

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE

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HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joann Ariola  
David M. Carr  
Amanda Farias  
Ari Kagan  
Linda Lee  
Farah N. Louis  
Mercedes Narcisse  
Lincoln Restler  
Carlina Rivera  
Nantasha M. Williams  
Julie Won  
Kalman Yeger

## A P P E A R A N C E S

Rich Davey  
President of New York City Transit

Kevin Willens  
MTA Chief Financial Officer

Jaibala Patel  
MTA Deputy CFO

Ydanis Rodriguez  
Commissioner for Transportation Planning and  
Management

Paul Ochoa  
Executive Deputy Commissioner

Eric Beaton  
Deputy Commissioner for Transportation Planning  
and Management

David Do  
Commissioner of TLC

Evan Hines  
Deputy Commissioner of TLC

David Jones  
President and CEO of the Community Services  
Society

Jean Ryan  
President of Disabled In Action of Metropolitan  
New York, DIA

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Liam Blank  
Associate Director of the Permanent Citizens  
Advisory Committee to the MTA testifying on  
behalf of Lisa Daglian

Eric McClure  
Michael Ring

Danny Pearlstein  
Policy and Communications Director at the Riders  
Alliance

Christopher Schuyler  
Senior Staff Attorney with the Disability Justice  
Program at New York Lawyers for the Public  
Interest

Amanda Berman  
Deputy Director of Regional Programs with the  
Center for Court Innovation

Denise Keehan-Smith  
Board Chair of the Friends of QNS

Joshua Steinberg  
Representing Friends of the QNS

Raul Rivera  
New York City TLC driver

Natasha Elder  
Regional Director with NYPIRG

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Paul Muhammad  
Member of the Coalition for Community Advancement

Sharon Mclennan  
Executive Director for the Center for  
Independence of Disabled New York, CIDNY

Elizabeth Adams  
Senior Director for Advocacy and Organizing at  
Transportation Alternatives

Tolly Canter  
Director of Planning at the Union Square  
Partnership

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1  
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: At this time, we ask if you  
3 can please phones on vibrate or silent mode. Thank  
4 you Chair, we are ready to begin.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [GAVEL] Good morning  
6 and welcome to the New York City Council Committee on  
7 Transportation and Infrastructure hearing on the  
8 Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Budget and the Fiscal 2023  
9 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report.

10 My name is Selvena Brooks-Powers and I have the  
11 privilege of Chairing this Committee. Today, we will  
12 be hearing testimony from the Metropolitan  
13 Transportation Authority followed by the New York  
14 City Department of Transportation and the Taxi and  
15 Limousine Commission.

16 Following the TLC, we will hear testimony from  
17 the public beginning at 2:30 p.m.. Thank you to  
18 those advocates who have joined us today. Before I  
19 begin, I would like to take a moment to recognize  
20 that tragically, just weeks ago, four New Yorkers  
21 died from traffic violence in a span of just three  
22 days, including a seven-year-old child. Traffic  
23 fatalities are preventable and unacceptable. Today  
24 and moving forward we hope the Department of  
25 Transportation remains committed to the goals of

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3 Vision Zero and addresses this tragedy by prompting  
4 safer streets in all communities.

5 I hope to be a part of this important ongoing  
6 work. We are here today to begin the Fiscal 2024  
7 budget process and it is my hope that this budget  
8 process will lead to the adoption of a budget that is  
9 equitable and fair to all communities citywide.

10 MTA's Calendar Year 2023 Adopted Operating Budget is  
11 \$19.2 billion and includes more than \$1 billion in  
12 city subsidies. Highlights of the budget includes  
13 \$5.6 billion in remaining COVID stimulus funding, a  
14 5.5 percent increase assumed for implementation in  
15 2023 and the assumption of \$600 million in  
16 unspecified additional government funding and/or  
17 additional MTA actions.

18 It's 2020 to 2024 capital program totals \$54.8  
19 billion and remains unchanged from the last year.  
20 Revenue from congestion pricing was estimated to  
21 cover 27 percent of the plan but to date, the  
22 infrastructure required to start the program is not  
23 expected to be in place until after the first quarter  
24 of 2024, the last year of the capital program. The  
25 Committee anticipates receiving an update on the  
status of this program and how persistent delays will

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3 impact the capital plan that is supposed to upgrade  
4 the system and create greater accessibility.

5 On February 1, 2023, Governor Hochul released the  
6 State Fiscal 2024 Executive Budget which proposed a  
7 payroll mobility tax increase, of which nearly \$500  
8 million annually will come from the city through 100  
9 percent city contributions for paratransit costs and  
10 student fare reimbursements and a share of license of  
11 fees and revenue for city casinos, and other revenue  
12 to support MTA.

13 The Committee looks forward to hearing the  
14 Authorities view on the Governor's Proposal and how  
15 it is managing programs like Access-A-Ride, which the  
16 city could soon be required to fully fund.

17 We also acknowledge and celebrate the data that  
18 indicates crime is down in our subway system. Today,  
19 I look forward to discussing how the states budget  
20 continues to address safety in the subway system,  
21 including with respect to officer and private  
22 security presence. But I also note, recent reporting  
23 demonstrating the massive disproportionate impact of  
24 fare evasion enforcement on Black and Brown riders.

25 Just yesterday, the Speaker announced the  
Council's commitment to expanding the Fare Fare's

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3 Program to more riders, which reflects our broader  
4 commitment to equity in transit. I hope to explore  
5 today how this budget prioritizes equity and ensures  
6 the system works for all New Yorkers. DOT's  
7 Preliminary Expense Budget for Fiscal 2024 is  
8 approximately \$1.4 billion. In addition, \$11.8  
9 billion is budgeted for the Departments Capital  
10 program. We look forward to the Commissioner  
11 updating the Committee on the Departments efforts to  
12 maintain the city's roadway infrastructure.

13 We also hope to hear how the department plans to  
14 invest in and improve neighborhoods like mine that  
15 are benchmarks, excuse me, that are suffering from  
16 high rates of traffic fatalities and crashes and how  
17 DOT will meet all benchmarks mandated by the  
18 transportation master plan. It is my hope that the  
19 Department will look to invest in these communities  
20 in order to transform city streets and safe and  
21 usable infrastructure.

22 Finally, we anticipate hearing from the TLC as  
23 they report on how the taxi industry is recovering  
24 from the effects of the pandemic. TLC's proposed  
25 Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Budget totals \$51.3 million.  
The Committee hopes to hear from the Commissioner on



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2 how it is helping to protect drivers and the future  
3 of an industry that saw a significant decline in the  
4 number of active unique vehicles across all TLC  
5 industries in 2020 and has not yet fully recovered to  
6 prepandemic levels.

7 Next, we will look forward to receiving an update  
8 on the Medallion Release Program, which will provide  
9 Medallion owners with \$20,000 grants to help set  
10 lower monthly payments and provide debt relief to  
11 driver's in need. In addition, we would like to  
12 discuss TLC's involvement with the Paratransit  
13 program, as well as its cost and the possibility of  
14 program expansion.

15 Before we hear from the MTA, let me take a moment  
16 to recognize my colleges who have joined us this  
17 morning. We are joined by Council Members Farias,  
18 Lee, Narcisse, Louis and Kagan. I would like to  
19 thank the Committee Staff who helped prepare this  
20 hearing John Basile Principal Financial Analyst,  
21 Chima Obichere Deputy Director of Finance, Sam  
22 Breitbart Committee Counsel, Kevin Kotowski Senior  
23 Policy Analyst, my Policy and Budget Director Jack  
24 Seigenthaler, and my Chief of Staff Renee Taylor.

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3 I will now ask the Committee Counsel to go over  
4 some procedural items and swear in the  
5 representatives from the MTA.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. I'm Sam  
7 Breitbart, Counsel to the Transportation and  
8 Infrastructure Committee of the New York City  
9 Council. Our first witnesses will be from the MTA,  
10 Rich and Jai Patel. I will now ask you to raise your  
11 right hands. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
12 whole truth and nothing but the truth before this  
13 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member  
14 questions? You may begin.

15 Thank you. Good morning and thank you all for  
16 having us here today, especially our Chair, Chair  
17 Brooks-Powers. Thank you again for the invitation to  
18 return to discuss some of the pressing issues that we  
19 have here in the City of New York and Transportation.

20 You know as mentioned, I'm Rich Davey, President  
21 of New York City Transit. I am joined here today by  
22 MTA Chief Financial Officer Kevin Willens and the  
23 Deputy CFO Jai Patel. I do want to start by  
24 acknowledging and thanking the Council Speaker and  
25 the Council for your bold proposal to expand fair  
fares. As mentioned by the Chair, this is an equity

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1 issue and to deliver more equitable fares to citizens  
2 across New York, I think is a critical step in  
3 ensuring that our system is fair, accessible and  
4 equitable to all. So, we applaud your effort and  
5 look forward to working with you all in the  
6 implementation of that plan.  
7

8 I'm also here to discuss the most pressing issues  
9 facing the MTA right now. Our challenging financial  
10 situation brought on by the COVID pandemic.

11 Prepandemic, we were able to recover 55 percent of  
12 our operating budget at the fare box, leading the  
13 nation in this metric. But with ridership still down  
14 across subways and buses by almost one-third; and let  
15 me remind you it was much, much worse at the height  
16 of the pandemic. Our operating budget is under real  
17 stress because the old financing model no longer  
18 works. The MTA overall is looking at a projected  
19 \$2.8 billion deficit in 2024, that grows to \$3  
20 billion by 2026. It's a whole too big to fill on our  
21 own, which is why and as our Chairman Jana Lieber has  
22 said many times, we need a new funding model for  
23 transit that recognizes our system as an essential  
24 service that it is.  
25

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1  
2 Thankfully, Governor Hochul has put forth a  
3 balanced executive budget proposal that addresses the  
4 fiscal cliff head on while preserving our ability to  
5 provide frequent and safe subway bus paratransit and  
6 commuter rail service. The first element of the  
7 governor's strategy is to get us at the MTA to  
8 generate savings. My colleague Cathy Rinaldi who  
9 oversees the railroads and I have been looking and  
10 continue to look to deliver over \$400 million in cost  
11 efficiencies without impacting service. The plan  
12 relies on \$100 million from a moderate fare and toll  
13 increase above what was already planned. And the  
14 rest of the money to fill the gap comes from a slight  
15 increase in the payroll mobile tax, applicable to  
16 only the top five largest businesses in the region.  
17 A one-time infusion from the state to address this  
18 year's deficit. A portion of future casino revenues  
19 and a realignment of cost arrangements with the City  
20 of New York.

21 Governor Hochul is asking the city to assume the  
22 net operating costs of our paratransit system and the  
23 NYC's Department of Education Student Metro Card  
24 Program, which I'll point out that the MTA simply  
25 helps administer. But in recent years, we've taken

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1 on a significant portion of its cost. We believe  
2 this is a reasonable request that allows the city to  
3 contribute its fair share towards the deficit, while  
4 ensuring those monies go to support activities  
5 benefiting New York City residents. Neighboring  
6 counties are responsible for paying the costs of  
7 their paratransit programs and the city has already  
8 been covering 50 percent of the program since 2020.

9  
10 These types of relationships are not uncommon in  
11 our shared history and partnership delivering transit  
12 to the city and I want to emphasize, it is not an  
13 indicator that we are committed to doing less to  
14 providing excellent paratransit service, as some have  
15 feared. Nothing could be further from the truth.  
16 Look at the bus system. Most average New Yorkers  
17 don't know the difference between a New York City  
18 transit bus or an MTA bus company, which is actually  
19 100 percent funded by the city.

20 The governor's proposal will have no impact on  
21 service delivery, nor the customer experience. As we  
22 just discussed with many of you just less than two  
23 weeks ago, we are making strides to improve our  
24 paratransit program and this change would have no  
25 impact on those gains.

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3 So far, we've heard from various stakeholders in  
4 civic and elected life, who have taken issue with one  
5 part of the governors plan or one word in another  
6 part of the plan. We haven't yet heard however a  
7 viable alternative that is sustainable for MTA's  
8 finances. One thing we do hear universally is that  
9 our stakeholders and partners in government  
10 understand the crisis the MTA is facing now and how  
11 we will all suffer if the authorities finances aren't  
12 stabilized.

13 No one benefits more from a strong MTA than New  
14 York City. Mass transit is the engine that drives  
15 the city and the region's economy. We are what makes  
16 New York City affordable, green, even possible. The  
17 density that has helped New York become the greatest  
18 city on earth doesn't work without strong, public  
19 transportation.

20 If our operating budget isn't funded to the level  
21 proposed by the governor, we are in serious trouble  
22 plainly. In past financial crisis, shared sacrifice  
23 has included service cuts, drastic fare increases  
24 coming at the expense of our customers in the  
25 layoffs. You will not hear the MTA proposing any of  
these options because as I said, we have learned over

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1  
2 the last few years, we are an essential service for  
3 this city. As we say, like air and water.

4 It wouldn't be fair to the millions of riders who  
5 rely on transit every day, especially those in low  
6 income and historically disadvantaged communities  
7 where ridership is bouncing back faster than anywhere  
8 else. Those New Yorkers are back to work full time  
9 and they need the same frequent, reliable and  
10 affordable service they have come to depend on. Even  
11 if some New Yorkers are not using mass transit as  
12 frequently.

13 It would be especially heartbreaking to make  
14 these cuts at a time when we're setting records on  
15 performance. January is one of the best months on  
16 record for subways with weekday on time performance  
17 hitting almost 86 percent. That's the highest in ten  
18 years. Not the best January in ten years, the best  
19 month in ten years. And we followed up with another  
20 strong month in February with an 85 percent on time  
21 performance and even weekend performance is north of  
22 87 percent, second only to the depths of COVID.

23 A shout out to our weekend service czar who is  
24 LaSalle who we appointed six months ago and has been  
25 pushing ever further to not only get the capital work

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1 we're doing on weekends done but also continue to  
2 deliver good service.

3  
4 On buses, the engines of equity here in the city,  
5 service delivery speeds on time performance, the  
6 metrics are all heading in the right direction led by  
7 the Bronx, where the local bus network redesign has  
8 had real positive on speed and overall performance.  
9 Customer satisfaction, which you may have heard me  
10 refer to as our North Star, is also on the upswing.  
11 Our February pulse survey shows buses ticked up  
12 slightly to 69 percent of our customers being  
13 satisfied or very satisfied. Subways jumping two  
14 points to 65 percent, again customers being satisfied  
15 or very satisfied. And Access-A-Ride's customer  
16 satisfaction group even higher, to 77 percent, a 15-  
17 point increase since last June. That's real  
18 progress.

19 Still we have limited options to balance the  
20 books outside of service cuts and fare and toll  
21 increases. The others leverage we can pull  
22 implementing layoffs or rating the capital program  
23 are disastrous. The MTA workforce kept the region  
24 moving during its darkest hour during COVID and we  
25 won't turn our back on them now. And we can't fall



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1 back into a pattern of capital disinvestment that led  
2 up to the summer of hell in 2017. We need a modern  
3 and strong transit system that's fast, reliable and  
4 above all safe. Again, this is an area where we have  
5 received incredible support from Governor Hochul and  
6 from Mayor Adams. The cops, camera, and Care  
7 Initiative, which was announced back in October,  
8 really kicked the MTA's year long efforts on public  
9 safety into overdrive.  
10

11 The NYPD surge their numbers into the subways  
12 with 1200 officers to patrol platforms and trains.  
13 The places where our riders were telling us they felt  
14 most vulnerable. Transit crews are announcing with  
15 cops or on trains or nearby so everyone knows. The  
16 NYS Safe Operations Support Teams and NYC DHS teams  
17 are out working to connect homeless New Yorkers with  
18 serious mental illness and addiction issues to the  
19 services in a more holistic way.

20 And our part, we're ramping up installation in  
21 new security cameras onboard trains. Soon every car  
22 in our fleet will have coverage on top of the over  
23 10,000 cameras we have in place at stations today.  
24 As a result, we have seen a significant downturn in  
25 just a matter of months, crime I should say. Crime

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1 since October is down double digits compared to the  
2 same time a year ago. And when comparing the same  
3 span of historical data, we're currently the second  
4 lowest overall crime rate since 1995.  
5

6 We're thrilled that customers are noticing the  
7 difference. In our December survey when we asked how  
8 safe they feel, nearly 60 percent of respondents said  
9 they felt safe or very safe, up significantly over  
10 the prior months. And 18 percent of customers stated  
11 they felt safer than they did a month ago. It's the  
12 highest since we started asking that question last  
13 year.

14 And 39 percent of our customers said that they  
15 were seeing about the right amount of police in our  
16 system, up from 26 in October. Again, the highest  
17 percentage we've seen. We want our customers to keep  
18 coming back, so we're doing everything we can to make  
19 transit faster, cleaner, safer. We just opened  
20 another three customer service centers bringing our  
21 systemwide total to six, with another nine said to  
22 open by the end of the year. Station agents are in  
23 training right now and will be coming out of the  
24 booth for their expanded customer service role in the  
25 coming weeks. We're drilling down on cleanliness

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1  
2 with our station renovation program, which times deep  
3 cleaning and upgrades at our stations to planned  
4 weekend outages. We've accomplished 20 already.

5 We phase reopening station bathrooms is underway.  
6 You may have seen the announcement yesterday. We had  
7 added an additional 12 stations. We'll be opening  
8 those bathrooms to the public by early May. Wi-Fi  
9 connectivity is coming to our subway tunnels and in  
10 short, we're doing the work that's necessary to  
11 provide New Yorkers with a world class transit  
12 experience.

13 But I have to make the point again, everything is  
14 at risk. If the MTA can't achieve our fiscal  
15 stability, this progress will be stunted. We are  
16 prepared to work with all stakeholders. Our partners  
17 here in City Hall, in Albany, in Washington, the  
18 Comptrollers Office, advocates, many of whom gathered  
19 prior to this hearing. Budgeteers and more to  
20 address the financial issues.

21 With that, Madam Chair, I'm happy to take your  
22 questions.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. We're  
24 going to just take a five-minute pause.

25 RICH DAVEY: Sure.

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3 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: We just have to  
4 reboot the livestream.

5 RICH DAVEY: Ah. Do I have to repeat that  
6 testimony?

7 [BREAK 19:14-23:40]

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning everyone. We are  
9 going to reconvene in just a moment. Thank you for  
10 your patience everyone. Once again if everyone could  
11 please find seats. Thank you. [23:50-24:14].

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you everyone  
13 for your patience on that. So, we can get back into  
14 everything. I must say first, thank you President  
15 Davey for once again submitting your testimony in  
16 advance. We truly appreciate it, so that we can  
17 actually have a conversation around these issues.

18 So, before we begin, the Committee may not get to  
19 all of our questions or may not get to all of the  
20 responses, so we will send a follow-up letter for any  
21 unanswered questions. So, just want to put that out  
22 there.

23 RICH DAVEY: Hmm, hmm, absolutely.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, let's start with  
25 bus redesign. Can you provide the Committee with an  
update of the Bus Redesign program?

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1  
2 RICH DAVEY: I can and I can excitedly provide  
3 that update. So, you know a few things, historically  
4 I think you all know we accomplished the Staten  
5 Island Express Bus Redesign now 2018, which with  
6 COVID feels like decades ago but I think that's gone  
7 incredibly well. We picked up the Bronx local bus  
8 redesign post COVID. We did a lot of public outreach  
9 and implemented that this past June, so June of 2022.  
10 We've been watching those statistics closely and  
11 we've actually seen both an increase in speeds across  
12 the Bronx. In some instances, customers depending on  
13 the route are picking up 15, 20 minutes of travel time  
14 which is great news. Watch that carefully. We  
15 actually added back a few stops that we had taken out  
16 but we watch, we continue to watch the Bronx very  
17 closely to see how it's going but so far, so good.

18 And now, we're currently in process, public  
19 process with both Queens and Brooklyn. So, you know  
20 the Queens bus, our network redesign we launched in  
21 2018. I think it's fair to say it got lots of  
22 feedback that was not very positive. COVID happened  
23 and so, New York City transit put a pause on that and  
24 we relaunched a new draft plan last year taking into  
25 account both that feedback we received prior to COVID

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1  
2 and we've held since that time, about 40 virtual in  
3 person events to get feedback on the Queens bus  
4 redesign plan. We expect a proposed final so,  
5 proposed final meaning we'll go back out for some  
6 additional comments but ultimately we have to go to  
7 our board for approval. That's expected to be  
8 published this year, later this year but we are you  
9 know excited to continue the dialogue with both  
10 electives, advocates, our bus customer and our bus  
11 driver's by the way I should tell you that. You know  
12 I think the folks that probably know these roots the  
13 best are the one's driving it, so we've engaged with  
14 our labor partners as well.

15       So, more to come but I was excited to attend a  
16 couple of those popup events myself, personally we  
17 got some great feedback from our customers in Queens.

18       And then Brooklyn, uhm, we're in early days or  
19 maybe if you would accept the baseball metaphor,  
20 probably in the top of the second ending. We've got  
21 a lot of work to do to get feedback and to get our  
22 customers, elected officials, stakeholders and others  
23 input on the Brooklyn Bus Redesign. We put out a  
24 launch, the report, draft report late last year and I  
25 think at that press conference, it was December 1<sup>st</sup>,

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1  
2 I was quoted as saying, I could guarantee one thing  
3 about that plan. It would be wrong. Like, we were  
4 not going to get it 100 percent right the first time.  
5 The goal of putting out a base plan is to do that and  
6 get public feedback. And so, we're in the middle  
7 right now of ongoing feedback from community groups,  
8 advocates, stakeholders, but we've got a long way to  
9 go for Brooklyn bus redesign.

10 So, that's where we are. Manhattan you know is  
11 probably out into the future. You know the bandwidth  
12 for our planners and our community, you know our  
13 community folks within New York City transit at MTA  
14 is limited because we want to make sure that we're  
15 taking care of Queens and Brooklyn first. But  
16 Manhattan will be you know probably 18 months or more  
17 beyond.

18 So, you know I would just finally say if I could  
19 Chair, you know my experience in 20 years in this  
20 business of you know trying to get transportation  
21 right, uhm, is that some folks say we move too fast  
22 and others say we move too slow and you know part of  
23 that is making sure we're balancing the right  
24 approach when it comes to feedback from all of the  
25

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3 advocates and stakeholders you know who care deeply  
4 about us getting it right.

5 So, my hope is we're striking that balance now  
6 but of course, happy to take you know any members  
7 feedback as we have and you know continue to make  
8 this a process, so.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I will say the  
10 feedback that I've heard from both bus driver's and  
11 members of the community in particular in Queens, is  
12 the concern about reduction in services. As you know  
13 in South East Queens, we don't really have trains.  
14 We rely heavily on the bus network and so, with the  
15 last proposal that I saw, I know it proposed creating  
16 like one or two new lines but it looked at reducing a  
17 number of the bus stops. And in South East Queens in  
18 particular, it's a growing, aging population that's  
19 there. So, while you know having two people get on  
20 at 222 Street on Merit may seem like not enough usage  
21 but at the same time for that constituent that is  
22 elderly or disabled, taking that bus one or two  
23 blocks is important to have that access to not having  
24 to walk several blocks to get the bus or were they  
25 getting let off not being in a reasonable amount of  
distance. And then over time, the fear is that it



1  
2 will then diminish the service that we get in the  
3 community.

