right, would you like to start?

23 SHARON PHILLIPS: Sure. Good, good
24 afternoon, thank you all for waiting so long, I'm
25 with you on the passing out from hunger thing,

1
2 too. [laughs] Yeah. My name is Dr. Sharon
3 Phillips, I am a cycling enthusiast. I'm actually
4 a Jersey resident, surprisingly enough. I like to
5 take the ferry over and then ride my bicycle up to
6 Columbia, where I've spent the past four years
7 studying the obesity epidemic, which the last
8 couple of people that came up spoke about, and I
9 know you said you've lost a ton of weight. Two-
10 thirds of the adult population right now are
11 obese, and one out of every five children is
12 obese. And you're all aware of the risks that
13 come with this obesity. The point that I'd like
14 to drive home is that the CDC even strongly
15 supports that complete streets, especially bike
16 lanes, can reduce the rate of obesity. Research
17 has shown that if you built it, they will bike it.
18 Increased opportunities to cycle increases
19 physical activity. As good citizens, we have a
20 responsibility to help promote a healthier living
21 environment for our community. There's also the
22 issue of money, and I'd like to point out that
23 obesity costs far more than setting up some bike
24 lanes. In, well, I--in 2008, obesity costs \$147
25 billion in healthcare; comparatively, the federal

1

2 government spent \$541 million on bike and walking
3 lanes, which is only .3 percent of the cost of
4 healthcare. It costs \$1,400 more per year for an
5 obese adult's healthcare than for a person of
6 average weight. So, clearly, it is far cheaper to
7 invest in bike lanes and it means, than healthcare
8 costs. So, basically, more bike lanes mean more
9 people exercise, more people exercising means less
10 obese people, less obese people bring down
11 healthcare costs, it seems like a win-win
12 situation especially when we're in a situation
13 where there's an obesity epidemic and we need to
14 act and become a healthier city. Thank you for
15 your time. I still have time to go, I was trying
16 to do that. [laughs]

17

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: [off mic]

18

Please, sir.

19

20

21

22

23

24

JEFFREY LENNET: Hello, my name is
Jeffrey Lennet and I am from New Jersey, so of
course I have a car. But what I really love to do
is to ride my bike in New York City and spend lots
and lots of money, as I do this. [laughter] So,
in regards to the businesses--

25

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: We need the tax

1
2 revenue, [laughter] we have constant deficits,
3 we're told. Most of the bike riding I do is along
4 the waterfront greenways, it's the easiest, it's
5 the safest. Once in a while I venture inland, so
6 to speak, on a bike path, and I feel fairly safe
7 on a, I should say a bike lane, I feel fairly safe
8 on a bike lane. The more bike lanes, the more I'm
9 going to venture inland, the more money I'm going
10 to spend at businesses that are not along the
11 waterfront greenways. So, thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Sir?

13 NICK ROSACK: Good afternoon, my
14 name's Nick Rosack from New Brighton, and I'm here
15 today to represent the forgotten borough. Staten
16 Island's always forgotten when it comes to biking.

17 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: You're here
18 from The Bronx?

19 NICK ROSACK: No, no.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: [off mic]

21 No, he's Staten Island.

22 NICK ROSACK: People know that
23 Bronx is part of the City; Staten Island they
24 think's part of Jersey, so. But I'm here to
25 repre--[laughter] We'll talk later. Yeah, but

1
2 Staten Island's always forgotten as far as biking.
3 We're the only borough without a bike network. We
4 have the smallest amount of bike lanes, we were
5 excluded from the New York City bike share program
6 proposal. We also, the only road connection we
7 have to the rest of the City is the Verrazano
8 Narrows Bridge, which is one of the very one of
9 the very few bridges that you cannot pass on a
10 bicycle. You're not even allowed to bring your
11 bicycle onto a bus to cross over the bridge. It
12 is simply impassable. I was not planning to speak
13 today at all, but I heard many people at the
14 beginning of the meeting, about six hours ago,
15 talk about the Father Cap bike land [phonetic]
16 being removed. And I am not in Community Board
17 Two where that bike lane is located, so I do not
18 know what discussions happened with community
19 board leading up to that decision. But I can
20 assure you that they did not talk to anybody
21 bicyclists. 'Cause if they had talked to any
22 bicyclist, they would've found out that the two
23 paths that the DOT referred to, saying that's less
24 than 100 feet or yards from Father Cap, they're
25 referring to the boardwalk, and the South Beach,