4       And so, I know I've been hearing also that people  
5 have submitted comments to the MTA on the bus  
6 redesign but there is no mechanism to one confirm  
7 that's it's been received. It's like going into a  
8 black hole and then there's no way for them to know  
9 if it's being considered or not and what the outcome  
10 is. So, has the MTA begun to create a system so that  
11 the public knows that one, it's been received, the  
12 comments. And then two, what the next steps are?

13       RICH DAVEY: So, so let me unpack a few of the  
14 points you made there, appreciate that. So, on the  
15 question first of what we're doing, I just want to be  
16 clear, we're not cutting service. In fact, what  
17 we've done for all the redesigns is actually add  
18 service. So, we'll be adding service to Queens as  
19 well, at least we proposed that.

20       Your point on cutting bus stops though, that I do  
21 take and understand. I think you know a couple of  
22 things I've learned in doing this and here and other  
23 places, you know, everyone wants the bus to go  
24 quickly but nobody wants to give up their bus stop  
25 and one of the ways to make buses move more quickly

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1  
2 is in fact to consolidate bus stops. New York is a  
3 bit of an outlier in the length of how close bus  
4 stops are together. With that said, you know in the  
5 Bronx and other places, I'm sure our plan for Queens,  
6 we didn't get it 100 percent right. We may have  
7 missed you know a senior center for example. You  
8 know that would be appropriate to keep a bus stop.  
9 So, we're going to go stop by stop and make sure that  
10 we're considering all those factors, including the  
11 one you raised. So, I just wanted to alert you. My  
12 sense is that the plan will still include a number of  
13 bus stop eliminations but to the extent that there  
14 are very particular ones that you mentioned, you that  
15 are particularly effecting seniors for example, we  
16 want to take a look.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yeah, I sent some  
18 back and my feedback also. I have some to add back  
19 based on some of the conversation I've heard in the  
20 community and obviously working closely with you. I  
21 want to make sure that the electives in South East  
22 Queens get an audience with you to really go stop by  
23 stop to make sure that we get it right, because we  
24 are a transportation desert and we're one of the  
25 furthest points of the city.

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3 RICH DAVEY: Indeed, indeed and we know buses as  
4 you said so heavily relied upon by our, you know by  
5 our customers there for sure. We want to get it  
6 right. On the other question you asked, which was  
7 remind me now, I forget it.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The feedback on the  
9 system.

10 RICH DAVEY: The feedback, yes of course. So,  
11 uhm, you know I can assure you and your colleagues  
12 that all the feedback we're getting through our  
13 government community affairs group and our bus  
14 redesign folks is being considered. How will folks  
15 know it's being considered? You know we will put out  
16 a new draft plan in the coming weeks or months, which  
17 will incorporate some of that feedback for sure and  
18 then there'll be an opportunity again for the public  
19 to provide comments. So, given the number of  
20 comments we received, I'm not sure we can answer  
21 every specific one but be assured it's not falling in  
22 a black hole. Our planners are today you know taking  
23 all that feedback and rewriting the plan.

24 I'm sorry, yes, and we will come back out to the  
25 public and hold a public hearing to say okay, we  
26 heard your feedback you know, here is the new draft

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1  
2 plan and then take more feedback. So, it's a  
3 virtuous cycle if you will.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Because that was one  
5 of my next questions. Like, what kind of community  
6 outreach was MTA planning on undergoing for the bus  
7 redesign program?

8 RICH DAVEY: yeah, so we'll do two things. We'll  
9 certainly have public hearings as required. We'll  
10 also go out to bus stops themselves and get direct  
11 feedback from bus customers. And so, we'll do popups  
12 and make sure that we're getting feedback.  
13 Obviously, elected officials and other stakeholders  
14 will also provide probably more aggregated comments  
15 or formal comments which we'll take as well. So, you  
16 know again, I want to make sure we get it right which  
17 is probably why it's taking a little more time than  
18 some would like us to take but it's critical for us  
19 to make sure we're hearing and as best we can  
20 responding to folks.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And how has the MTA  
22 been reaching out to Council Members, communities and  
23 other stakeholders regarding the redesign?

24 RICH DAVEY: Yes, we've had over 60 events. I  
25 mean just alone for both Queens and Brooklyn, I could

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29

1  
2 rattle off some statistics if it's helpful. We've  
3 had 14 virtual workshops; this was last year. Five  
4 outside open houses. We had 15 popups with our  
5 mobile sales, vans. We attended other you know  
6 advocates and other events I think eight times. And  
7 then for our outreach, you know for the Bronx, we did  
8 a number of customer ambassador pieces in the lead up  
9 to that implementation in the summer but you know we  
10 continue to be out to make sure that we're in front  
11 of not only the average bus customer and you know the  
12 average bus driver, we're also in depots as well.  
13 But to make sure that folks like yourselves who we're  
14 hearing from constituents, assembly members as well  
15 of course that we're getting that aggregated  
16 feedback, so.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And what info or data  
18 are you trying to collect with the surveys at the bus  
19 stops?

20 RICH DAVEY: So, you know, are you aware of this?  
21 If you're not, let's like you know talk about it.  
22 Here are the potential changes we're making. Maybe  
23 bus stop elimination or consolidation. Maybe a new  
24 routes for example. We're looking at new routes,  
25 increasing frequency. I know I will tell you that

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1 the one thing you know when I started, we started the  
2 pulse surveys back last years for subways. The  
3 number one issue on folks mind was safety. For our  
4 bus customers, the number one thing on our bus  
5 customers mind was frequency and reliability.  
6

7 And so, you know getting that information is  
8 critically important for us. It also informs you  
9 know working with our partners in DOT to look at  
10 other you know alternatives to improving service  
11 right? I mentioned bus stop consolidation as one  
12 tool in the tool box but transit signal priority, bus  
13 lanes. You know there are a number of things that we  
14 can do with our partners at the city DOT to improve  
15 service as well, which we're consistently looking at.  
16 So, those are the kinds of conversations you know  
17 that happen with our bus customers.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Would we be able to  
19 get a copy of the questions before the survey starts?

20 RICH DAVEY: Uhm, I think we've already started  
21 some of the surveying but we're happy to provide it.  
22 Yeah, we'll follow up of course, we're happy to be  
23 transparent, absolutely.

24 CHARIPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. So, pivoting  
25 to congestion pricing.

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1 RICH DAVEY: Sweet.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, congestion  
3 pricing revenue was estimated to cover 27 percent of  
4 the 2020 to 2024 capital plan which had been delayed  
5 for years on the federal level. The Calendar Year  
6 2023 Adopted Plan projected that congestion pricing  
7 would begin in Calendar Year 2024 and generate \$1  
8 billion. However, the updated Calendar Year 2023  
9 February financial plan assumes a latest of revenue  
10 collection for the program from the beginning of  
11 Calendar Year 2024 to the start of the second quarter  
12 of 2024. This change will reduce anticipated revenue  
13 from the program from \$1 billion to \$750 million in  
14 2024. What is the current timeline for  
15 implementation of congestion pricing?  
16

17 RICH DAVEY: I'm going to ask my colleague Kevin  
18 Willens to talk about both the timeline and also I  
19 think the fiscal implications you suggested.

20 KEVIN WILLENS: Thank you. As you know, we're  
21 waiting for the federal environmental process to  
22 finish up. So, if you know which you know has been  
23 as you know going for a while. We're hoping to get a  
24 Fonzie so we could proceed sometime this spring and  
25 based on that, it's about – you know it takes us

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1  
2 about 300 days or so to go from when we get the green  
3 light to where all the infrastructure is running and  
4 revenues are collected.

5       So, that's why we've got an estimated date to be  
6 you know sometime in the second quarter of 2024. As  
7 you know, all the congestion pricing goes 100 percent  
8 to capital, so it's one of the you know many revenues  
9 we have to fund the '20 to '24 Capital program. The  
10 delay in congestion pricing has not been an issue to  
11 date because we've been able to use the other sources  
12 that are available to fund the capital program  
13 including \$10 billion that we've been able to commit  
14 against the other part of the capital lock box. The  
15 sales tax and the mansion tax that are dedicated to  
16 capital. There's ongoing federal funding of roughly  
17 \$2.5 billion a year and also both the city and state  
18 have committed \$3 billion a year.

19       So, right now, the capital program, we've been  
20 able to keep together and you know we committed a  
21 record \$11 billion in new capital projects last year.  
22 And we've been able to do that even with the ongoing  
23 delay of congestion pricing again, by using the other  
24 revenue sources.

25



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3 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for that.

4 The current capital plan will end after 2024. As the  
5 largest single funding source for the 2020-2024  
6 capital program. How has the delay of congestion  
7 pricing effected the capital program? Like, should  
8 we anticipate this gets pushed to like the next one?

9 KEVIN WILLENS: Yeah, uhm, no, we're not looking  
10 to delay the Capital program. As you know the  
11 Capital program was delayed a bit just because of  
12 COVID and so, as I stated, the impact of the delay of  
13 congestion pricing has - we've been able to fill the  
14 gap by using the other resources that are available  
15 in the capital program and you know one thing, when  
16 we talk about a 20 to 24 capital program, that's the  
17 window of when we expect to commit projects and on  
18 the spending on projects like any capital program  
19 takes a number of years beyond that original  
20 commitment for you know for example, Second Avenue  
21 Subway you know once approved and we've locked in the  
22 federal funding, you know will be you know a seven or  
23 eight year construction project.

24 So, bottom line is if we get the federal approval  
25 you know by mid-year and then get congestion pricing  
up and running in the second quarter next year, it

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1 shouldn't impact our ability to fund the \$15 billion  
2 in capital from congestion pricing.  
3

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, will the MTA be  
5 able to meet all of its project goals in the capital  
6 program?

7 KEVIN WILLENS: Uh, yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How does the MTA plan  
9 to work with DOT to ensure there's a successful  
10 rollout of the congestion program?

11 KEVIN WILLENS: Sure, I mean I think we've had a  
12 great working relationship with NYC DOT on a number  
13 of items whether its bus lanes or some of the initial  
14 planning, work with NYC DOT and so, we don't envision  
15 any issues and as you know, the infrastructure for  
16 congestion pricing has already been well planned out  
17 and worked through with DOT.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And I know there's  
19 been like a lot of feedback in terms of different  
20 industries like the Yellow Taxi Cab and congestion  
21 pricing because they're already receiving a tax that  
22 they pay out currently. As well as quite honestly  
23 you have folks that are coming from you know the  
24 outer boroughs in particular that have some of the  
25 largest commutes that don't have you know currently

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1  
2 the infrastructure to expand some of the services to  
3 rely on public transportation. How has the MTA been  
4 working to look at addressing some of those concerns?

5 KEVIN WILLENS: Uhm, as you know what state law  
6 requires is the Traffic Mobility Review Board will be  
7 analyzing all of that in terms of you know obviously  
8 there's many different groups asking for you know  
9 exemptions or deductions or discounts and so forth.  
10 And so, what our job was to lay out a range of  
11 scenarios which exist in the federal environmental  
12 documents of different tolling schemes and then once  
13 the - then it's going to be up to the Traffic  
14 Mobility Review Board to once we have the federal  
15 approval to review all those and come up with a  
16 proposed plan for tolling.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Uhm, I think some of  
18 the concern especially with the Yellow Taxi Cab and  
19 you know the Relief program that the city has been  
20 working with them on, the concern is, is it  
21 negatively impacting the city's investment by having  
22 the Yellow Taxi Cab's pay this additional toll to  
23 come into the congestion zone. Because at that  
24 point, it will have a harsh impact on an industry  
25 that's already struggling to kind of stay afloat.

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3 KEVIN WILLENS: Yes, you make a good point and  
4 again, that as well as a lot of other issues that are  
5 raised not only by the city and the Yellow Taxi Cab  
6 industry, the whole For Hire Vehicle industry, that  
7 will all be addressed by the Traffic Mobility Review  
8 Board when they meet.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm glad to know that  
10 there's going to be the Review Board. I would also  
11 like to emphasize the need to talk and touch  
12 communities because in particular, when you look at  
13 like, communities like I represent, they're not -  
14 when you look at the advocacy apparatus, often time  
15 they are often missing from the conversation. And we  
16 can brainstorm about what the best way of engagement  
17 is around this because you know I can see congestion  
18 pricing going through and then there's this uproar  
19 similar to what we heard about with the change in the  
20 schedules, which we'll get to in questions to with  
21 the rail road. And so, I think we need to be  
22 proactive understanding that this will have an impact  
23 on low to middle income families that have to rely on  
24 that.

25 You know most of our health facilities, whether  
it's the blood center, the Sloan Kettering, like all

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1 of that is in this zone where people have to have  
2 access to and you have seniors, you have people with  
3 small babies and people with disabilities that need  
4 to get into that zone. So, I think we have to be  
5 proactive in thinking at how we make sure that those  
6 voices are centered as well in this conversation, so  
7 that congestion pricing does not move forward without  
8 taking into account, looking for ways to mitigate  
9 that.

10  
11 KEVIN WILLENS: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The city's Vision  
13 Zero goal is to bring traffic fatalities on city  
14 streets to zero. Is the MTA working with DOT to  
15 incorporate complete street treatments for the  
16 congestion pricing entry points to ensure our streets  
17 are designed to enable safe use and support mobility  
18 for all New Yorkers?

19 RICH DAVEY: Uhm, I'll take that one Chair. So,  
20 you know generally speaking of course, we're working  
21 closely with DOT and all of its projects to achieve  
22 Vision Zero. I think you know I know you'll have DOT  
23 speaking after us. I defer onto the specifics to DOT  
24 but we work closely with them. Obviously, many of  
25 our vehicles are on the city streets and we want to

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1  
2 make sure that we're supporting a pretty bold vision,  
3 which is to get to Vision Zero.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for that.  
5 Will the city or state bear the cost of congestion  
6 pricing, toll and infrastructure?

7 KEVIN WILLENS: The cost of the toll and  
8 infrastructure will be funded with the congestion  
9 revenue itself. So, what the state law requires is  
10 to set a toll rate that not only funds the  
11 infrastructure cost to implement and to run the  
12 program but then also to provide a net amount that  
13 could support \$15 billion of capital investment.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, I'm going to  
15 just sprint through a few more questions because I  
16 want to and then I could come back to round two. I  
17 want to make sure my colleagues have some time with  
18 you all.

19 While railroad cities take it to Far Rockaway.  
20 Currently, city ticket is not available to Long  
21 Island railroad customers traveling to and from Far  
22 Rockaway. When will the MTA extend city's ticket to  
23 Far Rockaway? This is a question by the way  
24 President Davey; you weren't here last year but this  
25 is a question from last years budget. So, I'm hoping

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1  
2 to see progress on this. So, when will the MTA  
3 extend city ticket to Far Rockaway.

4 JAIBALA PATEL: Uhm, so city ticket as you know  
5 earlier last year, we actually expanded from only  
6 being off peak on weekends to off peak during the  
7 week days and that has been benefited our customers  
8 greatly. As you probably know as well, the governor  
9 expanded the city ticket for the MTA to provide it  
10 during peak hours and we are working on that as well.

11 So, the city ticket will be available to  
12 customers during peak and off-peak times.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Sorry, I'm asking  
14 specifically about Far Rockaway. I'm aware of those  
15 changes but I'm asking specifically for Far Rockaway.

16 JAIBALA PATEL: So, I think that is part of the  
17 plan to expand it to Far Rockaway. As you know it  
18 already runs through Nasa County. So, it is part of  
19 the city ticket stations.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, when will it  
21 extend to Far Rockaway?

22 JAIBALA PATEL: So, we're looking into it as part  
23 of the plan for the expansion of the city ticket.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But do you have a  
25 timeline and is it definitely included in expansion?

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3 JAIBALA PATEL: So, it will be part of our fare  
4 and toll process later this year.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. What if any  
6 budgetary concern does the MTA have regarding city  
7 ticket?

8 JAIBALA PATEL: I'm sorry, can you repeat that  
9 question?

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What if any budgetary  
11 concerns does the MTA have regarding city ticket?

12 JAIBALA PATEL: So, city ticket is a discounted  
13 ticket and it impacts the revenues that we are  
14 collecting, so we know that the city ticket discount  
15 that we expanded to the off peaks was approximately a  
16 revenue loss of \$5 million annually to the fare box  
17 collection of the railroads. So, we are working on  
18 any revenue assumptions for expanding the city ticket  
19 for the peak as well. It will have an impact on our  
20 fare boxes.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Uhm, fare  
22 increase. MTA's Calendar Year 2023 Adopted Plan  
23 includes a proposal for a 5.5 percent fare and toll  
24 increase projected to begin in June 2023 and a four  
25 percent increase projected to begin in April of 2025.  
This increase is significantly higher than the



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3 standard by any old fare increases of four percent  
4 net at twice over four years, which is two percent  
5 increase in both years.

6 That has been approved in recent budget, past  
7 budgets. Last years adopted plan proposed fare  
8 increases in 2023 and 2025. However, in the MTA's  
9 updated February 2022 Financial Plan, the Authority  
10 stated that the 2022 fare increase would be averted  
11 due to the influx of COVID-19 stimulus funding.

12 Just last year, MTA stated that an influx of  
13 COVID-19 stimulus funded averted a 2023 fare  
14 increase. Why is the MTA now proposing a fare  
15 increase to take effect in June and what happened to  
16 the COVID-19 stimulus funding that offset the  
17 increase last year?

18 KEVIN WILLENS: Sure, first of all, what allowed  
19 us to not do a fare increase in 2022 was additional  
20 funds provided from the state, not the federal COVID  
21 funds. The proposal that's on the table, the 5.5  
22 percent fare increase for 2023, we view as a modest  
23 increase in total and you know very modest over the  
24 four percent that was already in the plan. The goal  
25 of again given our increase in costs of labor and  
materials and so forth, and that there hasn't been a

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3 fare increase since 2019, we viewed 5.5 as modest  
4 given the situation.

5 The other important aspect is trying to balance  
6 the budget without having to rely on service cuts and  
7 layoffs. So, the overall plan that we laid out, we  
8 believe is a balanced approach by asking riders to  
9 pay a small incremental amount at the fare box, as  
10 well as additional amounts from all the other  
11 stakeholders in terms of taxes and subsidies as the  
12 best way to again have a balanced approach to protect  
13 the amount of transit service we're delivering.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I'm going  
15 to come back to this after my colleagues ask their  
16 questions. I want to pivot to Access-A-Ride taxi on  
17 demand pilot. In November 2017 MTA enabled 1,200 of  
18 AAR's, Access-A-Ride, excuse me, a total of 160,000  
19 plus total uses to book same day trips via E-Hail  
20 taxis and FHB's. Can you please provide the  
21 Committee with an update on this program?

22 RICH DAVEY: Sure, I could briefly do that. We  
23 spoke to it a couple weeks ago when we were here to  
24 speak about paratransit but I think the pilot's gone  
25 well. There was an intent to expand it like  
unfortunately, several things that were going well at

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1 New York City Transit, COVID interrupted that plan.

2 We're looking at an expansion of that pilot later

3 this year and are looking at you know to ensure that

4 we've got the appropriate amount of providers that

5 are ready to go. But the feedback has been very

6 positive and we're hopeful that we can expand this in

7 the coming months.

8 Of course, you know one of the reasons why we're

9 waiting is in part of this conversation, which is as

10 we look at the budget developments over the coming

11 weeks, we'll know how - you know how and whether we

12 could expand the pilot.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The governor's state

14 executive budget includes a proposal that would

15 require the city to contribute to 100 percent of

16 power transit costs in the city. If this occurs,

17 would the city have more of a say on the

18 implementation of the Access-A-Ride E-Hail program?

19 RICH DAVEY: Yeah, I mean so I would just say the

20 city is well represented on the MTA board currently

21 and so, it certainly weighs in on all aspects of our

22 service.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: We have the minority

24 seats though right?

25

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3 RICH DAVEY: And they are vocal and informed, I  
4 would tell you since many of them sit on the Transit  
5 Committee.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Safety in the subway.  
7 Last fall many New Yorkers expressed concerns over  
8 safety in the subway and additional officers and  
9 security were placed in stations citywide in  
10 response. The data mentioned in today's opening  
11 testimony regarding crime and customer satisfaction  
12 are encouraging but I'm also concerned about recent  
13 reporting that demonstrates how skyrocket in fare  
14 evasion enforcement is disproportionately impacting  
15 Black and Brown riders.

16 In December, the MTA said it was paying \$1  
17 million a month for private security. Is this still  
18 the case today and does the MTA expect to increase or  
19 decrease funding for private security going forward?

20 RICH DAVEY: Yeah, so we did mention that we had  
21 unarmed guards at a number of stations and the run  
22 rate was about \$1 million a month then. We see this  
23 to be a very successful tool in our toolbox to combat  
24 fare evasion. Our estimates through February that  
25 that program has netted an additional almost 2.5  
million paid fares. And so, the net cost between the

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1  
2 cost of the guards, versus the new revenues coming in  
3 has actually been slightly positive in terms of the  
4 bottom line.

5       So, we like this approach. You know these  
6 officers are not sworn officers. They're not there  
7 to sight anyone other than to make sure that you know  
8 as our Chair has said, the super highway to fare  
9 evasion, which are those emergency gates that swing  
10 open, they're there to ensure that appropriate folks,  
11 folks who are requiring that gate because they're in  
12 a mobility device for example or a stroller or having  
13 luggage are using it and paying for it and not seeing  
14 folks come through.

15       The Governor's Budget also includes additional  
16 dollars for security, so if that is passed, we'll  
17 look to see if we would deploy other unarmed guards  
18 but I'm complete confident in saying its been a  
19 success. I should finally say too that it's not only  
20 about fare evasion but these folks have also helped  
21 improve the quality-of-life issues in these stations  
22 so, you know helping homeless folks get you know get  
23 services for example if they see disruptive  
24 individuals, getting NYPD to assist. So, you know

25

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3 all and all, I mean I'm very pleased with the success  
4 of the program.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: You said in your  
6 opening statement that cameras will soon be installed  
7 in every car. How soon is soon? And are camera  
8 installations in all cars funded in this years  
9 budget?

10 RICH DAVEY: So, how soon is soon? We've  
11 committed to getting them all out by the end of next  
12 year. We have been looking at a number of different  
13 technologies both that can be downloadable but also  
14 have cyber security you know considerations with  
15 them. So, we have been installing a number of pilot  
16 cameras in our system. And then the new cars that  
17 will be coming soon, very soon perhaps. The new cars  
18 that we purchased will also have cameras but our  
19 commitment to the governor is to get those done by  
20 the end 2024. And the answer to your question, has  
21 it been budgeted for? Yes, it has been.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Last fall, the state  
23 committed to paying overtime for NYPD in response to  
24 an uptick in crime in the subways. What is the  
25 current status of this commitment? And how long will

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1  
2 the state continue to fund this increase in overtime  
3 for officers in the subway?

4 RICH DAVEY: Yeah, I think we'd defer to that to  
5 the state Chair. All I can say is, its been by all  
6 measures incredibly successful as you said.  
7 Customers are telling us that in both their informal  
8 feedback to management and also our customer surveys  
9 and you know crime is down in the subway system. So,  
10 again, I mean I can't say enough about the governor  
11 and the mayor's leadership and relationship to get  
12 that done. It's been incredibly helpful.

13 I would finally say too, you know even  
14 organizations like the partnership for New York City,  
15 which have been poling employers throughout this you  
16 know pandemic, about why folks are or not coming back  
17 to work. Subway safety was an issue last year. It's  
18 really dropped off and now in recent surveys, it's  
19 remote work is the number one reason why folks are  
20 uhm, so I think even independent surveys are showing  
21 that this is working. But in terms of the  
22 commitment, I can't speak to that. I defer to the  
23 state.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Uhm, how does this  
25 budget better ensure an equitable approach to safety

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1  
2 in the subway? How is the MTA responding to the data  
3 demonstrating a desperate impact in fare evasion  
4 arrests and summonses?