1
2 Midland Beach greenway, both of which are
3 pedestrian pathway, packed with pedestrians,
4 physically blocked by things like dumpsters, valet
5 parking and both close at dusk. During the winter
6 months, the average Staten Islander doesn't get
7 home until around 6:30-7:00. Both those paths are
8 already closed with gates. This is not a passable
9 thing for a bicyclist. They also did not refer,
10 talk to any business owners, especially the bike
11 rental shop located right on Father Cap. He had
12 no warning this was coming, it happened all of a
13 sudden. So, definitely, as far as way bike lanes
14 are added or subtracted, I do not know how it was
15 done exactly on Community Board Two in Staten
16 Island, but there was no input from bicyclists.
17 [time bell] So, let me just close up here. Many
18 times, I think policymaker are confused between
19 biking as transportation and biking for recreation
20 purposes. Making Father Cap, moving Father Cap
21 bike lane to recreational, to the recreational
22 pathways that are filled with pedestrians is not a
23 good option for transportation. I hope that in
24 the future Staten Island will be included with the
25 rest of the City and will become a safe place to

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use a bike as form of transportation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, sir.

Our next panel, come on up. Richard Stevens is here, and Kevin Stevens, put them all together, let's all come up, whoever's left, let's go.

[laughter] 'Cause I really have to end this.

Don't take offense, I'd love to be here forever and meet with you, but--[background noise]

Whoever's here. Jim? Jim Forat?

JIM FORAT: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: All right, would you start off, please? Rhonda Rose, are you up here?

RHONDA ROSE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes, okay, Mr. Forat first.

JIM FORAT: I am one of the people that got here at 9:00 o'clock, and stood outside in the 30 degrees wind chill weather. I'm little bit - - because I am a biker, I'm also a senior and I'm 69 years old, and I wanted to talk about the problems that seniors have. And I think it's, I think it's been said a lot here about the legitimate concerns of pedestrians, particularly

1
2 seniors, who feel threatened and unsafe, by people
3 who violate the rules of biking and bicycle
4 etiquette. Unless there is some kind of
5 enforcement of rules on bike riders, all those
6 people that hate us, will have to be given due
7 credit. And by that I mean, people who walk on
8 the sidewalk get frightened when they see a
9 delivery person rushing the wrong way. They also
10 get frightened when I'm on the sidewalk, because
11 there is no bike lane, and I'm in the middle of
12 Sixth Avenue and 23rd Street where I have been hit
13 by a cab and had a broken arm. I do go on, I'm
14 going to be the only one that's going to tell the
15 truth here, I do go on the sidewalks when the
16 street is so dangerous I can't go. I try to be
17 respectful, I try to stay to one side, and I try
18 to go slow, and I try to say, "Bicycle! Bicycle!"
19 so that people--and I don't want to do that. So,
20 I'm here to advocate for the protected bike lanes.
21 Two broken arms, twice hit by taxicabs, one in an
22 unprotected bike lane, says to me the only way
23 that it's safe to ride a bicycle is in the paths
24 that are protected. And I really feel that the,
25 that seniors that can ride bicycles, you know, not

1
2 all of us can, and as we get older and older, the
3 gentleman with his arthritis in his knees at 73
4 who said he's, [time bell] he rode a bicycle,
5 should be really commended. But lots of seniors
6 cannot, and lots of children cannot, and the, by
7 the way, I've said this before, and I'm going to
8 say it here, those cobblestone streets, which hare
9 so romantic for all of you real estate people, are
10 terrible for women who wear heels, for people who
11 have baby carriages, for people who have mobility
12 issues, wheelchairs, stroll--whatever. And for
13 bicycle riders. I can't tell you what it's like
14 to go over those, you can shake something loose.
15 So, please do something about that. I ran against
16 Chris Kring [phonetic] in the democratic primary,
17 and I rode my bicycle to every single meet--

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: That's why you
19 were waiting outside from 8:00 o'clock this
20 morning. [laughter]

21 JIM FORAT: And I rode my bicycle
22 to every meeting. And I will tell you I, and I
23 walk, and I would go in with my bicycle cap, and I
24 was shocked to hear how many people were angry. I
25 also went to many a community board meeting and

1
2 heard car owners say, "We don't deserve these bike
3 lanes because it takes up their parking spaces."
4 They do not take up parking spaces, if you have a
5 protected bike lane, that continues to have the
6 parking spaces. And please, please, all of you,
7 put your brains together. The delivery trucks
8 have to make deliveries. And they're, we're not
9 opposed to them making deliveries, so please
10 figure that out. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, sir.
12 Young lady, first.