5 RICH DAVEY: So, on the you know arrests and  
6 summonses, I would defer to NYPD. All I would tell  
7 you is you know for our unarmed guard programs, for  
8 targeting stations for example, for more cameras or  
9 targeting stations that might have graffiti or  
10 cleaning issues, you know or across all the boroughs  
11 in improving the station environment. Which is what  
12 I'm very much focused on. I think that a station  
13 environment, which might feel unsafe or frankly might  
14 look like it hasn't been kept up with, I think  
15 provides a sense of potentially insecurity for our  
16 customers. And so, we're very much focused on that  
17 and then you know in terms of how we deploy the  
18 unarmed guards, again, they don't have the ability to  
19 write summonses or make arrests but what we do is  
20 look at a combination of customer complaints, crime,  
21 fare evasion, ridership, uhm, and the complexity of  
22 the complex if you will, right? Obviously, some  
23 stations are massive in their size and number of  
24 gates whereas others are not.

25



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3 So, we take that all into consideration on how we  
4 deploy our unarmed guards but I would have to defer  
5 to Chief Kemper and his team at NYPD Transit on your  
6 specific question of summonses and arrests.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: When will fair fares  
8 and reduced fares be integrated with Omni?

9 RICH DAVEY: Coming soon. Uh, you know it's  
10 something that we're working on. One of the reasons  
11 that we have launched some of these customer, these  
12 new customer service centers, we have now I think  
13 have six online. We'll be able to provide our  
14 customers the opportunity to do that. For example,  
15 not at Stone Street, which has been traditionally our  
16 only uhm place where there would be an in-person  
17 customer interaction but as I reminded, the reduce  
18 fare switch is already available. We rolled that out  
19 I believe a couple of months ago. And then we'll  
20 work closely with Fair Fares but again, I just want  
21 to applaud to the Speaker and this body for really  
22 doubling down on Fair Fares. We're excited to again  
23 partner with you to make sure our customers you know  
24 that this is available to them and they're taking  
25 full advantage of the program.

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3 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And in calling for  
4 increased enforcement has the MTA emphasized equity  
5 in the enforcement conversations with the NYPD?

6 RICH DAVEY: Absolutely and I think you know, the  
7 Blue-Ribbon Commission on fare evasion that Chair  
8 Lieber put together last fall, I think is close to  
9 putting out its report and I think one of the things  
10 that I'm told we'll hear from the Blue Ribbon  
11 Commission on is in particular being equitable about  
12 how we are enforcing fare evasion in our system. So,  
13 we look forward to those recommendations.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Two more questions  
15 and then I'm going to pass it to my colleagues. So,  
16 the capital plan include \$5.2 billion for new  
17 elevators, ramps, at up to 66 stations, which  
18 averages \$78.8 million per station. What is the plan  
19 for the MTA to successfully contain the rise in cost  
20 in the elevator projects? And which best practices  
21 is the MTA evaluating and/or implementing based on  
22 conversations and research with other cities about  
23 elevator design, procurement and construction?

24 RICH DAVEY: Yeah, so appreciate the question.  
25 So, a couple things. I mean, since our you know C&D  
construction development agency was created through

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1 transformation a few years ago, they've really worked  
2 hard at looking at not only the best practices you  
3 mentioned globally for construction but also losing  
4 things and leveraging things like design build for  
5 example or in the of ADA elevators, actually putting  
6 out a package of elevators so that you could  
7 potentially get you know economies of scale when it  
8 comes to labor or materials for example.

10 We're also looking at standardizing the size and  
11 standardizing the actual elevator itself. So, rather  
12 than having the spoked elevators across the system,  
13 looking at ways that we can standardize those  
14 designs. You know \$70 million sounds like a lot but  
15 in a built-in environment, which requires elevators  
16 to be precisely designed to you know a mezzanine and  
17 then a mezzanine down to a platform and in some  
18 instances down to a lower platform, it's actually  
19 incredibly complex work. But you know, we're excited  
20 that the you know - look I mean I'm excited. You  
21 know I came from an old system as well that was not  
22 accessible and I would just say that to work for an  
23 organization that you know for decades has I think  
24 you know denied its responsibility to be accessible  
25 and for this Chair and this leadership team to have

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1 stepped up with some advocates here in the room as  
2 well who pushed us, uhm, you know we have a long way  
3 to go but I'm excited about what's coming. 17  
4 stations have been completed since 2020. 35 are in  
5 some form of construction, either rewards or ground  
6 broken and you know, our customers are being patient  
7 with us. Some of the disruptions we're having on the  
8 weekends is because we're building out these  
9 elevators and then it will become upon in a New York  
10 City Transit once we receive them to make sure we're  
11 maintaining them.  
12

13 So, you know it was a long time coming but I'm  
14 just appreciative that I'm stepping to a role where  
15 we're not arguing about whether this was a priority  
16 now, we just got to get it done.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How does the budget  
18 handle elevator outages?

19 RICH DAVEY: I'm not sure I understand that  
20 question.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Uhm, we often see  
22 reporting of like the elevators like being out of  
23 service. Uhm, and escalators at these train  
24 stations. So, how does the budget like account for  
25 that?

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1  
2 RICH DAVEY: Yeah, so we have an in-house team,  
3 about I think 290 elevators, our New York City  
4 transits responsibility but 50-ish are third parties.  
5 So, we have an elevator and escalator team within New  
6 York City transit that's responsible for inspection,  
7 maintenance and then heavy maintenance if required.  
8 You know we're very transparent. We put out a  
9 monthly report that shows by elevator, by station how  
10 we're doing. We just recently disaggregated that  
11 data to show what we're responsible for and what  
12 third parties are responsible for. And we've seen an  
13 improvement in elevator availability process system.  
14 We're hovering around 96, 97 percent as I recall from  
15 the most reports I've seen. But again, more work to  
16 do. Our goal should be closer to 99 percent. You  
17 know we'll never be 100 percent because we are taking  
18 elevators out of service to inspect them and to do  
19 routine maintenance for example.

20 And then finally, you know we need to make sure  
21 communicating with our customers when those elevators  
22 are out of service, whether they're planned or  
23 unplanned to make sure that folks commutes aren't  
24 disrupted. But we think, you know we have a group  
25 within New York City Transit solely responsible for

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1  
2 the inspection and maintenance of our elevators and  
3 escalators.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And then my final  
5 question for right now is uhm, about the newly  
6 implemented schedule. It's been a nightmare and I  
7 know I saw a follow-up interview on New York One  
8 where someone said, oh look at it now. It has not  
9 and as I'm listening to you; I'm getting incoming  
10 right now about it. Some of the feedback is uhm,  
11 conductors being told not to stop at Hollis. A train  
12 stop at Queens Village, a stop before Hollis did not  
13 stop to pick up the passengers that were there.  
14 Their parked trains have been making random stops at  
15 Hollis. Commuters are literally waking up earlier  
16 and spending more money and having more transfers and  
17 getting to work late.

18 Right now, this becomes an equity issue. While  
19 we were excited about you know the access to Grand  
20 Central Terminal, I think the unintended consequence  
21 that came from it is that it did not take into  
22 account the need for the outer boroughs to connect to  
23 one another. We are no longer a Manhattan Centric.

24 RICH DAVEY: True.

25

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3 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And uhm, the fact  
4 that there are shuttles, just to give you context, I  
5 grew up in St. Albans. I went to Washington Urban  
6 High School in Manhattan. I woke up every morning to  
7 take a bus and three trains to school. We didn't  
8 have the city ticket dynamic right? Now that is a  
9 benefit, so more people because of that, are  
10 utilizing the railroad because it cuts down on the  
11 commute time significantly.

12 But now, what it's doing is where someone would  
13 have taken the one train, which before the change, I  
14 just took from Laurelton into the city to come to  
15 City Hall and it was seamless. This is before the  
16 change. Now, I would have to go into Jamaica, change  
17 tracks and catch another train. And the concern  
18 there is in terms of parents with small children, the  
19 disability community, and just in general the working  
20 public that are really trying to have a good quality  
21 of life to cut down on how many transfers they have  
22 to make and how long it takes to get into the city.

23 So, I know that the railroad has been tweaking  
24 the schedules to try and make it easier for people to  
25 connect but you got to go down; up and down sets to  
get to the next uhm, platform. And so, I want to

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1 know how the railroad plans to rectify this? I know  
2 I've been in constant communication about this and I  
3 have a commitment about a spring meeting but I don't  
4 at this point think that we are able to wait until  
5 this spring for changes to be made because again,  
6 this becomes an equity issue. What the visual looks  
7 like is a uhm, access has been created for commuters  
8 coming out of Long Island but the folks that are in  
9 the New York City area, that's paying a large chunk  
10 of what goes into the budget for the MTA are getting  
11 the you know, the uneven hand in this all.

13 RICH DAVEY: So, I'll say, you have to forgive me  
14 as President of New York City Transit, I won't have  
15 some of the details you just asked about in terms of  
16 stations. We can clearly bring that back to our  
17 colleagues you know at Long Island Railroad. But I  
18 know I'm here representing MTA, so let me just say  
19 this. Uhm, you know we had a tough week last week,  
20 there's no doubt about that. And I know our  
21 colleagues at Long Island Railroad took that to heart  
22 and as you said have been making changes to the  
23 schedule, adding cars to reduce some of the crowding.

24 As I understand it, we've seen a better week as  
25 you say, it still may not be a great week for some of



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3 our customers. So, there's still work to be done for  
4 sure. You know taking a step back, I would just say  
5 you know as the President of New York City Transit,  
6 walking into an \$11 billion new station for commuters  
7 from Long Island is you know, I mean it's pretty  
8 extraordinary what this community has pulled off  
9 these last number of years. And so, as challenging  
10 as it's been the last couple weeks and I acknowledge  
11 that, that's a pretty extraordinary effort and to add  
12 40 percent more service to the already busiest  
13 commuter rail in America. At a time were talking  
14 about a budget challenge, I think also shows MTA's  
15 commitment to getting it right.

16 So, but again Chair, we're happy to bring that  
17 back to you. In terms of Spring Meeting, I'm happy  
18 to meet with you but I'm not going to have any  
19 answers for you, so I can't -

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Oh no, I want to meet  
21 when have answers but I think we need to do that post  
22 haste because have people that are really struggling  
23 to get to work because of these changes and I know  
24 that the railroad did a survey and as a community but  
25 they did it in the summer time and that's the time  
when the community is not really engaged, so it's

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1  
2 kind of unfair to do it in the summer time in terms  
3 of when they did the outreach. And so, now we're  
4 getting hammered in Southeast Queens in particular  
5 and Brooklyn as well. So, a number of the Council  
6 Members have been you know hearing a lot of  
7 complaints from their constituents around this, so  
8 I'm looking forward to working with the railroad and  
9 with the MTA to making sure that there's greater  
10 equity and access to you know the railroad system.

11 RICH DAVEY: Yeah and I'll definitely bring that  
12 message back, appreciate that.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you and I will  
14 now pass it to my colleagues. And I also want to  
15 recognize that we have since been joined by Council  
16 Members Carr, Ariola, Williams, Restler and Yeger.  
17 And so, Council Member Narcisse, oh, sorry.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you Chair. Good  
19 morning. First of all, before I start I have to say  
20 that I have problem when they talk about casinos  
21 because I know whose going to lose more money, who  
22 doesn't have money, who has dreams. I'm not too much  
23 of that and the increasing fears is the same problem  
24 for me because I know my community is struggling and  
25 many communities around our city.

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1  
2 The \$54 billion with a B and we're talking about  
3 getting congestion pricing right. That's the  
4 projected is hoping that we're getting that kind of  
5 money to try to help us out to balance our budget. I  
6 know it's very difficult. I'm not asking for  
7 miracles but where we're looking to get money usually  
8 is the people that don't have it most.

9 So, now with all the numbers I'm looking at is  
10 from your internal audit or from external or from the  
11 city? Do you ever have any audit recently from  
12 outside besides your inside audit?

13 KEVIN WILLENS: Yeah, there's audits both  
14 internally and externally all the time.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Okay, when was the last  
16 time you have external?

17 KEVIN WILLENS: Well, there's a number of  
18 different audits. Our financial audits you know we  
19 do quarterly auditing and then a full annual audit  
20 that will be out you know within the next month and a  
21 half to two months. And then there's you know many  
22 audits you know whether it's Comptrollers or others  
23 that do things from time to time.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Okay, thank you. Uhm,  
25 what is because I know we're up for reimagine and

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1  
2 improve our transportation, especially the buses,  
3 right? And when we said consolidation, I also have a  
4 problem with that because I know it's cuts. So, in  
5 B2, that's in one of the buses in my district. I've  
6 been receiving a lot of emails on that. Are you  
7 aware of that B2 redesigning?

8 RICH DAVEY: I'm aware we're redesigning it but  
9 I'm not aware of the specific comments you received.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Because it's taking  
11 because there's no bus really because I live in  
12 transportation desert and the B2 actually is the one  
13 that gives transportation to around Kings Plaza,  
14 Kings highway to go to the train station. And uhm,  
15 one of the things that I'm hearing especially from my  
16 Marine Parks and uhm, around by Garrison Beach is  
17 it's not inclusive. Because they did not know an  
18 overnight because that was prior that I get in  
19 office. So, right now tonight, we're going to have a  
20 hearing and I hope that we can hear - I mean, we're  
21 going to have conversation and I hope that we can  
22 come somewhere.

23 RICH DAVEY: Exact - I mean, I mentioned before I  
24 may not have been here quite yet but very much open  
25 to that feedback right. I think I made the analogy

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3 or metaphor that we are in the second inning of nine  
4 inning baseball game when it comes to the redesign.

5 So, we welcome that very specific granular  
6 feedback relative to B2 and any, you know any other  
7 feedback you've received from customers, absolutely.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: From Access-A-Ride, you  
9 said there is an increase and I'm so happy when  
10 people are happy. But I don't know who is doing the  
11 survey because I'm hearing a lot of negative feedback  
12 for the Access-A-Ride.

13 RICH DAVEY: Uhm, look all I can say is, debating  
14 the survey, I think is a bit challenging because  
15 we're randomly asking several thousand customers on a  
16 regular basis their feedback and as I said before at  
17 the previous hearing, I don't deny that the lived  
18 experience of particular individuals has been  
19 negative. Not at all but to suggest that Access-A-  
20 Ride as a program is across the board not working or  
21 terrible is just not, it's not true. But to the  
22 extent we need to fix you know particular issues, I  
23 had an Access-A-Ride customer email me this morning.  
24 She wasn't happy. I have no doubt that that was true  
25 and you know, we're going to address that issue.

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Okay, because most of  
4 the riders are saying like, they have to get like two  
5 hours of waiting for their transportation, especially  
6 if they go to doctor's office or they go to any  
7 event. So, when they come back, they cannot give the  
8 time, so it takes about two hours for them, usually  
9 approximately. I don't want to be specific on the  
10 two hours because that's what I'm hearing.

11 RICH DAVEY: Yeah, I mean for that issue again, I  
12 can't deny it that a particular issue exists of  
13 course. We are not perfect but 77 percent of our  
14 Access-A-Ride customers polled in February said they  
15 were satisfied or very satisfied. So, but again,  
16 that means that 23 percent are not, so we've got to  
17 continue to focus on them.

18 So, I take your point. I think rather than  
19 debating the survey results, what I want to do is  
20 focus in on those stories that you've mentioned and  
21 make sure we're addressing those.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you. I  
23 appreciate it. So, I want to know, the last question  
24 that I have for you. I want to know what is the  
25 speed difference that we have from the fast buses,

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3 like the fast lane? And the difference between the  
4 regular?

5 RICH DAVEY: I mean, it's pretty significant. In  
6 particular in places where we have automated bus lane  
7 cameras and enforcement. And so, you know we are  
8 installing cameras on our buses now. I think 450  
9 buses now have cameras, so if someone is  
10 inappropriately parked in a bus lane for example, we  
11 can send them an automated ticket and I know we also  
12 have a legislation pending in Albany. We would  
13 welcome this bodies support to expand some of that.  
14 So, if you're parked in a bus stop for example and  
15 you're not a bus, uhm, get out of the bus lane.

16 And so, what we've seen significantly Council  
17 Member is, once someone gets a ticket, the recidivism  
18 rate drops tremendously, so behavior does change.  
19 But I think we can probably get you some more you  
20 know comparisons relative to bus lanes versus not bus  
21 lanes but you are right, that is a place we're very  
22 passionate about and I think you know we can work  
23 together on. Obviously, we are with DOT to really  
24 move our customers quickly.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Yeah, because I think  
the differences can help in how we move our city.

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3 RICH DAVEY: Absolutely.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Any plans for the 46?  
5 I'm going to finish with that; I know my Chairs  
6 looking at me. The 46? No, the district, my  
7 district 46? Because I live in transportation  
8 desert. I represent a transportation desert.

9 RICH DAVEY: So, let me say this. Why don't I  
10 come see you in your neighborhood and let's walk  
11 around. I want to see what we can do better alright.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Alright, thank you. I  
13 appreciate your time and thank you Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you and I'm  
15 just going to ask my colleagues to stay true to the  
16 time because we have DOT coming in shortly.

17 Next, we're going to hear from Council Member  
18 Kagan.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: Thank you Chair. Thank  
20 you. So, I have several questions. So, first of  
21 all, I would like to say that post congestion  
22 pricing, I believe it's a tax on hardworking New  
23 Yorkers and businesses. I believe one of the ways to  
24 improve MTA budget is stop raising MTA budget for any  
25 other purposes, which is happening almost every year  
like a ritual.



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3 In Albany, they use MTA budget to fund some other  
4 projects. So, it's not like you're to blame but I'm  
5 talking about government and legislature. So, they  
6 have to consider when they take funding away from  
7 MTA, that like someone has to you know fill out the  
8 coffers.

9 Also, I would like to mention about MTA bus  
10 redesign, it's a very - I know it's a proposal, I  
11 know it's a plan. It's not dumb but I would like to  
12 reiterate again because I hear it every day from my  
13 constituents of catching bus stops, especially for  
14 seniors you know in Coney Island like B36, B74. It's  
15 like absolutely unacceptable and seniors and people  
16 with disabilities will suffer big time and when we're  
17 talking about B49, we're talking about students in  
18 this case. That the only way for them to go to Kings  
19 Borough Community College from all over Brooklyn and  
20 B49 the way it's proposed, it will effect like so  
21 many people. That's about bus redesign proposal. I  
22 hope it's not going to happen, these specific ideas.

23 Also, I wanted to emphasize that I use trains and  
24 buses every single day.

25 RICH DAVEY: Thank you.

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: Including today. I came  
4 to City Hall by two trains, F-Train and R-Train, so I  
5 experience the subway system every day.

6 So, you mentioned restrooms. I already posted to  
7 my social media once and I would like to mention that  
8 like, a restroom on the last stop, which is a very  
9 busy stop, Coney Island is still closed. And it's  
10 like we're talking about the very busy subway  
11 station. And finally, mention about the Capital  
12 Projects Plan, again it doesn't include subway  
13 stations in south Brooklyn, specifically F-Train  
14 Avenue Subway Station in my district, which is one of  
15 the steepest subway stations probably in America. F-  
16 Train subway station, Neptune Avenue and it's seniors  
17 and people with disabilities complaining to me for  
18 years and to everybody who can listen. I know there  
19 were rallies and press conferences before New York  
20 Subway Station. I'm talking specifically Neptune  
21 Avenue F-Train. It's totally inaccessible to anyone,  
22 so please consider accessibility issues very, very  
23 serious issue. Not just for my constituents but for  
24 the entire City of New York.

25 So, that's my questions. Thank you.

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3 RICH DAVEY: That's a lot to unpack. Let me see  
4 if I can – on the bus redesign as you mentioned,  
5 again it's I can't reiterate it enough, that we are  
6 you know continue to get feedback from customers,  
7 which is important and you know I said at the top, I  
8 know that customers usually love their bus stop and  
9 they might not like their bus route. And one of the  
10 reasons why the bus route is slow is because in some  
11 instances, we have too many bus stops. But there are  
12 other tools in the toolbox as well. We'll look at it  
13 all.

14 Council Member to your point in particular for  
15 you know areas where there are senior centers or  
16 maybe medical facilities, you know those should be  
17 prioritized in our opinion for you know bus stop  
18 retention.

19 We probably and I guarantee you we didn't get it  
20 100 percent right, which is why it's important for us  
21 to take all that feedback in. With that said, what  
22 we learned in the Bronx redesign was the elimination  
23 of some bus stops has increased speeds, improved  
24 customer satisfaction and saved a lot of our  
25 customers time. So, we have to strike the right  
balance and obviously we'll work with you and again,

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1  
2 the feedback we received from our customers to strike  
3 that balance.

4 You had a question on accessibility. As I  
5 understand it that is in the -

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: Neptune Avenue F-Train  
7 Subway Station.

8 RICH DAVEY: Yeah, Neptune Avenue is in the  
9 Capital Plan. It hasn't been awarded yet, but that  
10 is in the Capital Plan to be addressed. Uhm, what  
11 else can I answer for you?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: And about raising MTA  
13 budget every year like a ritual in Albany.

14 RICH DAVEY: Uh, yes, I'll let my colleague Kevin  
15 speak to the budget.

16 KEVIN WILLENS: Yeah, I think a couple of items.  
17 One important element as you know in 2019, as part of  
18 congestion pricing, as well as the new revenues for  
19 the capital program, the city and state sales tax and  
20 the mansion tax. For the first time were put into  
21 what's called a capital lockbox that not only cannot  
22 be rated by others but are also 100 percent dedicated  
23 to capital at MTA. So, we can't use it to you know  
24 balance the operating budget. It's dedicated to  
25 capital.

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3 So, that type of lockbox, the Subway Action Plan,  
4 which is an important element but by law, the For  
5 Hire vehicle charges that come in have you know  
6 prescribed uses for the Subway Action Plan and outer  
7 borough projects and so forth. So, I think the uhm,  
8 although I share your similar sentiment, we don't you  
9 know want to you know have our funds raided for other  
10 purposes. There's been a lot of progress both in  
11 statute and in practice you know for example last  
12 year, the state appropriated us more dollars than was  
13 in the budget versus last to not have to have a fare  
14 increase in 2022. But point taken and we're, at  
15 least I'm very diligent on it and it makes a lot of  
16 sense.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: Are you planning to raise  
18 fares and tolls on every one? Is this the plan?

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: This is last question  
20 please.

21 KEVIN WILLENS: I'm sorry.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: You can just respond  
23 and that's it, we're going to move on.

24 KEVIN WILLENS: Yeah, very great, so in our  
25 proposal, is a fare and toll increase of

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3 approximately 5.5 percent to take place in June. You  
4 know around June of this year, correct.

5 JAIBALA PATEL: And I would like to add a  
6 statement to what Kevin just stated. The problems  
7 that the MTA is facing fiscally today is not because  
8 of any rating of any funds from the MTA. So, fully  
9 in this situation because we've lost ridership. Our  
10 fare box revenue as Rich mentioned earlier on went  
11 from 55 percent to 35 percent. So, we are losing  
12 about \$2 billion a year because of lost ridership due  
13 to the pandemic.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: Yeah, but federal  
15 government also give money to cover this gap,  
16 correct?

17 JAIBALA PATEL: Short-term. It wasn't a forever  
18 solution. They gave it to us to cover for 2020, 2021  
19 and 2022 and we have some funds left over for the  
20 remainder of the fiscal plan.

21 KEVIN WILLENS: Yeah and one thing as you  
22 mentioned, the federal aid, which our whole  
23 discussion has been it's running out and that's why  
24 we need more permanent fixes but one issue I don't  
25 think people are appreciative of the federal aid, New  
York City who subsidizes the MTA bus company by you

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1 know long term agreement actually has benefitted from  
2 about \$1.2 billion of that federal aid.  
3

4 In other words, the city has to pay less in  
5 subsidy to MTA than otherwise would be required  
6 because it applied that federal aid to reduce the  
7 city subsidy and that will be applied, \$600 million  
8 of the federal aid will be applied in the next few  
9 years to also reduce the city's cash subsidy payments  
10 for bus service.

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

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so much Chair  
14 Brooks-Powers. It's great to be with you.  
15 Appreciate your leadership with this Committee and  
16 thank you to New York City Transit for being here  
17 with us today. Just a couple brief comments to  
18 start. One is, I just want to express gratitude for  
19 the partnership of the MTA in the new Friends Group  
20 Pilot that we're starting in District 33. Will  
21 Schwartz in particular has been very helpful on this.  
22 We hope that this is a way where we can bring  
23 stakeholders together to meet with MTA staff and  
24 other agencies to identify issues, work through them

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2 AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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3 RICH DAVEY: We would love it Council Member and  
4 really appreciate your leadership in that very much.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: We are hoping that this  
6 pilot will be a success. We're really appreciative  
7 of your willingness to work with us on it together.  
8 I'm thrilled, I'm really excited about it. I also  
9 just want to express broad support for the governor's  
10 proposal to fund the MTA.

11 The MTA is the most essential service in New York  
12 City. It's the government agency that most New  
13 Yorkers interact with most frequently and it needs  
14 resources. And so, I very much appreciate emphasis  
15 on the Payroll Mobility Tax. It's time suburbanites  
16 to pay their fair share and contribute to our mass  
17 transit system. I also support the city doing more  
18 and you know this Mayor and this Council, we need to  
19 work together to identify additional resources to  
20 stabilize the MTA but do more than just stabilize the  
21 MTA to actually expand service.

22 And so, I've been a member of the Rider's  
23 Alliance since I didn't have any grey hair, which is  
24 a long time ago now and they have been championing  
25 the vision of six-minute service for as long as I can  
remember. What will it take from a resource



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1 standpoint? I've heard Chair Lieber mention \$150  
2 million to \$200 million. Is that six-minute service  
3 with that additional investment? Is it close to it?  
4 Where would we land with that kind of additional  
5 investment in the MTA?  
6

7 RICH DAVEY: Yeah, no it's a good question and  
8 maybe uhm, and again appreciate your leadership in  
9 pushing for better service for all New Yorkers, so  
10 thank you for that.

11 Maybe just take a quick step back. You know what  
12 do we offer today in terms of six-minute service.  
13 So, about 70 percent, about 70 percent of our subway  
14 customers receive six minutes or better service  
15 today. For example, I happen to live in the seven  
16 line and during rush hour when it's working and it's  
17 usually working pretty well every two- or three-  
18 minutes services running on the seven line. They  
19 also do modern signal system, which we have on the  
20 Seven. For a bus, our ride is a little different,  
21 it's about 15 percent today for six-minute service.  
22 Chair Lieber is right, another \$150 million, \$200  
23 million would allow New York City Transit to run  
24 significant more service. I think to get to 100  
25 percent of our customers for six-minute service would

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1  
2 be financially infeasible and in some instances  
3 impossible. Let me explain.

4       So, as you know for trunk lines, in some  
5 instances we have trains coming in that are  
6 interlined, very difficult to run six-minute service  
7 for those folks are at the end of line for example,  
8 because you have train traffic coming you know for  
9 example into Brooklyn or Manhattan that's merging.  
10 That would be challenging. And then in some other  
11 instances for example, for bus service overnight, now  
12 we're talking about bringing on you know hundreds of  
13 bus drivers, new vehicles which would take you know  
14 some time to procure and even in some instances we  
15 add more train service, we'd have to provide for more  
16 vehicles.

17       With that said, you heard me out on the front  
18 steps. I'm transit guy. If we're provided more  
19 resources to run more transit, we'll do it and I  
20 think the Chairman's number reflects the ability to  
21 get - for us to be able to deliver on more six-minute  
22 service. Would it be 100 percent? No, but it would  
23 be - would we get you know closer to that?  
24 Absolutely.

25

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1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Great, we want to do  
3 everything we possibly can to achieve as close to  
4 six-minute service universally as we can and  
5 appreciate that additional resources invested in the  
6 MTA can deliver tangible results and I think we need  
7 to do a better job of explaining congestion pricing  
8 in exactly that same way, the tangible capital  
9 projects that we will see as a result that will  
10 improve service. I am concerned about the ongoing  
11 delays on congestion pricing. I think the latest we  
12 heard is best case scenario, April of next year, is  
13 there anything that we can do to help move this along  
14 and get congestion pricing in place?

15 KEVIN WILLENS: Yes, uhm, well again, first of  
16 all, thank you for your support of the financial plan  
17 and you know additional resources for additional  
18 service would be great. You know I think the  
19 foundation of the plan is to get the resources in  
20 place to be able to maintain the existing service we  
21 have in stabilizing. I know you're supportive of  
22 that also and hopefully we can get that and the  
23 additional funding.

24 As it relates to congestion pricing you know, I  
25 don't think there's anything you know the city can do

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3 at this point. We're really waiting and you know  
4 we've done all the work we can do and now waiting on  
5 the final pieces of the federal approval, which  
6 hopefully will be soon.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: If you think of anything  
8 that we can do to be helpful, please tell us. And I  
9 know I've gone over time, so I'll just say this in  
10 closing. When -

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The final, final,  
12 final, final, final.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Ten seconds. When we  
14 scare congestion pricing, when we make these  
15 additional investments in the MTA, I hope that you  
16 all will be laser focused on a second entrance at  
17 York Street and making that a reality because it is a  
18 major, major safety concern for our community. So,  
19 thank you and thank you Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Next,  
21 we'll hear from Council Member Williams.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Hello. I just have a  
23 very brief question because I know the MTA is such a  
24 large and we need state help, we need city help but I  
25 wanted to talk about federal help. So, given the  
Biden's Administration and commitment to the

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1  
2 infrastructure development, does the authority  
3 anticipate any additional federal funding outside of  
4 the stimulus funds?

5 KEVIN WILLENS: Yes, thank you. So, the one area  
6 that we have gotten additional federal funding is on  
7 capital through the bipartisan infrastructure law.  
8 So, we're getting roughly \$500 million a year of  
9 additional funds from the federal government for  
10 important capital projects. We're also as you know  
11 pursuing the phase two of the second avenue subway,  
12 which we are you know working to try to secure a \$3.5  
13 billion grant from the federal government for that  
14 service.

15 So, I think on the capital side, clearly, the  
16 infrastructure law has helped us. We're competing  
17 for the additional grant money. On the operating  
18 side, which you know is you know other than the COVID  
19 emergency funding, the federal government you know  
20 for a number of decades now has been provided  
21 operating funds for transit. We are in discussions  
22 and have created a coalition with other transit  
23 agencies across the country to have the discussion in  
24 Washington about trying to provide more funding for  
25 the operating side.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, so it's fair to  
3 say you're in active communication with Washington  
4 and of course like our state leaders here, to really  
5 push DC to -

6 KEVIN WILLENS: Correct.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, thank you so  
8 much.

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

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Hi everyone. Thanks.  
12 I'm going to wrap it through some of these questions.  
13 So, just a quick follow-up on city ticket. Do we  
14 know if all four new stations will have city ticket?

15 RICH DAVEY: In the Bronx, when they come online,  
16 yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Okay, great and so, the  
18 MTA has been slowly working on ABA compliance  
19 stations for some time, especially around the capital  
20 projects that were halted during the pandemic but I  
21 believe have resumed since then. Can we get an  
22 update on what the status of some of these projects  
23 are and specifically if we have any update on the  
24 Park Chester's ADA compliance station?

25

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1  
2 RICH DAVEY: So, generally speaking and I  
3 mentioned this before. You know the good news is  
4 that we're taking this commitment very seriously.  
5 The current capital plan or actually I think the  
6 current work that we're doing around ADA stations is  
7 even more so than the previous three capital plans  
8 combined. So, we've made 17 subway stations  
9 accessible since 2020. We have 35 stations right now  
10 in some form of construction, groundbreaking in  
11 awards and we have another 17 that are coming up.

12 So, I mean the good news is we are really pushing  
13 this out and using some innovative construction  
14 techniques to get you know competitive pricing but  
15 also for example, bundling these things so we can be  
16 doing them all at once. You said Park Chester in  
17 particular?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Yeah, I know my assembly  
19 member and senator in the past have allocated some  
20 capital budget and I wanted to see if there's an  
21 updated status.

22 RICH DAVEY: So, that was awarded last year and I  
23 have it as being projected to be opened in the mid of  
24 yeah, June of 2025 right now.

25

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Looking forward to that  
4 ribbon cutting and then just really quickly on the -

5 RICH DAVEY: You'll have that largest pair of  
6 scissors we have.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Great.

8 RICH DAVEY: Well, maybe Gene will but you'll  
9 have Gene rival, but you'll have the second.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: And then just really  
11 quickly on escalator replacement. What's the  
12 internal process for evaluating whether or not. I  
13 know you touched briefly on it but our station has a  
14 variety of difficulty with our escalator and just  
15 want to better understand how do we know when it's  
16 time for replacement?

17 RICH DAVEY: Yeah, so appreciate the question.  
18 So, first I'll take a look with our maintenance team  
19 to see if there's more we could be doing there.  
20 Relative to escalator replacement, you know we have  
21 uh, what feeds our five-year capital plan is our 20  
22 year needs assessment, which we do. Which we are in  
23 the process of doing right now.

24 So, across transit, the railroads, bridges and  
25 tunnels. All the assets that we own. We look at  
from a state of good repair perspective, what needs



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1 to be replaced or what is a new capital asset that  
2 needs to be purchased. So, elevators and escalators  
3 are part of that equation if you will. But in the  
4 meantime, so that's happening now. I think our 20-  
5 year plan will be out later this year for comment but  
6 I will look to see relative to the escalators whether  
7 or not we could be doing in terms of maintenance in  
8 the meantime.  
9

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: That's great and if I can  
11 just get off line some information on Park Chester.  
12 We have week by week the complexities that have been  
13 there. I have just two more questions. Is the  
14 difference, well, how much is ridership directly  
15 connected to any vacancies in title positions that we  
16 need to help buses and subways move more efficiently?

17 RICH DAVEY: Yeah, I mean at this point, not any.  
18 You know the MTA again, prior to my arrival I mean  
19 did a pretty extraordinary job of saying we're not  
20 going to tie ridership to the service we're running.  
21 So, today we are running 100 percent of pre-COVID  
22 service for what is about 70 percent of our customers  
23 and we've been hiring like gang busters. We were  
24 focused on bus operators, train operators and  
25 conductors. Because when I started we had an

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3 availability issue. We were not running some service  
4 days because we didn't have enough people. That's  
5 been taken care of and now, we're shifting to  
6 cleaners, station cleaners, end of line cleaners and  
7 station agents, the next sort of wave and then behind  
8 that, mechanics and all sorts of folks. So, we still  
9 have a lot of work to do but in terms of that service  
10 delivery, I'm sorry, we are where we need to be.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Okay, great and anything  
12 on signaling titles?

13 RICH DAVEY: Signaling, so we have vacancies for  
14 sure and the challenge there is, it's a pretty  
15 specialized technical requirement.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Sure.

17 RICH DAVEY: We are still attempting to hire for  
18 signal maintainers and folks but that is a challenge  
19 for us for sure and a challenge nationally  
20 unfortunately.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Sure, yeah, I come for a  
22 little bit of a transit background so I get it. And  
23 then the last question, inaccessible bus stops  
24 persists year after year, both old ones and new ones.  
25 One, why? There are many bus stops wheelchair chair  
users that cannot use in Staten Island, in Brooklyn,

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1 specifically on 86<sup>th</sup> street, 92<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and  
2 also on Shore Road. And so, we just want to ask you  
3 know what are we seeing here in terms of the  
4 difficulties about why these keep persisting?  
5

6 RICH DAVEY: Yeah, so I would say because the  
7 stops are managed by City DOT, I would defer to the  
8 DOT to answer those specific questions. What I can  
9 tell you is what we're pushing for and again,  
10 appreciate this body's support is making sure that  
11 cars are not in our bus stops or in our bus lanes. I  
12 have been too often on a bus where an individual in a  
13 mobility wheeled device, a ramp comes down and the  
14 operator has to put that person into traffic because  
15 there's someone actually parked in our bus stop. So,  
16 we have to make them accessible no doubt and then we  
17 have to make sure that the only thing in a bus stop  
18 is a bus.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Great, thank you for your  
20 time and thank you Chair for the additional time.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so much.  
22 Two final, final questions. One, I would not be me  
23 if I did not ask anything about MWBE contracts. So,  
24 what percentage of contracts are awarded to MWBE's?  
25 Of this amount, what percentage of contracts were

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1 awarded to women owned businesses versus businesses  
2 owned by people of color? And what percentage of  
3 MWBE contracts were awarded to businesses located in  
4 New York City? And what percentage of MWBE contracts  
5 were awarded to businesses located outside of New  
6 York City? So, I just need the numbers.

8 RICH DAVEY: Sure, sure, well, I think we'll have  
9 to get back to you on most of those. You know I  
10 think the Mayor stole Michael Gardner from us, our  
11 wizard of DBE contract. And so, I'm a bit behind on  
12 that but no, in all seriousness, I mean MTA has a  
13 very robust DBE program and goes well above and  
14 beyond what the federal government requires but our  
15 contracts are now about 33 percent of DBE's are our  
16 total. The specifics you asked for where they were  
17 located, whether they were a minority of women, we  
18 could get back to you on that but again, having  
19 served another transit system to the north of us,  
20 boy, New York City is - I mean New York City Transit  
21 and MTA is just killing it when it comes to making  
22 sure that there are opportunities for businesses.  
23 I've just never seen the kind of effort and results  
24 than here.

25

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3 And then the next one that I will send uhm, going  
4 back to the railroad and the schedule changes. So,  
5 why isn't there a direct service to and from Atlanta  
6 Terminal during rush hour from the Laurelton Rosedale  
7 Stations? They have them still during the nonpeak  
8 hours and yeah.

9 RICH DAVEY: Honestly, we'll have to get back to  
10 you on that one just to get it in by role while we  
11 obviously support LARA. I just can't speak with an  
12 informed view about your question. We'll get back to  
13 you.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, thank you and  
15 thank you for your testimony and participation today.

16 KEVIN WILLENS: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm sorry, one  
18 moment.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: I like to save the best  
20 for last. Thank you very much. Good afternoon.  
21 Uhm, just very briefly, this is kind of an outer  
22 borough problem more than a Manhattan problem. MTA  
23 has an enormous amount of property that abuts the  
24 underpasses through which the LARR for example runs  
25 in Brooklyn, which sometimes stretches for over a  
block long. The property on that area, whether it's

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1  
2 the fencing, the sidewalks, the brush is simply just  
3 not maintained. And it would seem, I know this is a  
4 capital program, etc., but this is really not a  
5 capital thing. This is just more general  
6 maintenance. It's sending a gardener and you know a  
7 guy to clean, make sure the fences are kept. We've  
8 never really, I mean this is a problem that's been  
9 going on forever. You know the city won't do it.  
10 Sanitation won't clean up MTA you know trash outside  
11 an MTA piece of property because it's you know  
12 private property. It's not the city's property. DOT  
13 won't fix your sidewalks because for the same reason.  
14 This is all really MTA's obligation to doing it. We  
15 can't really get MTA to do it and I'm wondering if  
16 you can try to figure out some way that we can fast  
17 track or I'm happy to bring you down there and -

18 RICH DAVEY: Yeah, no, so uhm, so a couple of  
19 things. First of all, just yes. We'll bring the  
20 right folks for Long Island Railroad to take a look  
21 at that. I can't speak to the jurisdictional issues.  
22 What I can tell you is our philosophy is to sort of  
23 put the alphabet of jurisdictions aside and to fix  
24 it.

25

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1  
2 It was a Parks piece of land over Willets Point  
3 which was let's just say in difficult shape last year  
4 before the US opened. I had my crew in there  
5 cleaning it up. I'm actually doing a walk around at  
6 Pelham Parkway next Tuesday with the Parks  
7 Commissioner. There's you know some of its park,  
8 some of its MTA and it all doesn't look good. So,  
9 we're going to fix it.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: So, what's the answer  
11 though. I mean, let's get educated together or at  
12 least I'll get educated. If it's alongside MTA  
13 property and you know, keeping it separate, the parks  
14 and whether it's LARR, MTA, this, that. It's all  
15 MTA. I mean, it's all -

16 RICH DAVEY: Well, that's not true. It's not all  
17 MTA. Like, so I think it's city, like what I'm  
18 saying in my philosophy is let's fix it. On this  
19 particular one, I don't have the specifics and I'm  
20 happy to take it offline and we'll figure out among  
21 you know the alphabet soup of agencies how to get it  
22 done.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay, perfect, thank you.

24 RICH DAVEY: You're welcome.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. 1:49:25-  
3 2:02:52].

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon everybody. If  
5 everybody can please find their seats, we are ready.  
6 Thank you. 2:02:57-2:03:11.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks everybody. We'll be  
8 moving now to our next panel from the Department of  
9 Transportation. Uhm, and we'll be joined on that  
10 panel by Commissioner Ydanis Rodriquez, Executive  
11 Deputy Commissioner Paul Ochoa, Deputy Commissioner  
12 for Transportation Planning and Management Eric  
13 Beaton, Associate Commissioner of Budget and Capital  
14 Program Management Elizabeth Franklin, and Assistant  
15 Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community  
16 Affairs Rick Rodriguez. You can raise your right  
17 hands and I will administer the oath.

18 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth  
19 and noting but the truth before this Committee and to  
20 respond honestly to Council Member questions?

21 PANEL: Yes.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may begin.

23 YDANIS RODRIQUEZ: Thank you everyone and for  
24 record Rick Rodriguez will not be here with us today.  
25 He asked for the record to. Good morning Chair



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3 Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on  
4 Transportation and Infrastructure. I am Ydanis  
5 Rodriquez, Commissioner of the New York City  
6 Department of Transportation. With me today are Paul  
7 Ochoa our Executive Deputy Commissioner, Eric Beaton,  
8 Deputy Commissioner for Transportation Planning and  
9 Management and Elizabeth Franklin, Associate  
10 Commissioner of Budget and Capital Program  
11 Management. Thank you very much for the opportunity  
12 to allow me to testify on behalf of Mayor Eric Adams  
13 on DOT's Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary Budget and  
14 Fiscal Years 2023-2033 Capital Plan.

15 At the Preliminary Budget press conference, Mayor  
16 Adams unveiled his vision for our shared future.  
17 This budget reflect that the Mayor's commitment to  
18 promote an equitable recovery by making investment in  
19 affordable housing. Keeping city streets clean,  
20 ensuring the safety of communities and promoting a  
21 greener city.

22 As the Mayor said, while we have made a strong  
23 recovery, the city, state and nation still face  
24 economic challenges. The Preliminary Budget doubled  
25 down on the Mayor's commitment to fiscal  
responsibility by spending limited resources wisely.

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We appreciate the Mayor's investments in DOT during the city's disciplined fiscal approach.

This budget will allow DOT to continue critical safety work, reimagine the use of public space, invest in low-income communities and communities of color, make the city more accessible for all New Yorkers, including people with disabilities, maintain our infrastructure and continue to operate the Staten Island Ferry.

DOT's \$1.4 billion FY24 Expense Budget includes the following: \$111 million for bridges; \$129 million for ferry's; \$228 million for roadways; \$299 million for sidewalks; traffic operation \$448 million; transportation planning and management \$186.7 million.

DOT's proposed \$33 billion FY23-FY33 Capital Plan includes the following: \$17 billion on bridges; \$5.5 billion for street reconstruction; \$3.4 for resurfacing; \$4 billion for sidewalks; \$1.3 billion for traffic; \$586 for ferry's; \$652 for vehicle facilities and IT's.

The Administration is committed to Vision Zero and the safety of all New Yorkers remain DOT's number one priority. This is reflected by the significant

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1 investment DOT's current year capital plan 2023-2033  
2 invest nearly \$4 billion in Vision Zero and our  
3 Expense Budget invest an average of about \$250  
4 million each year in Vision Zero.  
5

6 This commitment is working as I testified last  
7 month, traffic fatality in New York City and I want  
8 all New Yorkers to know this number because sometimes  
9 there's some confusion. Traffic fatality in New York  
10 City dropped in 2022 for the first time since 2018.  
11 They were near record lows. New York City is  
12 defining national trends for pedestrian deaths, which  
13 are at a four decade high across the country. These  
14 local trends are encouraging and show that the steps  
15 we are taking to make streets safer are working  
16 including our commitment to the safety system  
17 approach. And that's why many cities across the  
18 nation and others across the globe including  
19 delegation that we have now, for example Brazil, they  
20 are spending this week to look on how, what is New  
21 York City doing to improve safety in our streets.

22 But as Mayor Adams has made clear, the only  
23 [INAUDIBLE 2:08:38] as New Yorkers of traffic  
24 fatality is zero. We are committed to doing more.  
25

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1  
2 DOT also remains focused on creating a more  
3 equitable city where the transportation network made  
4 the need the of all New Yorkers regardless of race,  
5 ability and economic status. DOT is prioritizing  
6 street sign investments in highly need neighborhood  
7 based on the priority investment areas like housing  
8 New York City Street Plan while it's still being  
9 guided by that as such as crash histories. We are  
10 also committed to robust community engagement and  
11 learning from community members, Council Members and  
12 other elected officials about conditions on the  
13 ground. And that's why walking across the borough  
14 meeting with the community, elected officials and  
15 everyone that would like to be part of this  
16 conversation about their future in transportation for  
17 them to have a seat at the table.

18 In 2022, DOT completed 111 streets improving  
19 project, including projects in higher need  
20 neighborhoods as determined by the priority  
21 investment areas. We also exceeded the Mayor and my  
22 commitment to improving 1,000 intersections with the  
23 1,600 intersection with treatments such as turn  
24 calming, all way stop signs, raised crosswalks, day  
25 lighting and leading pedestrians intervals. Some

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1  
2 2022 projects highlighted include: many such as  
3 protected bike lanes, sidewalk extension on 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>  
4 in Lexington Avenue Manhattan protected bike lanes in  
5 streets in Brooklyn. Intersection upgraded at  
6 Homelawn Street and Grand Central Parkway in Queens,  
7 and intersection safety improvements at Victory  
8 Boulevard, Brook Street and Fremont Street in Staten  
9 Island.

10 In 2022, DOT completed over 26 new protected bike  
11 lane miles and reached 1,500 bike lane miles  
12 citywide, the largest bike network in the United  
13 States of America.

14 DOT also hardened 10 miles of previously  
15 delineator-protected bike lanes and will harden  
16 another 10 miles this year. This will keep us on  
17 track to harden half of the city's delineator  
18 protected bike lanes by the end of 2023. Something  
19 that we'll advocate for riders alike for the bike New  
20 York to TA, they all agree that we should focus on  
21 quality, not just on the quantity.