13 RHONDA ROSE: Hi, my name is
14 Rhonda, I live on the Upper East Side. I was
15 raised in Brooklyn, and as a child biking was
16 something to do outside the apartment. My fondest
17 memories are crossing the Marine Park Bridge, the
18 Brooklyn Bridge, and cycling through Prospect Park
19 to Ocean Parkway. Bicycling is exercise, seeing
20 places and biking adds balance to my life. I now
21 live on East 83rd Street. Marley was right, we
22 don't have enough bicycle lanes on the Upper East
23 Side. Having bike lanes in my neighborhood would
24 make me safer. Let's open more bike lanes. We do
25 have an obesity epidemic, and we should encourage

1
2 people to walk more. Bicycling encourages people
3 to walk more. When there are bike lanes, it
4 creates open space and a feeling of community and
5 safety. Let's show children and parents that we
6 care about safety. With each new bike lane, we
7 open our souls to the possibility of healthy
8 children, not obese children, to confident
9 parents, not fearful parents. When there are bike
10 lanes in every section of the City, we will feel
11 less stressed. More bike lanes, let's make it
12 easy for everyone. Let's not give up, let's keep
13 going, we're not finished. I want to see people
14 bicycling uptown, to and from work, and for it to
15 be as safe as possible with well-marked bike
16 lanes. With each new bike lane, we open our
17 hearts to the possibility of a green city.

18 Bicyclists are the great equalizers in New York.
19 Yesterday I saw film celebrity Owen Wilson from
20 the movie "The Wedding Crashers" riding his bike
21 on 5th Avenue/98th Street, on the sidewalk.

22 [laughter] We smiled at each other. Come out,
23 everyone, there is no entrance fee, just bring
24 your bike and we'll go places together. I need my
25 bike, when I can't afford the MTA fare.

1
2 Unemployment, high rents and prices are realities.
3 I know I am not alone. Biking cuts through all
4 that. If you don't have \$2.25, but you have a
5 bike, you can still get there, and maybe meet a
6 film celebrity, like Owen Wilson [time bell] or
7 share a laugh with the delivery guy. Let's make
8 biking as safe as possible, add more bike lanes.

9 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you.

10 Sir.

11 KEVIN STEVENS: My name is Kevin
12 Chattan Stevens, and I'm a podiatrist and Mt.
13 Sinai. The greatest issue that pediatricians face
14 today is childhood obesity, which I was glad to
15 hear has been mentioned a couple times already.
16 Yeah. Approximately 40 percent of schoolchildren
17 in our City are overweight or obese. And there
18 are striking health disparities that often exist
19 between multiethnic, low income communities, such
20 as East Harlem and higher income neighborhoods.
21 East Harlem, where many of my patients live, has
22 some of the highest rates of childhood obesity and
23 asthma in the City, and therefore the nation. So
24 as a pediatrician, I view the safe streets
25 movement, which includes pedestrian and bicycle

1 safety improvements, as a public health issue. We
2 know that healthcare professionals, including the
3 Health Commissioner Dr. Farley, have expressed
4 support for utilizing these changes to improve our
5 communities' health. We should encourage New
6 Yorkers to be active through walking and biking by
7 providing safe streets. These streets should
8 welcome individuals of all ages, especially
9 vulnerable populations such as children, the
10 elderly and those with disabilities. Too often
11 improvements in street design are narrowly
12 characterized as just bicycle lanes, when in fact
13 it results extend to reductions in pedestrian
14 injuries and motor vehicle speeding crashes, in
15 addition to providing a safer cycling environment.
16 When I discuss healthy active lifestyles with my
17 patients and their families, many often express
18 concern about walking and cycling in their
19 neighborhood due to the speed of traffic and the
20 lack of protecting riding space. We must ensure
21 that these safety treatments are distributed
22 throughout the City in an equitable manner. We
23 should stop viewing the bicycle as solely a
24 recreational toy, and consider it a tool by which
25

1
2 we can improve individual and community level
3 health, and begin to address some of these health
4 disparities. This is a public health issue and
5 should be dealt with accordingly. To conclude, we
6 are experiencing an epidemic of obesity, safety
7 improvements that result in balanced streets
8 reduce injuries for all users, and the City should
9 use these improvements as a tool in the fight
10 against obesity. Thank you.

11 RICHARD STEVENS: Good afternoon.
12 I'm Richard Stevens. She drove up behind me as I
13 was cycling, and with no other vehicle behind or
14 beside her, she sent both bike and rider to the
15 asphalt. As I lay on the street, with the bike on
16 top of me, I could see plus or minus an eighth of
17 a mile to the east that the roadway was clear of
18 vehicles, free even of double-parked cars. On
19 Fremont Avenue, bordering the Park Chester
20 Apartment Complex in Bronx County, two lanes of
21 easterly vehicular traffic are separated by a wide
22 sidewalk median from two lanes of westerly bound
23 traffic. And in each direction, a single lane of
24 parked cars are adjacent to the traffic lanes, and
25 are in turn flanked by wide pedestrian sidewalks.