22 In another win for safety, DOT succeeded in  
23 getting authority from the state to expand the speed  
24 camera enforcement program to 24 hours a day, seven  
25 days a week. Since the launch of 24-hours operation

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3 in August, DOT has experienced a 25 percent reduction  
4 in violations. It means that we are seeing less  
5 speeding in our streets.

6 I'm happy to say that this budget invests \$81  
7 million more in capital funding for school safety  
8 street reconstruction projects. As I testified last  
9 month, student safety is a top priority for me as  
10 father of two daughters, as a former teacher, as a  
11 co-founder of two schools in New York City public  
12 schools. Thanks to the Mayor's investment, DOT and  
13 DDC will begin construction soon on several contracts  
14 for school safety improvements in Brooklyn, Staten  
15 Island and the Bronx, and also start new projects for  
16 school safety improvements citywide.

17 To give examples of the type of safety work this  
18 will fund, we enhanced safety on Alexander Avenue in  
19 the Bronx, a wide roadway that separates local NYCHA  
20 residents from schools on the other side of the  
21 street, by installing new signalized crossings and  
22 sidewalk extensions. These changes led to a 48  
23 percent reduction in injuries overall and a 67  
24 percent reduction in pedestrian injuries. We look  
25 forward to bringing similar safety gains to more  
parts of the city with this new funding.

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3 This budget also includes \$77 million in funding  
4 for new traffic signal installation, which will allow  
5 us to install 200 signals a year, up to 100. In  
6 addition, each new installation will include an APS.  
7 And we are also constructing about 1.6 miles of  
8 Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway from Red Hook through  
9 Sunset Park. This will include a two-way, separated  
10 bike path on Hamilton Avenue and Third Avenue, raised  
11 crossing and accessibility improvements.

12 Next year, we are planning to start design build  
13 activities for the upcoming Citywide Raised  
14 Crosswalks Contract. This project will build more  
15 than 100 raised crosswalks at high-priority  
16 intersections across the five boroughs. Raised  
17 crosswalks improve pedestrian safety conditions by  
18 calming vehicle traffic at intersections, which also  
19 increasing accessibility by improving a level of  
20 street crossing to the New Yorkers with disability  
21 and many senior citizens.

22 Thanks to the support of our city, state and  
23 federal partners, DOT has won grants that will  
24 support our work to make streets safer. Last month,  
25 we celebrated the \$20 million Safe Streets for All  
Grant and that will support the safety enhancement on

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1 Delancey Street, which will begin construction next  
2 year, and a new pedestrian model and micro mobility  
3 planning tool. And last year, DOT and Parks won a  
4 \$7.2 million Raise Grant to plan for the expansion of  
5 greenway network across the city.  
6

7 We will be kicking off the public engagement  
8 process soon for the landmark community driven study,  
9 reimagining the Cross Bronx Expressway, thanks to a  
10 \$2 million Raise Planning Grant, we won in  
11 partnership with New York State and DCP. We will  
12 also be continuing our BQE Vision engagement,  
13 pursuing once in a generation federal funding for a  
14 long-term fix for BQE Central and developing project  
15 to reconnect neighborhoods along the corridor  
16 including South Williamsburg, Red Hook, and Sunset  
17 Park. And as Mayor Adams said, that whatever we hear  
18 from the community, this opportunity to hear the  
19 voices of all the stakeholders from the north to the  
20 south, anyone that has an impact at the BQE.

21 We have a team hard at work tracking federal  
22 funding opportunities and identifying projects that  
23 best fit each one. Thank you to all the Council  
24 Members and other elected officials for your support  
25 in going after this grant. USDOT values local



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1 support and we will continue to call on you to help  
2 us make the case for why these projects are so  
3 important. And this is so important because you hear  
4 a lot of people out the billions and billions of  
5 dollars that infrastructure bill would provide to  
6 city but all this money on infrastructure came mainly  
7 through those grants that we had to apply. So, your  
8 support as we apply is very important.  
9

10 DOT also continues our work to make it easier and  
11 faster to travel around the city for all New Yorkers,  
12 regardless of race, ability, or economic status. In  
13 2022, DOT installed APS, Accessible Pedestrian  
14 Signals at a record of 494 intersections citywide to  
15 help New Yorkers who are blind or have low vision  
16 navigate the city. This budget also includes over \$3  
17 billion in capital funding over the next ten years to  
18 continue pedestrian ramp installation and upgrades  
19 citywide.

20 And to speed up buses, last year, DOT implemented  
21 Transit Signal Priority at a record 781 intersections  
22 to reduce the time buses spend stuck at red lights.  
23 We improved the lives of 400,000 daily bus riders  
24 with projects that have made bus services faster and  
25 more reliable. One great example is our work with

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3 the MTA at Pelham Bay Park Station in the Bronx.

4 There, one-tenth of a mile of bus lanes will save two  
5 and a half minutes per trip for thousands of daily  
6 bus riders and improve the connection to the subway.

7 This budget includes \$62 million in new capital  
8 funding to make improvements on Jamaica Avenue from  
9 Sutphin Boulevard to Merrick Boulevard. Thanks to  
10 the support of Speaker Adams, Council Member  
11 Williams, Council Member Gennaro, and Borough  
12 President Richards, this project will revitalize this  
13 central neighborhood corridor by introducing a number  
14 of sidewalk and streetscape improvements, building  
15 off changes allowed by the new permanent busway. The  
16 project will reconstruct the avenues sidewalks and  
17 introduce curb extensions, sidewalk expansion and  
18 raised crosswalks at priority intersections.

19 This budget also provides \$16 million to fully  
20 fund a project along Kings Highway, Flatlands Avenue  
21 and Pennsylvania Avenue. This project will include  
22 expansion of existing median bus stops for the B82,  
23 adding bus pads, resurfacing the roadway and  
24 construction pedestrian safety and accessibility  
25 improvements, including pedestrian islands, new  
raised and planted medians, raised crosswalks, median

1 extensions, and curb extensions. We plan to start  
2 construction on this project later this calendar  
3 year.  
4

5 Turning to the public space, this Administration  
6 continues to reimagine the use of public space. All  
7 New Yorkers should have access to safe, welcoming,  
8 and attractive public spaces close to where they live  
9 and DOT continues our work towards this goal but we  
10 can only do it together in partnership with the  
11 Council and the support of the administration.

12 In 2022, DOT continued to grow the largest Open  
13 Streets Program in the country with over 200 open  
14 streets on 430 city blocks, and we are waiting for  
15 more application as the new line will be later in  
16 April. We celebrated the completion of the 34<sup>th</sup>  
17 Avenue Open Streets redesign, a groundbreaking  
18 project that transformed 1.3 miles of 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
19 into a pedestrian and cyclist priority corridor,  
20 including a new plaza and shared street blocks  
21 centered at schools. This project enhanced safety,  
22 accessibility and create vibrant programming space  
23 for the seven schools within a block of the Jackson  
24 Heights corridor.  
25

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3 I also join Council Member Farias to celebrate  
4 the completion of the Morrison Avenue Plaza in  
5 Soundview in the Bronx. It was a great day. DOT in  
6 partnership with DDC and the Council Members, DEP and  
7 Parks increased pedestrian space and amenities at a  
8 busy intersection under the Morrison Avenue Soundview  
9 subway station, while also adding critical safety  
10 elements. That's how we show by action that we are  
11 paying attention to underserved communities.

12 As the Mayor announced in his State of the City  
13 Address, this Administration has committed \$375  
14 million to improve public spaces. This includes \$63  
15 million added in this budget for reconstructing  
16 Flatiron Plaza. This funding will allow us to start  
17 design on projects to connect Madison Square to  
18 Herald Square between 21<sup>st</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street as part of  
19 the Broadway Vision Plan. These projects will  
20 include improved pedestrian spaces and amenities as  
21 well as safety elements such as grade separation of  
22 the plaza, landscaping, improved road markings,  
23 dedicated bike lanes, and expanded median islands.

24 The Mayor's State of the City commitment will  
25 also allow us to make permanent upgrades to Open  
Streets on Willis Avenue between East 147<sup>th</sup> Street

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3 and Bergen Avenue in the Bronx, Minthorne Street in  
4 Staten Island and Willis Avenue in Queens.

5 Applications are currently open for the 2023 Open  
6 Street Program. Please help us to spread the word to  
7 community groups in our districts. As you know, the  
8 in January, we connected with each Council Member.  
9 We asked for any reference that you may have or any  
10 non-for-profit, any business improvement district as  
11 a result, we have a large number institutions already  
12 apply and the second in line is going to be April.

13 Mayor Adams also appointed the city's first ever  
14 Chief Public Realm Officer. DOT looks forward to  
15 working with Ya-Ting Liu, and in our city agency to  
16 continue to create public spaces that can be enjoyed  
17 by all New Yorkers.

18 Turning to our critical operational work that  
19 keeps the city running. This includes our work to  
20 maintain the city's roadways, sidewalks, and bridges  
21 in a state of good repair and to operate the Staten  
22 Island Ferry.

23 As I testified last month, DOT faces staffing  
24 challenges that are in line with many sectors of the  
25 economy and municipal governments across the city,  
across the state and across the country. We are

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1  
2 aggressively working to hire and creating a pipeline  
3 for future transportation professionals. DOT  
4 recently hosted an Engineering Job Fair from which  
5 DOT made 50 conditional offers to enthusiastic  
6 engineering college students. We also attended the  
7 DCAS citywide job fair in partnership with District  
8 37, where we made a number of offers, including 20  
9 Apprentices Inspectors. We are also working with DCAS  
10 to expand the qualification of hard to recruit job  
11 titles to increase the numbers of diverse candidates.

12 DOT also created a new Director of Workforce  
13 Development position to focus on recruitment  
14 initiatives and targeted outreach. The Director has  
15 been collaborating with executive staff and hiring  
16 management to develop recruiting strategies to  
17 attract and retain a diverse workforce. The Director  
18 has also been conducting outreach to organizations  
19 that represent underrepresented populations in  
20 various agency titles, and pursuing opportunity to  
21 partner with citywide agencies, such as the Mayor's  
22 Office for Talent and Workforce Development, the  
23 Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, and the Mayor's  
24 Office for People with Disability. I'm more than  
25 happy to connect the person with one of your staff if

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1  
2 you would like for us also to work closer as we work  
3 toward the recruitment initiative.

4       On ferries, this budget includes \$46 million in  
5 capital funding for ferry dry docking and  
6 reconstruction of ferry maintenance facility piers  
7 and wharves. This reconstruction is necessary to  
8 ensure DOT can maintain ferries to U.S. Coast Guard  
9 regulations and comply with the American Bureau of  
10 Shipping's classification requirements.

11       This budget includes \$36 million in new Capital  
12 funding to fully fund the Harper Street Asphalt  
13 Plant. This plant is a key piece of DOT's operation,  
14 producing more than three tons of material for our  
15 resurfacing crews. We are so glad that we are funded  
16 in the baseline to resurface a 1,100 lane miles and  
17 up to 50 miles of bike lanes. We all should know and  
18 be proud that this is one of the few cities that  
19 reproduce 50 percent of the asphalt that we need to  
20 resurface our street.

21       DO maintained nearly 800 bridges. We plan to  
22 start construction soon on the Williamsburg Bridge,  
23 continuing the goal of maintaining the iconic East  
24 River Bridges in a state of good repair. This  
25 contract will extend the service life of the bridge

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3 for up to 60 years for future generations and will  
4 include rehabilitating the floor beams, structures  
5 supporting the subway tracks and more. We will also  
6 be beginning work on the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge over the  
7 Long Island Railroad and subway tracks and work on  
8 Boston Road over the Hutchinson River.

9 In conclusion, Chair and Council Members, I would  
10 like to thank the Council for the opportunity to  
11 testify before you today. This investment, along  
12 with our legislative agenda, will lead to a safer  
13 city for all New Yorkers. I look forward to  
14 partnering with the Council as we work together to  
15 make these streets safer, more equitable and  
16 accessible for generations to come.

17 In one minute [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 2:27:49-  
18 2:8:16]. We will now be happy to answer any  
19 questions.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so much  
21 Commissioner and it's always great to see you and  
22 your team. So, before we begin, the Committee may  
23 not get to all of our questions or may not have  
24 responses. So, we will send a follow-up letter for  
25 any unanswered questions. We're going to just ask  
that in the interest in time that the responses be as



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1  
2 brief and synced as possible. So, I'm going to start  
3 with traffic and I've been joined by Council Member  
4 Won as well, okay. And so, traffic fatalities.

5 Fatalities amongst bicycles have increased from  
6 14 in 2014, the year Vision Zero was launched to 18  
7 in 2023, a 29 percent increase. Moreover, pedestrian  
8 fatalities increased from 107 to 113 between Fiscal  
9 2020 and Fiscal 2023. It is unclear at the present  
10 pace if the city will achieve its goal of Vision Zero  
11 - excuse me, of zero traffic related fatalities by  
12 2024. What does DOT attribute this increase to and  
13 what is DOT doing to address this issue of increasing  
14 traffic fatalities?

15 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: A few things in that area was  
16 added. That's a person that obviously everything  
17 that we do in planning. I think that you know one  
18 thing that I would like to offer if the Chair and the  
19 Speaker allow is to come one day to the lounge. You  
20 know with the Council and give like a more detailed  
21 presentation about you know how we collect the data  
22 on crashes. Like, what is the number? Because I  
23 think that there is some disparity on the  
24 interpretation on those numbers. Like, as just you  
25 know like, you will say that this Council, in

1  
2 addition I will see a hire number of motorists,  
3 right? But then those Council, they had the Deacon,  
4 they had the FDR and what you saw is that in the last  
5 year after COVID, the number of reckless drivers have  
6 increased nationwide. So, when you look at  
7 intersection at the streets of New York City, our  
8 street, putting aside the highway, putting the side  
9 the speeding epidemic that is here in our city, you  
10 will see that the numbers that we have is completely  
11 going down. One death is to many for Mayor Adams,  
12 for myself and for more than 5,000 men and women that  
13 work at DOT but Eric can share you know what is the  
14 real dollar and I think that is important if we can  
15 coordinate it with you one day to come in front of  
16 you guys you know in more time at the lounge, so that  
17 we can share. What is the difference? Like -

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, you don't feel  
19 that there's been an increase is what you're saying?

20 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: We are so confident that  
21 Vision Zero is working. Vision Zero is a policy that  
22 started that combined engineer enforcement and  
23 education but Eric also can add a little bit about  
24 those numbers.

25

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1  
2 ERIC BEATON: Sure. So, in 2013, the first year  
3 of Vision Zero, we had 184 pedestrian fatalities and  
4 last year, 2022, we had 120. So, you know it  
5 decreased of about one-third. So, as the  
6 Commissioner said, like we don't treat those numbers  
7 as acceptable. Even one is clearly too much but we  
8 do feel like things are trending in the right  
9 direction. Even as nationwide, the number of  
10 pedestrian fatalities has gone up as we've seen  
11 increased speeding and larger vehicles on our roads.  
12 And you know it's early and I'm always worried about  
13 jinxing it but year to date, we're doing even better  
14 than we have in any year under Vision Zero.

15 So, we do think that it has been working. We're  
16 very proud of that. We think we have more to do but  
17 we think the tools we have are making the streets  
18 safer for everyone, especially for our most  
19 vulnerable users.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, next we're  
21 going to pivot to transportation master plan  
22 mistarget, which is something we were able to talk  
23 about in the last hearing that we had together. So,  
24 in an effort to -

25

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1  
2 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And I also would like to – we  
3 are in the same in partnership when it comes to try  
4 to identify other things that we can do to achieve  
5 our goal. Together with Council Members and the  
6 Assembly Members. We also have been working in  
7 Albany to see a reduction of the level of alcohol  
8 that people are allowed to have when they drive and  
9 reduce it from 0.8 to 0.5. And we know that if we  
10 are able to make those changes, we will be able to  
11 see a big reduction in our city. Again, we are not  
12 telling people not to drink as we are not telling  
13 people not to drive, all we are saying is about, if  
14 you drive, don't drink.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. So, in an  
16 effort to make our street safer, in October 2019, the  
17 Council passed the Transportation Master Plan.  
18 Legislated to take effect in Fiscal Year 2022. The  
19 Master Plan calls for the installation of at least  
20 250 protected bike lanes and 150 protected bus lanes.  
21 Bus stop upgrades at 2,500 stops, redesign of at  
22 least 2,000 intersections and major transportation  
23 projects. However, mandated targets set in the plan  
24 have been missed.

25

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1  
2 According to the Preliminary Mayor's Management  
3 Report, bus lane miles installations decreased 47  
4 percent to 6.8 miles in the first four months of  
5 Fiscal 2023 when compared to last year. Last year,  
6 DOT installed just 12.9 miles of bus lanes, a 37  
7 percent decrease when compared to Fiscal 2021 and  
8 well below the 20-lane mile benchmark set for 2022 by  
9 the Transportation Master Plan.

10 Additionally, in the first four months of Fiscal  
11 2023, DOT added 18.1 bike lane miles. A decrease of  
12 42 percent over the same period in Fiscal 2022. Of  
13 which, 8.6 miles are protected lanes. Can you please  
14 provide the Committee with an update on the status of  
15 the master plan and we'd like to know why DOT missed  
16 its bus lane target last year. Because I know in the  
17 last hearing, we heard you know one reason. There  
18 was different reporting's as to reason, so we just  
19 like to have a clear understanding as to why the  
20 target was missed and the master plan set a mandated  
21 benchmark of 30 miles of bus lanes in Fiscal 2023.  
22 Will DOT meet this benchmark? Will DOT install an  
23 additional 7.1 miles of lanes to make up the last  
24 years mistarget?  
25

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1  
2 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: As you know the Street Master  
3 Plan is deep to my heart. That was my bill. That  
4 was a complaint. So, as a Commissioner, I have the  
5 honor to be working with the agency to address any  
6 challenges that you may have in order to complete  
7 those goals. One thing that and now, we're getting  
8 to the details but we know what we you know yet, we  
9 were behind on bus lanes, bike lanes and that was a  
10 top one. And even with the bike lane, we did good.  
11 The bus lane was one of those that I need support  
12 from local Council Members. There's one reason among  
13 many others that we go to community and say, for me  
14 it's great to have Council Member Farias because I  
15 know that she came you know a new air in her  
16 district. That was a district that I couldn't think  
17 about getting bus lane or bike lane before.

18 So, now having her in partners working with us,  
19 challenging us, making us accountable but now that  
20 she is standing for this initiative, that's what we  
21 also ask are we going to be getting to the details.  
22 Yeah, we can deal with challenges but I can say  
23 overall it's about building that support in the local  
24 community that we're going.

25

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3 And not only for us it's important to count on  
4 the local Council Member support. And as we get  
5 there to help us to move forward. But also, we also  
6 have learned to start early the process of  
7 engagement. You know, as you know, I'm doing my  
8 commission in the borough and I'm meeting with the  
9 Council Members. You know I'm going and meeting with  
10 the community and the community of vision, they also  
11 do their part but the technical part, this is  
12 something that Eric also can add.

13 ERIC BEATON: Sure, and you know as the  
14 Commissioner said, we're very committed to the  
15 targets in the master plan and you know we reaffirmed  
16 that in our streets plan update last month. You know  
17 and we're upfront about how many miles we had done.  
18 We recognize that on those couple things, we didn't  
19 meet the target, even though we met or exceeded the  
20 targets on so many of them and you know, I think what  
21 we want to do is make sure we're doing not just  
22 projects to meet numerical goals but doing the right  
23 projects in the right ways.

24 Last year, we did some shorter projects that  
25 still had benefited you know tens and hundreds of  
thousands of bus riders and we want to make sure that

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1 we're doing it in close community consultation. We  
2 also did you know many projects that were not  
3 required in the law, like the bike lane hardening.  
4 Like open streets and open restaurants. Like all the  
5 additional intersection safety work we did that we  
6 thought were critically important to achieve and  
7 again, I think really show up in our continued good  
8 Vision Zero numbers. We think we do have a really  
9 exciting slate of projects for this year on bus  
10 lanes. Projects like Gun Hill Road in the Bronx and  
11 Northern Boulevard in Queens. And you know as the  
12 Commissioner said, we appreciate all the local  
13 support and we want to make sure we're working with  
14 local communities to get those projects done.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How is DOT planning  
17 to overcome obstacles to implementing 150 new bus  
18 lanes or bus way miles in four years in compliance  
19 with the streets plan law?

20 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I'll also pass it to Paul  
21 Ochoa who also you know oversees the HR and that  
22 piece related to the staff and this is something that  
23 he is doing working with a different division. But  
24 you know like, as I said, like those two areas, bus  
25 lane and bike lane, and those were the two top ones.



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3 And that one, also we learned early in the process  
4 that we had to start early. You know the level of  
5 engagement, we elected officials with community  
6 bases, not only beside Community Board, interfaith,  
7 PTA's and other, riders in the different community  
8 that was understanding.

9 We also heard loud and clear that you know the  
10 different Council Members, they've been saying, when  
11 will we get a school in my district? When will we  
12 get a bike in bike in my district? And we are  
13 saying, we need to build the infrastructure. So, I  
14 feel that you know what we are doing. One, being  
15 sure that we address the staffing and that's why we  
16 have partners with CUNY and City College and that's  
17 why we've been partners with District 37 and that's  
18 why we have an internship program. That we will have  
19 more, almost 200. A young person who will be doing  
20 internship and many of them, they started doing  
21 interns and they are working on planning bridges and  
22 different divisions. But I think that Paul is  
23 looking at about what is it that we're doing this  
24 year to address you know how to get to those numbers.

25 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The vacancy reduction  
memo issued in November describe a change in the

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1 city's hiring process and in the policy that allowed  
2 agencies to fill one of every two vacant positions.  
3

4 Since November, has your agency been enabled by  
5 OMB to hire, to fill all vacant positions or are you  
6 still required to provide two vacant positions for  
7 every one to be hired?

8 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I will pass it to Paul Ochoa  
9 for to answer the question.

10 PAUL OCHOA: Thank you Chair. Thank you for that  
11 question. Listen, DOT understood the role that  
12 agencies needed to play in a difficult fiscal  
13 climate. We are happy to say that OMB and City Hall  
14 have been helping us and we are no longer doing the  
15 two for one policy, which is a huge plus for agencies  
16 and the realities in the vacancy reduction is that  
17 you know vacancies don't necessarily equate to  
18 staffing. The vacancies that we were asked to give  
19 were longstanding vacancies, we just haven't been  
20 able to fill. I think we are very proud of the work  
21 that we're doing in terms of recruitment and trying  
22 to reach that level. I think we have a commitment  
23 from City Hall and OMB that if we get to a point  
24 where we fill our vacancies, then we'll start  
25 conversations about bringing in more budgeted

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1 headcount but I think as the Commissioner mentioned,  
2 the job fairs that we've done focusing on engineers  
3 and planners, which are sort of the two critical  
4 roles that we're seeing and we're having you know the  
5 most difficult time as with other municipalities and  
6 even the private sector is just a very tight labor  
7 market for engineers and planners. But listen I  
8 think we're very proud of the work that we're doing  
9 and we're also very excited about the Mayor's  
10 announcement in the DC37 deal to pilot a hybrid  
11 option for staff. I think that is something that  
12 we've been hearing. It certainly is something that  
13 private sector tends to offer and I think it will  
14 certainly help recruitment and retention here at DOT.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And we understand DOT  
17 continues to say that they don't really need more  
18 funding for the agencies but do you see that some of  
19 the challenges with hiring of even quicker is as a  
20 result of maybe like needing high wages. Like, who  
21 are you losing out to? Are you losing out to the  
22 MTA? Are the salary ranges comparable for the  
23 planners at DOT to MTA or other competitors like  
24 that?

25

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1  
2 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I think there's many factors  
3 and you heard some that Paul also referred to, work  
4 that we're doing in collaboration. You know many  
5 other hired education institutions. People migrate  
6 from one place to the other. Council Members that I  
7 saw before I was here, they love this you know, they  
8 work in agency. Members of agency, now they're  
9 working at the Council. So, I think it's going to be  
10 migration of individual from one place to the other  
11 for different reasons.

12 You know sometimes you want to do something  
13 different. I feel that you know, like I feel that  
14 this year, on this administration on Mayor Eric Adams  
15 and we all know that this Mayor is different from  
16 previous one. He's very supportive of Commissioners  
17 and agency to be created. He's very supportive of  
18 Commissioner to be working, you know with DCAS to  
19 say, how can we align when you get the examine as a  
20 student coming out from college. Not back a big  
21 difference. When we have a job fair at 55 Water  
22 Street and we offer the job opportunity to more than  
23 50 engineers, that would have been resold or we've  
24 been supported by Mayor Adams and DCAS to say, you  
25 guys work together. So, we were able to invite

1 engineers, that they will be graduating next year.

2 For them to know that they can have an offer so that  
3 when they graduate in May, they will come to us. So,  
4 for us it's about continuing to allow you know doing  
5 all the part, marketing is key. You know like, we  
6 when we get through this hearing, we think about the  
7 bridges. But most New Yorkers, even those who are in  
8 college, they think that we only have Manhattan  
9 Bridge. When someone is in college and say, you have  
10 these opportunities to work in the agency that  
11 oversee almost 800 bridges you know that run like you  
12 know, that the sidewalk you know they're resurfacing  
13 last year. You know the roadway under the leadership  
14 we are in, she started testing plastic as you know to  
15 recycle and turn it as asphalt.

16  
17 So, it's about marketing. It's about connecting  
18 with the student. Just like it was with Chancellor  
19 Banks.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: It's about money too  
21 though.

22 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Listen, we all know that we  
23 have limited resource. When I used to be an  
24 activist, I used to be in front of City Hall and  
25 thinking that I we had unlimited resources. When you

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1  
2 are at BMT and you guys are going to be sitting with  
3 the Speaker and you have to make decision about which  
4 is the budget that we have next year, then you have  
5 to decide where do you put resources. As we need as  
6 much resources as possible, I take it. Give me and I  
7 take it and I will use it. But what I can say, Mayor  
8 Adams increased 18 percent of budget last year. He  
9 added almost \$400 million this year in the state of  
10 the district. I cannot ask for more support from any  
11 Mayor than what I get from you. From the Speaker and  
12 from you who also is advocating for DOT to have more  
13 resources.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, what you're  
15 saying is -

16 PAUL OCHOA: For the record, we also poach and  
17 recruit staff from the MTA, so it's not just a one-  
18 way street.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Luckily, MTA has left  
20 the building. But in terms of like, because you got  
21 the 18 percent increase, have you applied it to the  
22 salary ranges that you're like advertising right now?

23 PAUL OCHOA: And listen, I think the Commissioner  
24 said it right, we're never going to be able to  
25 compete with the private sector but I think we have

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1 other opportunities that we offer. Not only that,  
2 our benefits package, the city's benefit package to  
3 define pension is a big factor when it comes to  
4 recruiting but I think you know, if you're asking me,  
5 will we ever compete with the private sector? No and  
6 I don't think -

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No, no, what I'm  
9 asking is on the job post, have you increased the  
10 salary ranges?

11 PAUL OCHOA: Yeah, and I would also say just going  
12 back to the Mayor's announcement and DC37 deal,  
13 there's going to be a nine percent increase come May,  
14 which will of course help.

15 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And if you don't mind Chair,  
16 adding to what Paul said, what we know is that the  
17 private sector tend to offer higher salaries in many  
18 areas, however, we in government, we offer other  
19 things. That is priceless. When someone comes from  
20 college and that person learn that they can build  
21 pedestrian plaza, that they can make the city the  
22 safest one in the nation. That everyone across the  
23 nation was looking about how New York City has the  
24 larger numbers of bike lane, bus lane, open street.  
25 People also know that you know they work 13 hours a

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1 day but they also get a lot of things when they work  
2 in government, so as a private sector in many areas  
3 provide higher salary, we in government also provide  
4 other incentives that they were never finding in  
5 other places.  
6

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Also, uhm, according  
8 to OMB for the current Fiscal Year, DOT saw attrition  
9 of 270 full time employees. How many new hires has  
10 your agency added during the current fiscal year?

11 PAUL OCHOA: Thank you Chair for that question  
12 and again, also I would be remiss to acknowledge the  
13 tremendous work that our workforce continues to do  
14 even in challenging times. So, I want to make sure  
15 that we start there. As for the retirements, we are  
16 keeping up with attrition in terms of hiring, plus a  
17 bit more. I think the job fares that we're doing,  
18 the advertising campaigns that we're doing will  
19 certainly help that but we're certainly keeping up  
20 with attrition.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Does DOT plan on  
22 conducting outreach in neighborhoods to solicit  
23 feedback from local communities prior to launching  
24 any major transportation projects?  
25



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1  
2 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yes, for the first time the  
3 agency has a – first of all the agency will be  
4 bringing a person that will be working in the  
5 community and into community engagement and focus  
6 about building community engagement. I also created  
7 a position for a director of immigrant affair in  
8 connection between DOT and the immigrant community.  
9 And as I said before, when I went to a Staten Island  
10 meeting with the local Council Member, Borough  
11 President and other, I ended that day meeting with 40  
12 interfaith leaders because what I feel that in the  
13 past, the conversation about transportation and  
14 planning was more something related to the highly  
15 educated middle- and upper-class New Yorkers. Now  
16 what we are saying and someone, not only English-  
17 speaking person, someone that has contributed to the  
18 city, someone that has been living unserved committee  
19 my whole life, is that that part of the city make a  
20 larger percentage of individual that they have never  
21 been invited to be at the table to talk about  
22 transportation. Transportation is the most important  
23 equalizer that touch the lives of everyone.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And, and, sorry  
25 Commissioner, and how will DOT ensure that the master

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1  
2 plan projects, excuse me, projects and funding are  
3 equitably distributed among city neighborhoods?

4 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: We have a formula in place and  
5 Eric, if you can take it through the formula and  
6 especially in resurfacing, I don't think that the  
7 city had the best safety in place to address equity.  
8 We do resurfacing and we do many other projects.

9 ERIC BEATON: Sure and something that we were  
10 very proud to introduce as part of the Streets Plan,  
11 is the priority investment areas. Where we  
12 explicitly look at places in the city that may have  
13 been historically underserved by the agency in terms  
14 of infrastructure. We look at populations of color,  
15 low-income populations, population density, as well  
16 as where we've actually done projects in the past.  
17 And when we use that as a tool to make sure that as  
18 we plan new projects, we are serving, we're over  
19 serving those communities that have gotten less  
20 previously.

21 So, we are always guided, we always want to make  
22 sure we're working at locations with the highest  
23 crash rates but we also use that as a lens to make  
24 sure that we're not leaving parts of the city behind.

25

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1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, do you already  
3 have a kind of populated in terms of what  
4 communities? Is the formula done or are you doing it  
5 project by project?

6 ERI BEATON: Yes, it's in the streets plan and we  
7 can make sure you see that.

8 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And one thing also under Mayor  
9 Adams we did was also as you know working with the  
10 previous Council body, you know we created the  
11 community office in the City of New York. And as a  
12 result also, the Council baselined \$5 million Home  
13 Vision Zero. We also used the money to also go to -  
14 connect also through the community media. Not only  
15 with the immigrant community but also local media.  
16 So, what we are expanding, we're working aggressively  
17 to be sure that the community again are early in the  
18 process as we look for any project that isn't only  
19 about here we had a project done, say yes or no. So,  
20 and of course the leadership of each of you Council  
21 Members play in this. My commitment to go and walk  
22 through every single Council District, to hear your  
23 feedback. I had to be in any of your district that  
24 you have, I like anything that is important for you  
25 that has not come back with solution.

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2 AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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3 So, that's what we will continue doing and I'm  
4 doing it because this is what Mayor's have  
5 instructed, all Council Members build a close working  
6 relationship with every elected official and be sure  
7 that you know that the ear on this city is relied on  
8 those leaders that we have in the local communities.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, I'm going to ask  
10 two questions on the resurfacing streets and then I'm  
11 going to yield to my colleagues just to make sure  
12 that they get their questions in. So, DOT previously  
13 had a goal to repave 1,300 lane miles annually, which  
14 was reduced to 1,100 lane miles per year in Fiscal  
15 2020 and Fiscal 2021.

16 Last year in our budget response the Council  
17 urged the administration to increase baseline funding  
18 for street resurfacing by \$41.1 million in the  
19 Executive Budget to allow DOT to repave 1,300  
20 annually. This funding was not added at adoption.  
21 The Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Plan maintains the  
22 repaving goal of 1,100 lane miles in Fiscal 2024.  
23 Given that the preliminary budget only provided  
24 funding to repave 1,100 lane miles is the resurfacing  
25 of 1,100 lane miles adequate to meet the city's  
needs? And does the department have the staff

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1 capacity to repave additional lane miles beyond the  
2 1,100 in Fiscal 2024?

3  
4 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: We are. Again, the roadway  
5 division of DOT run by Rina and is composed by 1,200  
6 men and women that work under her leadership. We  
7 feel that they work together with the administration  
8 and the Council to ensure that also we baseline those  
9 resources, so that we have the funding necessary.  
10 Allows for a [INAUDIBLE 2:53:54] purchase to 1,100  
11 lane miles. We then, it's a good support that we  
12 have and provide the support that we need. We feel  
13 that it is inadequate amount to keep the street in a  
14 state of good repair.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I'm going  
16 to yield to Council Member Carr.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you Chair.  
18 Commissioner, good to see you. Just doubling down on  
19 what the chair was just asking with lane mile  
20 resurfacing. In the two year, first two years of the  
21 prior administration, they committed and achieved  
22 2,500 lane miles of resurfacing while you were the  
23 Chair of this Committee and it was an astonishing  
24 achievement. It really put us forward in terms of  
25 making our roads in a better state of repair.

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1  
2       So, how many lane miles to date for this Fiscal  
3 Year have you done citywide and by borough? And what  
4 do you expect the number would be for FY24 based on  
5 the proposal now? Because I really think we need to  
6 get to over 200 lane miles of resurfacing in my  
7 borough and to 1200 or 1300 citywide. Because we had  
8 a pretty decent winter and we have a real opportunity  
9 to get ahead on our resurfacing goals, if we were to  
10 go with the 1,300 lane miles of the FY24.

11       YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, and listen, we all are  
12 in the same boat. We know that I say that you know  
13 the larger percentage of responsibility that we have  
14 in this agency is to be sure that we take care of the  
15 every day New Yorkers and it's about powerful. It's  
16 about roadways, about resurfacing and even New  
17 Yorkers expect that the city through DOT is to cure  
18 responsibility which we do but you know like more  
19 than happy now to take here, you know with more  
20 details on how are we doing in breakdown per borough.  
21 And yes, like you know I always say that you know I  
22 work and we all do. We work to the best ability to  
23 make sure that we have the resources to resurface  
24 that we always take more on whatever.

25

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1  
2 PAUL OCHOA: Thank you Council Member for that  
3 question. I think resurfacing is one of the core  
4 functions of the agency and we're very proud of it.  
5 It has been a very good winter and I think we've met  
6 a lot - you only need to look at our response time  
7 for pothole repairs. I think we went from about four  
8 days, which is still well above our target to about  
9 two days for this winter precisely because we've been  
10 able to get crews out there.

11 So far year to date in Staten Island we've done  
12 about 106 millions of resurface lanes. This upcoming  
13 season starts on Monday and we're actually bringing  
14 in about 550 seasonal workers to do exactly this  
15 work. There's no indication that we won't meet our  
16 target and I think you're right. There has been in  
17 the years passed, made incredible investments in  
18 resurfacing. This is why, this is the reason why we  
19 think 1100 miles is exactly where we need to go.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Well, I'll trade you back  
21 our bike lane and bus lane miles if you give me a few  
22 more resurfacing miles for our regular streets and  
23 Chair, if you could just bear with me with one more  
24 question. Thank you.

25

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1 I want to turn to the issue of the ferry. We've  
2 had significant service disruptions, going back years  
3 before you were Commissioner and the answer we're  
4 always given was COVID related vulnerabilities in the  
5 work force and we're well past that now and we had  
6 the event this past summer where we had a significant  
7 disruption in service. And so, my question to you is  
8 when are we going to get back to the locally law  
9 mandated levels of service every half hour for off  
10 peak, every 20 or 15 minutes depending on what hour  
11 of peak service we're talking about? Because  
12 particularly for off peak, we're constantly seeing  
13 the DOT is in violation of the law passed by my  
14 predecessor Jimmy Auto. I was at a dinner the other  
15 night and I was taking a friend from Manhattan back  
16 to the ferry and he asked me, oh how often does the  
17 ferry come? I said every half hour and the server  
18 corrected me and says, no after midnight it's hourly  
19 service.  
20

21 So, there's a perception among the community that  
22 service has been cut. Because of how much disruption  
23 there has been. So, I'd love to know, I know your  
24 not the Office of Labor Relations. I think this is a  
25 labor issue, but you do have a representative whose



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1  
2 in on those negotiations. When are we going to see a  
3 contract for these folks who have been out of one for  
4 over almost 12 years now?

5 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: First of all, my thanks to the  
6 captain that carry our ferry, to John, our Director  
7 for the Staten Island Ferry and for almost 300 to 400  
8 you know great staff that we have you know in your  
9 borough or Staten Island, the great borough of New  
10 York City that has one of the largest ferry services  
11 in the nation. Not only for the rest of the Staten  
12 Island that as Mayor Adams have said, it's not  
13 borough anymore but also a ferry that provide free  
14 services to also to millions of tourists. That they  
15 also come to the city and they use the ferry to go  
16 enjoy the nice view that they have when they go  
17 Staten Island, they come back from there.

18 Let's just say a station going through. As  
19 someone that you know used to be a teacher and used  
20 to be you know the chapter leader of my unit and in  
21 the school, I used to be the Chairman of Department.  
22 I also know that how important it is for our workers  
23 who have contract about this. The association that  
24 is going on and I hope again that we will get good  
25 results.

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2 AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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3 And I will pass it to you know to Paul to add  
4 other information when it comes to you know the  
5 challenges that we have had. That is not only about  
6 staffing, it's all the challenge about you know, as  
7 you know, through the walk that we had done you know  
8 with the ferry, with you and the other elected  
9 officials, borough president, we are so committed  
10 again as instructed by Mayor Adams to be sure that we  
11 look at the ferry's as a service. We know how  
12 important it is and we do the best we can to our  
13 ability.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Next,  
15 we'll have Council Member - if you could make it real  
16 tight because we pushed TLC back already.

17 PAUL OCHOA: Okay, I'm going to make it really  
18 tight. Council Member, just a quick technical note,  
19 I think on the things that we do control, we're  
20 working with DCAS on changing like title specs so  
21 that we can recruit more marine oilers for example,  
22 which is our critical part of our ferry operations  
23 and so, we are doing that. So, the things the things  
24 that we control we're pushing ahead trying to recruit  
25 more people for our Staten Island Ferry operations.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you.

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3 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, Council  
4 Member Restler.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Great, thank you so much  
6 Chair. Really appreciate your leadership. Always  
7 good to see you Commissioner. Thank you for your  
8 leadership and good to see my friend Deputy  
9 Commissioner Ochoa and I just wanted to firstly  
10 recognize the Brooklyn Borough Commissioner Keith  
11 Brey who does a great job and I really appreciate  
12 Keith, so thank you.

13 That's like such an organic round of applause for  
14 a government worker, a public official who works  
15 really hard. Keith responds to every email whether  
16 it be 6 a.m. or 11 o'clock at night. He really  
17 cares, so thank you Keith.

18 PAUL OCHOA: Stop emailing people at 6 a.m.  
19 please.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: He responds at 6 a.m.  
21 but I do email at all hours and I apologize. I'm  
22 trying to do more schedule send, I'm working on it so  
23 thank you for the feedback Paul.

24 I just briefly on staffing, we had a good back  
25 and forth on this last time Commissioner and I  
appreciate you all are trying but I just have to

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1  
2 underscore the data and the PMMR really is concerning  
3 to me. I'm very concerned about being down 42  
4 percent on bike lane installation in particular, bus  
5 lane miles are down significantly year over year,  
6 nearly 50 percent due to lack of available staffing.  
7 Do we have a plan to staff up and to get our bike and  
8 bus lane installation numbers back on track in the  
9 immediate future for safety purposes and I just ask  
10 for a brief answer because I'd like to shift gears.

11 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: The answer is yes. We're  
12 working to all our ability. Eric is the one who  
13 leads that division and we're confident that we will  
14 continue making a lot of progress. We get support  
15 from the Mayor, from the resources and Eric, if you  
16 would like to add something else.

17 ERIC BEATON: Good.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'd just want to say, I  
19 will block and tackle in District 33. I know many of  
20 my colleagues feel the same. If there's any ways  
21 that we can be stronger partners for you, let us  
22 know. We want to help. We want you to achieve these  
23 goals. We know you want to achieve these goals,  
24 please let me know if there's anything I can do. I'd

25

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1  
2 like now switch to our maybe least favorite topic or  
3 favorite topic; the three-letter word the BQE.

4 PAUL OCHOA: Oh, the time is up.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: One question then. I'll  
6 a three-part question for your Commissioner. Quick  
7 three part. I was too nice to keep - damn. One,  
8 Commissioner, do you personally as the progressive  
9 champion that you've always been, support keeping the  
10 triple cantilever two lanes in each direction? For  
11 environmental reasons and otherwise?

12 Two, could you comment on the feasibility of  
13 adding columns to the current structure of the triple  
14 cantilever? And three, the proposed temporary  
15 highways in the recent plans that have been released,  
16 I just want to confirm, would put a temporary bypass  
17 through Brooklyn Bridge Park. Could you just comment  
18 on those three? Thank you.

19 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: We will - Lincoln as you are  
20 of course that individual that share values. We know  
21 where our heart is and we know that we are also  
22 committed for the best of your district and the whole  
23 city. So, I'm going to be getting to the details, we  
24 are in the early process of the community engagement.  
25 Again, you are an important piece of this process.

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1  
2 You know as you know, we've been meeting with you and  
3 the other elected from the north. We've been meeting  
4 with the elected from the south. You know for the  
5 first time; you know this agency is investing \$25,000  
6 in 18 CBO's. That they are helping us with the  
7 community engagement. So, we know that you know that  
8 you know we hope the environmental study is starting  
9 soon but we just want to let the process to go  
10 through. The voices of the local Council Member of  
11 the community will be very important as we will  
12 decide the number of lanes with the structure.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Alright, you were  
14 punting on the BQE today, but I love you anyway. So,  
15 thank you for being with us and we look forward to  
16 continuing the conversation. Thank you Commissioner.

17 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you Council Member.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you Council  
19 Member. I'm going to go next to MWBE percentage.  
20 Please provide the Committee with the MWBE  
21 percentage. Excuse me, for DOT contracts for Fiscal  
22 2023 and the projection for a Fiscal 2024.

23 ERIC BEATON: Thank you for that question Council  
24 Member. I think one of the main things that the  
25 Commissioner first mentioned when I started at DOT

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1 was the importance of increasing our MWBE utilization  
2 rate. Not only is it creating good jobs but it's  
3 giving opportunities to Black and Brown minority  
4 owners.  
5

6 We are proud to say that we are surpassing our  
7 own goals. Year to date, we are above 50 percent  
8 higher than last year in terms of MWBE utilization  
9 rate. We're about \$107 million in current contracts  
10 and listen -

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Well, what's that  
12 percentages?

13 ERIC BEATON: About 20 percent year to date but  
14 we have four months left in the year, which means we  
15 are on target to meet our 27 percent target. As for  
16 next year, and I think Michael Gardner, who is the  
17 new Director of Mayor's Office of MWBE, has been very  
18 clear, the agencies expectation is 30 percent and  
19 that's what our goal is going to be for 2024.

20 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And the Mayor committed as you  
21 know that he wanted to see \$26 billion by 2025 going  
22 for women and minority. He was very clear, as Deputy  
23 Mayor Sheena Wright too and the new director. So, I  
24 feel that you know this is a commitment that is  
25 coming not only for myself as a Commissioner but it's

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1 also coming directly from the Mayor. And again  
2  
3 Chair, as we look at this number, this is going to be  
4 the year that we will be able to say what did we  
5 complete in a year, this administration. Because  
6 this year in the calendar year in '22 was a  
7 combination between whether the previous  
8 administration and the administration of LND but  
9 whatever we are sharing right now, show how we are  
10 moving the positive direction getting so far by this  
11 year having 20 percent already of the 30 percent that  
12 we want to accomplish of contract going to women and  
13 minority.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How many contracts  
15 were granted to women owned businesses and how many  
16 were granted to businesses owned by people of color?  
17 I just need the numbers.

18 ERIC BEATON: Okay, we have 178 total contracts,  
19 we have for White women 67 and then we have it broken  
20 down by 39 for African American, 41 for Hispanic and  
21 31 for Asian. So, just note that there maybe African  
22 American women, African American -

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Wait, 39 African  
24 American.

25 ERIC BEATON: Yes. 41 Hispanic.



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CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: 41 Hispanic.

ERIC BEATON: 67 White women, 31 Asian. These are 178 contracts.

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: 31 is Asian. Okay, and then uhm, how many contracts were granted to New York City based businesses and how many were granted to businesses located outside of New York City?

ERIC BEATON: Yeah, about uhm, about 50 percent are MWBE businesses in the city. About 30 percent are in New York State, just not in New York City.

And about -

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How much is in New York State?

ERIC BEATON: 30 percent.

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: 30 percent.

ERIC BEATON: And about 25 percent to in New Jersey.

CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay.

YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And one thing Chair that you know there is limitation that we have by the law on New York State. So, like we let's say we cannot say that all have to be from the city because you know you used to work in Port Authority and other agency

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1  
2 too, so the MWBE, anyone can apply from Jersey from  
3 upstate New York.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But you could  
5 prioritize the city.

6 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Well, we the city cannot deny  
7 anyone that apply from Jersey or looking for  
8 opportunity close to New York. However, with the new  
9 leadership of Michael Gardner, we know that we're  
10 going to be looking to you know go to the state and  
11 look on any other thing they also can do to be sure  
12 that also with the apprenticeship and other  
13 initiatives, that we also can create better condition  
14 for more women and minority to have more access to  
15 MWBE and to know how to navigate the system, and to  
16 get the support that they need in order to be able to  
17 do their job on time.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, I'm going to  
19 pivot to Vision Zero. How much funding will be  
20 allocated to Vision Zero work and the ten-year plan  
21 between Fiscal 2022 and Fiscal 2031?

22 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Just give me one second  
23 please.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay.  
25

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3 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Okay, let's help her to answer  
4 that.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Just the numbers.

6 JAIBALA PATEL: Sure, uhm, as the Commissioner  
7 stated in his testimony actually, our ten-year  
8 capital plan invests nearly \$4 billion in Vision Zero  
9 and our Expense budget invest an average of about  
10 \$250 million each year.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Will this  
12 funding be allocated equitably? Can you provide a  
13 breakdown of where Vision Zero funding will be spent  
14 by borough?