1
2 Few streets or avenues in New York City offer as
3 wide a field of vision as is present on this
4 occasion, at this location, yet she hit me. It
5 was either Richard Aborn [phonetic], or Cyrus
6 Vance, as candidates at a political forum,
7 cosponsored by Benjamin Cardozo School of Law at
8 Yeshiva University and the nonprofit advocacy
9 organization, Transportation Alternatives, prior
10 to the election for Manhattan District Attorney,
11 who stated that district-- [time bell] hearing
12 officers, the communications industry, and police
13 departments, treat vehicular homicide and
14 attempted vehicular homicide as accidents. Sure
15 enough, when I was in the ambulance, the police
16 allowed the woman to go, no name, no license,
17 nothing. You see it's this way, we don't need
18 bike paths or even bike lanes because there are no
19 homicides, attempted homicides, not even
20 accidents, they never happen. Until there's a
21 body to be disposed of. [applause]

22 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Your testimony
23 was very effective. I know from where you speak,
24 it's right outside of my district in the Park
25 Chester community. But I will say that we don't

1
2 have a way to effectively gage bicycle involved
3 accidents. Your accident was not of your making,
4 but it involved you as you were riding a bicycle.
5 We don't have that type of technology, or we don't
6 have the ability of the, we don't have the
7 willingness of some City agencies to be more
8 transparent. We are trying to find out why we
9 can't get that information. And we're trying to
10 press upon the City our view that once we get that
11 information, it will better help us keep you safe.
12 And keep others safe. And that's what this
13 counsel is committed to doing, by this hearing and
14 by everything else that we are doing in this vein.

15 RICHARD STEVENS: The issue is,
16 multiple sources collecting the data. This never
17 happened, according to the Police Department.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I understand.
19 And I think that that goes to the heart of the
20 conversation new had before regarding how 311
21 identifies bike related accidents and how they
22 record them. And how do they then go into a
23 statistical database that we can access? So, that
24 is part of the issue that we face, as bicycle
25 riding becomes more prevalent. And I think it's

1
2 something that I know my Committee's determined to
3 address.

4 MALE VOICE: Do something about
5 FedEx and UPS trucks, because in Manhattan they
6 are the worst violators of double parking in the
7 bicycle lanes, and those are huge trucks, and if
8 you have to go around them, the cars don't know,
9 and the bicycle riders are at risk.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Okay. Council
11 Member James, and then we will conclude.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Let me just
13 say, as we conclude, I believe that I concur with
14 the doctor, that this is a public health issue,
15 and it should be treated as such. In addition to
16 that, obviously, this is an issue that the City
17 Council is very much aware of and all of us are,
18 and I'm sure the chair is interested in focusing
19 on this issue, and trying to protect citizens'
20 lives, health and wellbeing in the City of New
21 York. Having said all of that, I do believe that
22 we can do a better job in making our roads safe
23 for cyclists, and that includes, but is not
24 limited to, education, recycling bikes so that
25 individuals from low income communities could take

1
2 advantage of cycling. I've asked the Speaker of
3 the City Council to create a task force, Mr.
4 Chair, and I would hope that you would join me in
5 that effort. There were some, I think that we
6 should contact the Metropolitan Transportation
7 Authority and we should allow individuals to take
8 their bikes on the buses. And the compromise, if
9 [applause] the compromise at least should be at
10 least off peak hours, if we can't do it 24 hours,
11 seven days a week. I love my cobble streets, I
12 represent brownstone Brooklyn, so I love those
13 streets, but [background noise] well, you see, I
14 have sneakers on, so you know. I gave heels up
15 yesterday, but anyway. And there's some other
16 initiatives, but obviously, you know, this, the
17 testimony here today, this hearing, was exciting,
18 it was educational, it was needed, and I guess
19 I'll just end with, "Can't we all just get along,
20 Mr. Chair?"

21 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Yes, that is--
22 I, too, want to end, I first want to thank all of
23 you for coming, and I want to thank you for your
24 patience. And some of you waited here for hours,
25 and I appreciate that, and the Committee does.

1
2 This was, I think, an informative hearing, but I
3 think it was a hearing that had to be held. And I
4 hope it begins a meaningful discussion. I want to
5 thank our Sergeant-of-Arms, who did a wonderful
6 job. [applause] And keeping order, "Quiet,
7 please," and he did a great job. And Gerry, and
8 Novarto [phonetic] Lopez and Lyle Frank, our
9 counsel and staff analyst. I want to thank
10 Council Member James for sticking it out with me.
11 [applause] And it was very nice of her. Okay,
12 there being no further business, this meeting is
13 adjourned, it is now 3:25.

14 [gavel]

15 [pause, background noise for
16 remaining five plus minutes]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Donna Hintze 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 

Date December 14, 2010