15 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Top priority. I guess you  
16 know like this is about, we follow data on crashes  
17 but also we have our own system on how we address  
18 equity and how we prioritize but Eric will also add a  
19 little bit more on the mechanism that we use.

20 ERIC BEATON: Sure, as the Commissioner said, we  
21 are always guided by the latest information on where  
22 crashes, serious injuries, fatalities are happening.  
23 So, I can't tell you in five years where those will  
24 be but on a year-by-year basis, we are guided by  
25 where that happens and that's on our day-to-day  
expense side.

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2 On the capital plan, again, it's easier to look  
3 back at where money has been spent. But you know  
4 we're happy to sort of I know this has come up  
5 before, we're happy to sort of work with you on what  
6 the right way to break this down would be.

7 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And Chair, we will follow with  
8 you. As you know, there's a new date in the city  
9 where this administration say, you know let's be sure  
10 that every community look for the lens of equity.  
11 And as you know that it is priority for Mayor Adams,  
12 for Speaker Adams, it is for you and for me. So, any  
13 opportunity to that we have, if there's any Council  
14 Member that feels that the voices that they need that  
15 they have in the community, has not been heard. More  
16 than happy to follow with you with that.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yes, I'll follow up  
18 on B77 street on the Mill Lane and on Beach Channel  
19 Drive where I'm looking for infrastructure  
20 improvements, where Davina Afokoba was killed by the  
21 vehicle.

22 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: That resurfacing is scheduled  
23 for this year. Thank first of all to bring it to our  
24 attention. You know as you know one of the things  
25 that I am doing is that I ensure that in every

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1 hearing that I have, I do the best I can to all my  
2 borough commissioners here. Because I also want to  
3 be sure that you know all of you Council Members, you  
4 know your local commissioner. You staff and our  
5 staff work very close.  
6

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, is it March or  
8 April?

9 JAIBALA PATEL: April, May.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: April, May good  
11 because I got - on my way here today I got a phone  
12 call about it. And then for Beach Channel, where  
13 Davina was killed with the vehicle infrastructure?

14 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Follow-

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Follow-up, okay.  
16 Okay, I'm going to yield to Council Member Won.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Hi everyone from DOT. Thank  
18 you so much Chair Selvena Brooks-Powers and thank you  
19 so much to the DOT team. My question is around how  
20 does the spending get determined from Department of  
21 Transportation since you're covering five boroughs  
22 and I know how busy you all are.

23 So, within each district, how do you determine or  
24 which districts get the funding to make the design  
25 changes? Because as you saw in my district, we just

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1 had another incident last night at a very busy  
2 intersection where we've had multiple injuries. Two  
3 teenagers were hit by a car. So, I'm just trying to  
4 understand, how does the funding model work on how  
5 you determine or triage which intersections that you  
6 choose to make changes to because I know that it is  
7 very costly.

9 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, Council Member first of  
10 all, thank you for inviting me and the rest of my  
11 team you know to be with you. Unfortunately in that  
12 moment with the family that lost that beautiful  
13 daughter, as my daughter, you know they're seven  
14 years old. And look, we got 44,000 intersections in  
15 the City of New York and I'll just say like, you know  
16 you heard from Eric Beaton who is a person to oversee  
17 everything on planning.

18 And I got to say that you know, I think that the  
19 four years that I spent sitting in that part of this  
20 you know the Council body and the last oh, four years  
21 I was a member of this Committee. And the last year,  
22 being the Chairman of this Committee. I think that  
23 give me, especially for me you know to understand  
24 that you know first of all, as I said before, I live  
25 in a community that you know is about the east and

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1 west or the northern Manhattan area. I know what it  
2 was you know to be in places where people say, we  
3 have not been heard. So, I think that is not only  
4 that there's direction from Mayor Adams Campaign; and  
5 he got elected with a mandate you know to address  
6 equity. And what we have seen it's about when he say  
7 get stuff done, he's not a joke. He really means it.  
8

9 And I know that all of you connected with him and  
10 what we are doing to be sure that every Council, the  
11 51 Council Districts get [INAUDIBLE 3:14:23-3:14:27].

12 So, you heard from everybody, we have a formula  
13 on how we make decision. We have a borough in each  
14 and we have a commissioner in each borough. But when  
15 I have my company meeting every week, we are around  
16 85 men and women who are leaders in this mission.

17 The only thing, the first thing that I address  
18 and they will be with me, is about let's be sure that  
19 whatever we do is addressing the need of every single  
20 community. So, I think that you heard the mechanism  
21 that we use but it's more than the mechanism, the  
22 formula that we use, it's about the determination of  
23 this administration to be sure that no community is  
24 left behind.

25

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Can you breakdown the actual  
4 formula for us, so that we can understand how each  
5 district within the district when I have hotspots  
6 where people continue to get mauled by cars. On how  
7 those changes are – how the investment determinations  
8 are made.

9 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, in 22<sup>nd</sup> and we never can  
10 predict where the crashing happen and we do follow in  
11 those intersections that are the more dangerous ones.  
12 So, on January 2022, we announced that we're going to  
13 be focusing on improvement on 1,000 intersection. We  
14 selected the most dangerous intersection based on  
15 police report. Based on Council Member calls, based  
16 on assessments that we did. That was one of the  
17 measures that we used.

18 The second thing that we also know is that you  
19 know unfortunately there's drivers you know that they  
20 involved in a crash because they have high level of  
21 alcohol and that's why I also need support. To  
22 support John the State Senator who is looking to  
23 reduce the level of alcohol to be reduced from 0.8 to  
24 0.5. That decision will allow the city to reduce ten  
25 percent of crashes. So, something that you support  
me and help me to. Allow for it to come out and say,



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1 we reduce this percentage of crashes but Eric can  
2 talk a little bit on the formula.  
3

4 ERIC BEATON: Sure and when we say formula, it  
5 doesn't mean that we you know rank every intersection  
6 from one to 44,000 and always go in order, right. We  
7 work closely with local communities. We know that  
8 there's feedback sometimes that doesn't show up in  
9 the data but what we start with is we look at  
10 fatalities but not just fatalities, we also focus on  
11 serious injuries as well, because we know that any  
12 serious injury could have been a fatality depending  
13 on you know the person and how it played out.

14 So, that's how we put together our Vision Zero  
15 Borough action plans, which identify the  
16 intersections, streets and areas that we think are  
17 most likely to have another serious injury or another  
18 fatality. And that's where we focus the vast  
19 majority of our work.

20 So, that's how we do things. You know it's  
21 always hard when there's a fatality that occurs at a  
22 location that was not on that list and then we go and  
23 make sure we look and see what you know what do we  
24 need to do at that location? And not just at that  
25 location but locations that are like that location.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Do you think there's  
3 something wrong with the current existing formula for  
4 determining which intersections get investment?  
5 Because you're pegging it on the amount of people who  
6 have died, so that means that your bench mark is a  
7 retrospective design saying that it is only at the  
8 after math of a death and injury that you will make  
9 investments, instead of preventing injuries to make  
10 sure that we don't have other hotspots.

11 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: No, we don't only do projects  
12 based on reacting. We do prevention. And the first  
13 thing that I said it's about we following the data.  
14 And the data is what we can accumulate as a result of  
15 police that they get report is the 311, is the  
16 Council Member that has identified which are the most  
17 dangerous intersection.

18 So, when we say last year that we're going to be  
19 raising the crosswalk, we have said let's focus on  
20 the most dangerous intersection. When we say let's  
21 really find the most dangerous intersection, let's  
22 address it, we follow those data and it's working.  
23 We've been reducing. But what I say, when someone is  
24 driving in high level of alcohol in their body and  
25 they hit someone, it doesn't matter where the

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2 intersection was unfortunately we cannot predict that  
3 to happen.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you so much  
5 Commissioner. I definitely support you and the state  
6 and I know that the many Council Members will be  
7 supporting you in lowering the threshold for alcohol  
8 levels in the body.

9 My last question before I turn it back to the  
10 Chair, is on Queens Borough Bridge. Could you give  
11 us the latest on the construction and when the South  
12 outer roadway will begin construction, the timeline  
13 and when it will open for pedestrian use?

14 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Yes, we will and the first  
15 thing that Eric was also addressing, like you know  
16 like one of the previous where we're doing the  
17 largest investment you know is needed. It has to  
18 been done in that area. So, we of course, we work  
19 with you. We are committed to address as you know  
20 the need that we have for the cyclist, for the  
21 pedestrian, but also, there's a I don't know -

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Yeah, we would just like a  
23 clear timeline because the funding that the budget  
24 that was allocated from the Manhattan Borough  
25 President, the Queens Borough President and Council

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1 Member, former Council Member Kallos and Van Bramer,  
2 I would like to know if the capital investments that  
3 have been made for procurement still remains the same  
4 or you need additional funds because of inflation and  
5 the recession?  
6

7 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Eric will add where we are.

8 ERIC BEATON: Yeah, I mean as we've discussed,  
9 like we feel very committed to turning that south  
10 outer roadway into the pedestrian path and really  
11 opening that up. We do need to complete that  
12 reconstruction work on the upper deck. We think that  
13 the schedule continues to be on target. The work  
14 will continue through 2023 as we've expected but we  
15 are making sure we get everything lined up so that we  
16 can open it you know as soon as we can afterwards.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So, what is the timeline?  
18 Can you give us at least the months of this year?

19 ERIC BEATON: Yeah, so we expect that the upper-  
20 level work will continue until the end of 2023 and  
21 then we should open the south outer roadway shortly  
22 after. So, probably in early '24.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So, now you're changing to  
24 early '24? Last time we spoke, you told me that it  
25

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3 will be open by late 2023 because it was promised to  
4 be open in 2022.

5 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: First of all, your  
6 administration, we did the assessment when we took  
7 this responsibility in the administration and we  
8 knew, we look at the – we knew that it was not  
9 accurate. The previous data was keeping the year and  
10 that's why we got back to you and the rest of the  
11 body and say, we're working to do it at the end of  
12 2023. We're working towards that goal.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Maybe you can just  
14 follow-up off line Council Member Won on that. I  
15 appreciate that. Just a few more questions. How  
16 much did DOT spend on New York City Streets Plan in  
17 the 2022 Calendar year. I just need the amount.

18 ERIC BEATON: Council Member give me a second to,  
19 a lot of the work that we do could be attributed to  
20 streets plan, so if you want like a dollar figure, we  
21 can put it together. I'm not sure I have it.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, while you're  
23 looking at that, I'll go to the next question. Uhm,  
24 what funding does New York City currently receive for  
25 the safe routes to schools program? What are the

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1 funding sources and what is the current status of  
2 that program?

3  
4 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: One thing that I you know and  
5 Eric can talk about what we're doing in preventing  
6 safety around the school but you know and this is  
7 important that we know because whatever we can share  
8 about the work that we have done, it is not only  
9 administration. It is the Council and the  
10 Administration working together. When you look about  
11 the Street Master Plan, right, you think about what  
12 we, when I was in Council including the Street Master  
13 Plan.

14 That Street Master Plan didn't include you know  
15 the open street. The Street Master Plan didn't  
16 include that someday they may open restaurants. So,  
17 there a number of things that we have done because of  
18 being innovating. Working together, the  
19 Administration and the Council that they've been  
20 added to that.

21 So, this is you know one thing, one approach that  
22 also want for us to look at it when you think about  
23 how much do we invest? You know when the Mayor  
24 Adams, like almost \$400 million. Most of the money,  
25 was going to places related to the Street Master

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1 Plan. It's about you know pedestrian plaza, it's  
2 about bike lanes, it's about bus lanes, it's about  
3 giving space on the street for pedestrian and  
4 cyclists.

5  
6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And if you're still  
7 looking I have another question.

8 ERIC BEATON: Okay, I can answer the first  
9 question.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay.

11 ERIC BEATON: So, on the expense budget, about  
12 half of the work that we do on the expense budget,  
13 can be attributed to streets plan. So, anywhere from  
14 \$600 million to \$700 million per year.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you and then in  
16 terms of the funding New York City receives for the  
17 safe routes to schools program? How much does like  
18 what is that funding in terms of the dollar amount?  
19 What are the funding sources? And what is the status  
20 of the current program? And while you're getting  
21 that, my final question because I want to be  
22 respectful of TLC because we already pushed them  
23 back, daylighting. I'd like to know what the cost of  
24 daylight for a single intersection on average costs?

25

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1  
2 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Let me let Paul look for the  
3 answer for the first one. Let me give you on the  
4 street daylighting. And as I said before Chair, you  
5 know when I was sitting there, I also was advocating  
6 for the street daylighting but the thing that I say,  
7 it's not a flat figure on the street lighting because  
8 it's not only to remove the car. It's about each  
9 corners have different need. And it's not only  
10 again, as you need more space you know for creating  
11 improved visibility.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Well, can you walk me  
13 through the different variations? So, like, for a  
14 street that has a planter versus a street that  
15 doesn't have a planter, today like that street, what  
16 would the cost be?

17 You know like, what are the different, I'm just  
18 trying to get an idea of what that costs.

19 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Eric can give you - I don't  
20 think again, there's no such a thing that say \$20,000  
21 on this. We added more, \$10,000 more. You know  
22 there's an assessment we got to do but Eric can also  
23 -

24 ERIC BEATON: Right, so I can speak in very round  
25 numbers, right and the individual intersection will



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1 be its own issue. But you know say an intersection  
2 where we need to put up a granite block and a few  
3 bike racks that we provide a physical intervention  
4 and people don't take the turn more sharply. You  
5 know that probably costs somewhere in the low five  
6 figures, \$10,000 to \$20,000 per location. We do want  
7 to make sure we're looking at each intersection  
8 individually as the Commissioner said. That we're  
9 not just stamping it out. But you know we do feel  
10 very strongly that we want to do it right. Like, the  
11 cost of just the no standing sign, is very low but we  
12 think that that has safety implications that we're  
13 not fully comfortable with. So, it's -

14  
15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Like, what's been the  
16 most amount of money you've spent on like daylighting  
17 a street?

18 ERIC BEATON: We'd have to check that and get  
19 back. You know past a certain point; we don't just  
20 call it daylighting right. We've done very large  
21 pedestrian expansions at intersections that get more  
22 expensive.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, but I mean I'm  
24 sure like in any like construction project, they have  
25 the different scopes and phases of the project.

1  
2 Like, so if you've done a full street, you can carve  
3 out like what it costs for that particular piece of  
4 it, I would imagine. No?

5 ERIC BEATON: You have to find where it ends but  
6 you know it probably, it goes up to the low is six  
7 figures but that's for a very deluxe treatment where  
8 we're doing a number of safety interventions at the  
9 location.

10 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: And Chair, with the other  
11 piece related to and of course any other details that  
12 we may have we'll follow with you with the street  
13 daylighting. We know that this is important for the  
14 speaker. This is important for you and this is a  
15 tool that you heard when I read my opening statement  
16 that we use in 2022 and it's about where do we use  
17 that tools. It's all related to thinking about what  
18 is the outcome that we can give when we do the street  
19 daylighting together with all the tools that we have  
20 but I'm more than happy, I know how important this is  
21 for you.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, you all opposing  
23 my legislation?

24 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: We will talk. Even again as I  
25 mentioned, there was many bills that you know that I

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1 had in front of me as a Chair, no Administration  
2 came. Even though they cannot support it as they  
3 were rating. It doesn't mean that there's no space  
4 open to continue a conversation. And we're going to  
5 be working with you as the leaders of this Committee  
6 on this and many other issues. So, I think that the  
7 approach that we have is about, we know that the  
8 street daylighting work and we had used it. It's  
9 about the flexibility that we thought that we should  
10 have but I'm more than happy to continue that  
11 conversation with you.  
12

13 With [INAUDIBLE 3:27:54] as I said before, I was  
14 the cofounder of the first school that we created for  
15 new, coming into for Latin American and I was 165 in  
16 Amsterdam and I was a cofounder of the Washington  
17 Heights Health Academy. Creating, making our streets  
18 safe for our students is a top priority for me. I  
19 advocated when I was there. I will continue  
20 advocating now.

21 In this year, we will be spending around \$300  
22 million to improve safety around the school. Which I  
23 want to put that clarity. When we talk about safe  
24 routes to school, it's not only about if we're  
25 improving safety in front of the school. It's about

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1  
2 improving safety in the surrounding, in the vicinity  
3 of the school. Like last year, we are announcing a  
4 press conference together where I challenge myself, a  
5 CBO that work with students afterschool program that  
6 we were really signing on to 190<sup>th</sup> Street as one or  
7 more than 100 projects that we have been doing across  
8 the city. So, we will continue making improving on  
9 the safe routes to school but the average investment  
10 is around \$300 million to fund this capital.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, it's \$300 million  
12 and what are the funding sources?

13 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Well, this is part of the  
14 capital plan. We have a \$37 billion for the ten year  
15 2023-2033.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, that's the only  
17 status. I mean, that's the only source?

18 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Like, when you think about,  
19 this is the source that we have identified, the  
20 Administration and the body you know when it comes to

21 -

22 ERIC BEATON: Chair, we also have state and  
23 federal support for this type of work. So, we do  
24 gets some grant funding, grant formula funding for  
25 this type of work that we can plug into projects.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, sorry. I'm sorry  
3 because TLC is on their way up and I again, want to  
4 just be respectful of the time. So, with the \$300  
5 million, is that just from the capital plan? How  
6 much is it from the state? How much is it from the  
7 feds? Like, what's the full picture?

8 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: We can get back to you with a  
9 breakdown. The vast majority of the investment is  
10 part of the capital budget \$33 billion that the  
11 Administration and the Council dedicated to DOT for  
12 2023-2033. There's other source of funding at the  
13 state level, most of those are grants that we've been  
14 able to get some funding but the vast majority is  
15 part of the Capital budget that we have for ten year  
16 of \$33 billion.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, let me just  
18 follow up with like the breakdown of that and also  
19 the current status of the program. That would be  
20 great.

21 ERIC BEATON: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And I know there's  
23 one last question. One final, final question from  
24 Council Member Narcisse.

25

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3 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you. It's always  
4 a pleasure to see you Commissioner. In terms of the  
5 ferry transportation for the southeast of Brooklyn,  
6 specifically Canarsie area. Is that anyway in your  
7 plan that you can see that happen?

8 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: First of all, Council Member  
9 it was a great honor to be working in your district  
10 and as I was even checking with my Brooklyn Borough  
11 Commissioner, and this is how you know we're working  
12 in this Administration. You take me through areas  
13 together with senior citizens. We identify that they  
14 were not safe. As you saw one of those was the exit  
15 for the parking garage. I say this afternoon, we  
16 will put the sign back. We did it. We're working  
17 with the NYPD to be sure that there's enforcement.  
18 Thank you for your leadership and we're more than  
19 happy to continue working with you.

20 With the ferry, it's not in our portfolio, so  
21 it's under EDC, the agency that oversees but more  
22 than happy to follow with you and connect also with  
23 EDC.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Yeah, because I would  
25 love to see that happen and thank you for coming.  
Thank you for taking your time.

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1  
2 And MWBE, when I was listening as I was over  
3 there, what is the percentage? I didn't collect the  
4 percentage of the Black community in that pile. I  
5 think I heard 67 percent for White women, something  
6 like that. Maybe I'm wrong, I didn't hear, so can  
7 you repeat that for me again?

8 PAUL OCHOA: Yes, Council Member it was 67  
9 contracts of 170. The numbers are for Fiscal 2023  
10 and again, this is year to date, so we have a couple  
11 months left. So, we have \$15 million for African  
12 American contracts, \$17 million for Hispanic  
13 contracts, \$42 million for Asian Americans and then  
14 \$32 million for White women.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Alright. Uhm, thank  
16 you for that but we're going to have to narrow the  
17 gap trying to be more inclusive and make sure that we  
18 have more Black and Brown communities getting.  
19 That's how we address inequities by the way. And for  
20 that I'm always having a problem with that. It's  
21 always the pavement. You do it like this year, in  
22 two years later. They already have so much potholes  
23 in them and then now with the [INAUDIBLE 3:33:08] and  
24 everything else, I know is more difficult but can we  
25

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1  
2 get contractors that can actually our road can last a  
3 little longer?

4 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: I'm more than happy to like as  
5 I say, we have a great you know roadway director  
6 arena who work as I said with 1200 men and women.  
7 You know as you go through the BQE, look at that side  
8 what DOT has and the one in Queens, we produce like  
9 we have the only seat I think that we produce 50  
10 percent of the asphalt in our city.

11 So, we're always looking for improved quality.  
12 As I say one of the things that I think I want to  
13 speak at the global news more than even the city.  
14 That last year, under her leadership, we tried and  
15 we've been working with some professors from the  
16 University where we are mixing plastic in order to  
17 recycle to turn it as asphalt.

18 You know one of the great things that also we  
19 should know that DOT is one of those that recycle the  
20 most in the City of New York. You know as you see  
21 those trucks sometimes. People will have opinions  
22 because the street will also be closed. That  
23 material that we reserve is coming back to the plans  
24 and we recycle and use it as the asphalt. But one of  
25 the things also we should know, someone like you and



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1 I that is coming from the Caribbean, we don't have  
2 great weather the whole year. We have four different  
3 stations. Even though we have a great day, nice  
4 weather today but let's be careful what we ask  
5 because the great weather that we have today is a  
6 signal of climate change. So, I think that it's also  
7 the weather but we're always trying to figure on how  
8 we can improve the quality.

9  
10 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you so much and  
11 thank you Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Thank you  
13 Commissioner and to your team for your testimony and  
14 participation today.

15 YDANIS RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

16 [3:35:02-3:38:53]

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: If everyone can please find  
18 their seats, we are beginning shortly. Thank you.

19 [3:38:57-3:39:36]

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Once again, if everyone can  
21 please find your seats, we are beginning shortly.

22 [3:39:41-3:39:55]

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and I will quickly  
24 swear you in. So, our next panel is from TLC. We're  
25 joined by Commissioner David Do and by Deputy

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3 Commissioner Evan Hines. If you could raise your  
4 right hands, I will now administer the oath. Do you  
5 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing  
6 but the truth before this Committee and to respond  
7 honestly to Council Member questions?

8 PANEL: I do.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may begin.

10 DAVID DO: Good afternoon Chair Brooks-Powers.  
11 It's good to see you and the members of the  
12 Committee, including Councilwoman Narcisse. Thank  
13 you for inviting me to update you on the TLC's  
14 Preliminary 2024 budget. It's a pleasure to be here.

15 I am joined today by our Deputy Commissioner for  
16 Operations, People and Innovation Evan Hines. Before  
17 I talk to you about our recent efforts to ensure the  
18 safe and timely delivery of more than one million for  
19 hire trips per day, I would like to thank this  
20 Committee for the tremendous support it has shown for  
21 one of TLC's most popular programs, the Medallion  
22 Relief Program.

23 Back in October, when I last had the privilege of  
24 briefing you in person, MRP had provided just over  
25 \$240 million in debt relief to eligible medallion  
owners, many of them hardworking drivers.

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3 Committee members, I am happy to inform you that  
4 this number is now almost \$370 million. This has  
5 transformed lives, brought hope to individuals and  
6 families that were being crushed by predatory loans  
7 and runaway debt. It has been nothing short of a  
8 lifeline for an entire sector of our industry.

9 The support of this Committee and this  
10 administration, the New York Taxi Workers Alliance,  
11 and private sector firms like Marblegate and PenFed,  
12 have brought meaningful relief to almost 1700  
13 medallion owners. Thanks to this and other efforts,  
14 the taxi sector continues to recover.

15 Taxi trip volumes are now about half of what they  
16 were before the pandemic, over a 1,000 percent  
17 increase from their pandemic low point, and trip  
18 volumes continue to grow as taxis and drivers return.  
19 Almost 8,000 taxis were in service in December, the  
20 highest number since before the pandemic, and nearly  
21 four times the pandemic low point. We continue to  
22 see recovery in other sectors as well, with black car  
23 and livery trips at 64 percent of pre-pandemic  
24 levels, and high-volume Uber & Lyft trips up at 88  
25 percent.

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3 The city's efforts to regulate minimum driver pay  
4 have been integral to these recoveries. Drivers  
5 should not be overextending themselves behind the  
6 wheel to keep up with rising expenses and the profit  
7 demands of app companies. In such a working  
8 environment, a safe and healthy industry is possible.

9 When it passed a Local Law in 2018 directing TLC  
10 to regulate minimum driver pay standards, the City  
11 Council did the right thing. As the Committee knows,  
12 in December TLC raised the taximeter rates of fare  
13 for the first time in over ten years. As a result,  
14 drivers are now able to weather increased inflation  
15 and operating costs.

16 So far, we have seen no significant impact on  
17 trip numbers. During the same month TLC also voted  
18 to raise the minimum driver pay for Uber and Lyft  
19 drivers. Uber, however, immediately sued to block  
20 this increase. We fought them in court and the judge  
21 ruled that we needed to provide a more detailed  
22 explanation. So we did exactly that. We introduced  
23 a new rule increasing the minimum driver pay,  
24 providing significantly more background on our  
25 calculations, just like the judge had asked.

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1  
2 Yesterday, the Commission voted unanimously to pass  
3 that rule. We get stuff done.

4 We sincerely hope that there will be no more  
5 attempts to interfere with this much needed pay  
6 adjustment, and we will continue to regulate driver  
7 pay in a way that ensures that our industry is  
8 healthy, humane, and sustainable. Sustainable also  
9 means doing our part to reduce carbon emissions. We  
10 will soon be releasing 1000 EV licenses for the first  
11 time in two years.

12 This will help encourage development of the  
13 city's charging infrastructure and they are just the  
14 beginning of a broad initiative that Mayor Adams laid  
15 out in his State of the City Address. The full  
16 electrification of city's high volume fleet Uber and  
17 Lyft by 2030.

18 As the Mayor stated in his address, Uber and Lyft  
19 share this goal with TLC. We're working on the  
20 specifics and will be announcing more details of this  
21 plan very soon.

22 Over the last year, TLC has also been working  
23 diligently on perennial, ongoing missions, such as  
24 increasing accessibility. We share this committee's  
25 commitment to increase accessibility. Last year, we

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1 added more than 1300 wheelchair accessible vehicles  
2 to our taxi fleet, while our high-volume wheelchair  
3 accessible vehicle fleet increased by more than a  
4 third, to 4,000.  
5

6 TLC leads the nation by requiring 80 percent of  
7 Uber and Lyft WAV trips to be completed within 15  
8 minutes or less. Approximately 90 percent of FHV  
9 Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle trips requested through  
10 Uber and Lyft, had a wait time of ten minutes or  
11 less. We will continue building up our accessible  
12 fleet and ensuring that accessible vehicles are  
13 dispatched to those in need quickly as any other for  
14 hire ride.

15 We will also keep supporting our partners in  
16 transportation at the MTA, which runs the Access-A-  
17 Ride program. Our role is limited to the fact that  
18 the MTA uses TLC licensed drivers and vehicles to  
19 fulfill some Access-A-Ride requests.

20 This is done through brokers and private apps  
21 that dispatch to TLC licensed vehicles. We do not  
22 regulate these drivers as they relate to the MTA  
23 program, but TLC is always here to support our  
24 partners in transportation, and I have met with Chris  
25 Pangilinan, Vice President for MTA Accessibility

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1  
2 several times in the last months to help MTA reach  
3 its goals in providing better service to its  
4 customers.

5 Increased accessibility is a never-ending  
6 mission, as is our mission to improve driver,  
7 passenger and pedestrian safety. As a Vision Zero  
8 agency, we work with DOT, NYPD, and advocacy groups  
9 to raise awareness of how to drive safely in our  
10 city. Per miles driven, TLC drivers continue to be  
11 the city's safest drivers and safety is a primary  
12 component of TLS driver training and licensing. We  
13 recently participated in both the Dusk and Darkness  
14 campaign and the annual holiday awareness events.

15 We continue to enforce fatigued driving rules,  
16 which were designed to increase safety by warning  
17 drivers and bases when their schedules exceed 10  
18 hours in any 24 hour period, and more than 60 hours  
19 in a calendar week.

20 If they continue to violate rules, they can be  
21 issued a summons. I know this Committee, like my  
22 agency, also supports the safe operation of commuter  
23 vans, which play a vital role in our city's  
24 transportation ecosystem. We support the legislation  
25 in Albany, allowing commuter vans to accept street

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1 hails, and we continue to facilitate dialogue between  
2 state officials, van operators, and insurance  
3 industry representatives to establish safer and more  
4 economical commuter van operations.  
5

6 Now, I would like to share with you our  
7 preliminary budget for Fiscal Year '24. TLC's total  
8 expense budget for 2024 is \$51.3 million. The budget  
9 reflects a vacancy reduction of \$3.8 million for 56  
10 positions. TLC's share of the citywide program to  
11 eliminate the gap authorized headcount for Fiscal  
12 Year 2024 is now 505.

13 Our top goal is to recruit and train new  
14 enforcement cadets after being unable to hire a full  
15 class of new officers over the past three years. We  
16 are actively recruiting for more enforcement cadets  
17 and we will continuing hiring new officers in the  
18 coming year. TLC is working closely with OMB to  
19 navigate citywide limitations on hiring and meet our  
20 staffing needs by backfilling critical positions.

21 In summary, as TLC continues to stabilize the  
22 city's for hire transportation industry, prioritize  
23 driver wellbeing, and honor our core missions of  
24 safety, equity and accessibility, we are looking  
25 towards a better future. One in which the world is



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1 not only reversing humanities effect on global  
2 warming but one in which this agency has directly  
3 contributed to a more livable and enjoyable city.

4 Thank you for this opportunity to share TLC's work.

5 I would like to thank my fellow commissioners at the  
6 TLC for their dedication and public service.

7  
8 Chair, I'm happy to answer any questions that you  
9 may have.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so much and  
11 congratulations on voting for the Uber raise. I know  
12 it was a journey there and it was definitely wanted  
13 and as someone who was an organizer through the site  
14 for 15 and organized alongside the drivers, I know  
15 it's something that was needed in terms of increase  
16 in the wage, so thank you for that.

17 DAVID DO: Sure.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, before we begin,  
19 the Committee may not get to all of the questions or  
20 you may not have responses, so we will send a follow-  
21 up letter for any unanswered questions okay.

22 DAVID DO: Of course.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The effect of COVID-  
24 19 on the for-hire industry. The COVID-19 pandemic  
25 devastated the taxi cab industry in 2020.

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3 Tragically, there was a 66 percent decline in the  
4 number of drivers on the streets in December 2020  
5 when compared to 2019 before the pandemic.

6 TLC reported at the Fiscal 2022 Preliminary  
7 Budget hearing that it anticipated a return of active  
8 vehicle as the city began to reopen. However, the  
9 total number of unique vehicles have not fully  
10 recovered to pre-pandemic levels. For example, the  
11 number of unique yellow taxi's on the road in  
12 November 2022 declined 32 percent when compared to  
13 pre-pandemic November 2019.

14 How is the for-hire industry fairing in 2023?  
15 What do you attribute this decline if it's a decline  
16 in the number of unique vehicles to?

17 DAVID DO: Yeah, so Council Member, the TLC has  
18 been working incredibly hard on various programs to  
19 get driver's back on the road to get vehicles out of  
20 storage. And ensure a better industry as a whole.  
21 Let me give you some numbers Council Member. First  
22 and foremost, our MRP program has helped stabilize  
23 the industry and has brought out thousands of  
24 medallions that have previously been in storage.

25 In addition, what we have seen is that now there  
are 8,000 medallions operating on our city streets on

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1 a regular basis. We also see over 75,000 for-hire  
2 vehicles operating on high volume platforms and  
3 another about 25,000 on other platforms. And so, the  
4 industry is recovering.  
5

6 For the yellow industry, we're at about 50  
7 percent recovery or about a little over 100,000 trips  
8 per day and in a month, three million plus. We also  
9 know that high volume for hire companies are 90  
10 percent recovered. Those are let's say Uber and Lyft  
11 and there are about 20 million trips per month. And  
12 then the traditional for-hire vehicle sector is about  
13 67 percent recovered and about 1.2 million trips per  
14 month.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Does TLC  
16 anticipate that the for-hire industry will recover to  
17 the pre-pandemic levels at all?

18 DAVID DO: You know I can't forecast the future  
19 Council Member but we will continue to work with the  
20 industry and to work with anyone who is willing to  
21 get us back to pre-pandemic levels. But as you know,  
22 we've increased for the first time in ten years the  
23 meter rate of increase for taxi drivers, and we have  
24 worked on making sure that driver pay is realized and  
25 it has been realized as of yesterday. And so, that

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1  
2 is going to contribute to our recovery. It is our  
3 intention that you know one of the things is first  
4 Lively Street Hill industry is the street that  
5 vehicles are there when customers want it and so, our  
6 goal with various programs including MRP, including  
7 raising the meter rate, is to get more vehicles on  
8 the road to serve customers. And so, if and when a  
9 customer sticks out their hand for a yellow taxi, it  
10 will be available for them.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And what support is  
12 being offered to drivers who are no longer able to  
13 work because of COVID-19? How many drivers who left  
14 the industry have found new jobs and how many are now  
15 unemployed? Is TLC tracking those numbers?

16 DAVID DO: Council Member, we don't track  
17 specific numbers once they leave the TLC's industry.  
18 But what I can tell you is that we provide support  
19 services for our drivers at the owner driver resource  
20 center. Beit financial assistance, mental health  
21 assistance, tax assistance or otherwise. Our ODRC is  
22 a component of the agency that serves drivers and  
23 that's what we'll continue to do.

24 We also have other services including external  
25 affairs that goes out to communities that provides

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3 direct services. And so, uhm, we are providing any  
4 and all services that drivers need.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, I want to pivot  
6 to the uhm, the Medallion Relief Program. The  
7 Medallion Relief Program provides medallion owners  
8 with \$20,000 grants to help restructure loan  
9 principals and set low monthly payments as well as up  
10 to \$9,000 for monthly debt relief payments. In  
11 Fiscal 2023, \$119.4 million was allocated to this  
12 program in fiscal, yeah, sorry in Fiscal 2023. No  
13 new funding was added in Fiscal 2024. Can you please  
14 provide an update on the Medallion Relief Program?

15 DAVID DO: Yes Council Member. So, first and  
16 foremost, thank you so much to the Committee for  
17 their assistance with the Medallion Relief Program  
18 and I also want to thank all the team members at the  
19 Taxi and Limousine Commission that has helped get  
20 this program to a reality.

21 We have helped over 1,700 medallion owners and  
22 1,900 medallion's get modified. What that means is  
23 that uhm, we have saved drivers and helped them get  
24 out from under a mountain of debt of \$370 million.  
25 Our team also won the Haze Innovation Award for this  
just last week and I want to give a shout out to both

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1  
2 Cindy Davison and Ashley for all their hard work on  
3 this program, and also all the TLC team. This is a  
4 collective award. It wasn't just two people. It was  
5 a whole agency that went behind this and we have  
6 achieved a lot in a short, in a few short months.

7 And so, that's where we are. We'll continue to  
8 get every medallion owner who wants to participate in  
9 this program into this program, and we have been  
10 outreaching and getting additional lenders onboard.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. How many  
12 drivers have been effected by the program?

13 DAVID DO: 1,700 medallion owners Council Member.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Is there remaining  
15 funding left from Fiscal 2023?

16 DAVID DO: Yeah, so how the program works is that  
17 it's a contract right that we partner and we provide  
18 various grants. There's about \$33 million left for  
19 grants within the program, and that can help an  
20 additional 1,100 medallion owners.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Is there a remaining,  
22 excuse me, so will the funding or can funding that  
23 was not spent in 2023, be rolled into 2024?

24 DAVID DO: Yeah, so it will be available for  
25 drivers. The additional \$33 million will be rolled

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1 over to Fiscal Year '24 and will be available to  
2 drivers to provide additional grant assistance to  
3 them.  
4

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: While I'm on the  
6 Medallion Relief Program, because this has come up in  
7 some conversations with the advocates around the  
8 yellow taxi cabs, and while the city is now investing  
9 in this way to try and save the medallion owners,  
10 when we talk about congestion pricing, uhm, they're  
11 concerned about obviously what that means for their  
12 industry further putting a burden on them, especially  
13 with the fact that they pay a form of congestion  
14 pricing now. And so, just wanting to understand like  
15 the TLC's position as they are working to uhm, be  
16 kind of carved out of the congestion pricing program  
17 because the city, we have now invested, so you know  
18 if that industry fails, we fail and we tank the money  
19 that we've invested at that point. So, I'm  
20 interested in understanding the TLC's position on  
21 that.

22 DAVID DO: Definitely, so like I have talked not  
23 only to this Committee but also to the MTA, is that  
24 the taxi industry and the for-vehicle industry as a  
25 whole, has paid over \$1.75 billion to the MTA with

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1 surcharges of \$0.50 of \$2.75 on the for-hire vehicle  
2 side and \$2.50 on the yellow taxi side. And so, they  
3 have contributed a lot.  
4

5 In the last Fiscal Year for the state alone, they  
6 have contributed \$400 million. And so, what I have  
7 asked is that I don't want to get ahead of the MTA  
8 and the Traffic Review Mobility Board, but I want - I  
9 ask them to consider the contributions that have been  
10 provided by this industry already.

11 Again, that is going to be a policy decision that  
12 both the MTA and the Traffic Review Mobility Board  
13 does but we are closely watching that.

14 In addition, I also want to pull out something  
15 from the MTA's report itself and that it says that  
16 the for-hire vehicle industry, both taxi and for-hire  
17 vehicles are an environmental justice group. Which  
18 will be disproportionately impacted by congestion  
19 pricing and I'll leave it at that Council Member.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for that.  
21 Uhm, the medallion values. As of March 2020, TLC  
22 reported that the value of medallions on the  
23 secondary market were around \$200,000. And that 279  
24 medallions were exchanged in Fiscal 2020. What is  
25 the current value of the medallions and how many



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1 medallions have been exchanged in Fiscal 2022 and  
2 Fiscal 2023.

3  
4 DAVID DO: Council Member, so the TLC doesn't  
5 track or doesn't suggest a price for medallions.  
6 What we do track is what the medallions trade for,  
7 right. And so, medallions in the last month for  
8 example, of February of 2022, have traded anywhere  
9 between \$85,000 to upwards of \$225,000.

10 In Fiscal Year '23 to date, there have been about  
11 538 medallions that have traded hands and in Fiscal  
12 Year '22, almost 1,200 medallions were transferred.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Uhm,  
14 according to OMB for the current fiscal year, TLC saw  
15 an attrition of 56 full time employees. How many new  
16 hires has your agency added during the current fiscal  
17 year?

18 DAVID DO: So, we have added – so I guess Council  
19 Member, I'll give a big picture of where we are. Uh,  
20 and so, I think we are going to work on fulfilling  
21 those 56 vacancies. And most of them, we're working  
22 through various ways of doing that. Working with  
23 DCAS, working with OMB and we have been able to  
24 accomplish all of our hiring needs within the last  
25 year to fill those positions.

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1  
2 In the calendar year so far, we have filled three  
3 out of the 56 vacancies and so, our vacancy rate so  
4 far right now is at 53.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, the vacancy rate  
6 is at 53 right now?

7 DAVID DO: Yeah, so it's decreased by three and  
8 we'll continue working on that.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Now, have the new  
10 hires been in the areas that you saw the attrition?  
11 Or are those three hires somewhere else?

12 DAVID DO: Yeah, so it's all across the agency.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Uhm, I want to pin it  
14 to MWBE participation. Please provide the committee  
15 with the MWBE percentages for the TLC contracts for  
16 Fiscal 2023 and the projection for Fiscal 2024.

17 DAVID DO: Yeah, so the TLC is very proud of the  
18 fact is that we contribute to our MWBE goals to our  
19 communities, local communities, communities of color  
20 and women owned businesses. In the last year, our  
21 goal was about 45 percent and we have exceeded it at  
22 48 percent.

23 Currently for this fiscal year, it's about 31.5  
24 percent but I suspect or I know, and I've told my  
25

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1  
2 team as much, is that we will not only exceed but  
3 meet the Fiscal Year '22 numbers.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Well, I will say I  
5 love hearing that it's a 45 percent instead of a  
6 measly 30 percent.

7 DAVID DO: We're going to get there, yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How many contracts  
9 were granted to New York City base businesses and how  
10 many uhm were granted to businesses located outside  
11 of New York City?

12 DAVID DO: Uhm, so, I'll give you the New York  
13 base number Council Member. 157 year to date and in  
14 Fiscal Year '22 it was 138. So, we've increased the  
15 way we work with local small businesses and we'll  
16 continue to do that. 26 of those were women owned  
17 and 46 were owned by people of color.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: 26 women and how many  
19 of color?

20 DAVID DO: 46 people of color, businesses owned  
21 by people of color, excuse me.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And that's out of the  
23 157 or out of the 138?

24 DAVID DO: Uh, that's out of the 157.  
25

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1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And the balance of  
3 that makeup is?

4 DAVID DO: A variety of different businesses. I  
5 can get those numbers to you.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Hmm, hmm.

7 DAVID DO: But if I can, in Fiscal Year '22, we  
8 awarded 44 percent of our MWBE contracts to  
9 Hispanics, 30 percent to White females.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Sorry, can you just  
11 slow down and start that over?

12 DAVID DO: 44 percent to Hispanic owned  
13 businesses, 30 percent White female owned businesses,  
14 14 percent to Asian owned business and 13 percent to  
15 Black owned businesses.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Uhm, I know the state  
17 did this value study a couple years ago and then the  
18 Port Authority had followed it and sorry to speak  
19 about MWBE participation through the lens of  
20 diversity within diversity and I definitely encourage  
21 TLC to look at that also because we find that across  
22 the board, Black in particular businesses are often  
23 one of the least utilized businesses.

24 So, I would love to see in TLC an action plan on  
25 how do you pull up the Black and the Asian firms that

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1 are two of the lowest participants as of right now.

2 So, in future hearings, it will be great to hear a  
3 report on what that progress looks like.

4  
5 DAVID DO: Yeah, definitely, you have my  
6 commitment to expand our MWBE goals but also to get a  
7 more diverse group of businesses within the  
8 businesses that we contract with and you'll see  
9 definitely a change in the next year.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And then I just will  
11 end my line of questions. I'm not sure my colleagues  
12 have any questions but I wanted to spend a few  
13 moments on the paratransit partnership that TLC has  
14 with the MTA. Uhm, we had the MTA here earlier. We  
15 also spoke about it. There's also a chance that New  
16 York City will be taking on 100 percent of the  
17 paratransit service and we've heard feedback from  
18 constituents that it had been pretty successful and  
19 welcome that people were able to like, as they need  
20 it, transportation to call it from the disability  
21 community. And while it did not work for everyone,  
22 there was a good population that it didn't work for.

23 Also, the Yellow taxi cab industry has been  
24 struggling and like when we first met, you talked  
25 about ways that our TLC drivers were able to pivot

1 during the pandemic to do other things, like  
2 delivering food and what have you and showing the  
3 flexibility was able keep that industry afloat. And  
4 so, as we look to be creative and ensure that that  
5 industry remains viable, I'm interested in knowing  
6 what it would take to expand that program from your  
7 vantage point with the yellow taxi cabs. Because I  
8 understand about 50 percent of the fleet at a minimum  
9 is already handicap accessible.  
10

11 DAVID DO: It's close to that of the active fleet  
12 Council Member.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Hmm, hmm, so I'm  
14 interested in your take on that on what the expansion  
15 would take, what the cost would be. Is it something  
16 that you could see as being feasible with the MTA's  
17 by in?

18 DAVID DO: So, first and foremost, let me say  
19 that accessibility is incredibly important goal.  
20 There's always work to be done. Only 7,100 of our  
21 vehicles so far are accessible. And so, that tells  
22 us that we have more to do. 3,100 taxis are WAV  
23 accessible and then about 4,000 for hire vehicles.  
24 But let me say is that the TLC is a regulator and we  
25 don't provide transportation options but we're more

1  
2 than willing to work with our state partners in the  
3 MTA to work with them to get what they need to expand  
4 the Access-A-Ride program. But again, we're not  
5 equipped to do that program. How we can help is if  
6 they need more vehicles, we'll contact, we'll work  
7 with them to look at ways of how to increase the  
8 number of vehicles that are part of the Access-A-Ride  
9 program or the pilot that residents are so - that  
10 residents use.

11 Uhm, so I guess in conclusion in all of this, is  
12 that it is something that we are not equipped to  
13 provide but definitely willing to work with the MTA  
14 on.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And I imagine that  
16 you advocate for the drivers. So, this is something  
17 that you know would you see yourself advocating for  
18 an expansion or utilization of the driver's for this?

19 DAVID DO: Yeah, so you know we'll work with the  
20 MTA. I know that we have 175,000 drivers but when it  
21 gets to the MTA they have their own licensing  
22 requirements including random drug testing and other  
23 things that they need to do before they meet the  
24 criteria of what they have to do in order to  
25 participate within the MTA Access-A-Ride program.

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1  
2 And so, again, I've met with Chris over at the MTA on  
3 a regular basis and we'll think outside of the box  
4 and be creative on how to work together to improve  
5 Access-A-Ride.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Uhm, and so the  
7 current program that existed, the pilot program that  
8 included the Uber drivers. How did that relationship  
9 happen and what is the TLC's role in that.

10 DAVID DO: Yeah, so I don't know if - so I know  
11 that the for-hire vehicles as a whole can participate  
12 within the program but some of the brokered services  
13 like Uber is not one of the broker services or Lyft  
14 is not one of the broker services, but various basis  
15 like let's say Arrow and some of the other Access-A-  
16 Ride brokers can dispatch trips to anyone of our  
17 100,000 for hire vehicles.

18 Again, that is requirements not only set by the  
19 federal government at the FTA, but also that as an  
20 entity that follows the federal governments rules and  
21 regulations, MTA has to follow those. And so, in  
22 order to be consistent, I think that we need to make  
23 sure that uh, the MTA has all it needs both on  
24 following FTA guidelines and otherwise to fulfill  
25 their transportation needs for Access-A-Ride users.



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3 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I'm going  
4 to now yield to my colleague Council Member Narcisse.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Good afternoon  
6 Commissioner.

7 DAVID DO: Good afternoon.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: In an honest opinion I  
9 think when I spoke to you, when we met I thought you  
10 meant business. You're a cool dude and I appreciate  
11 that.

12 DAVID DO: I appreciate that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: The work you do. Yeah,  
14 and you know yellow cabs, all taxis is what fed me as  
15 a young person. My father was a cab driver. So, in  
16 the breakdown of MWBE, I got the percentage. Can you  
17 break that down in terms of dollars? Because I see  
18 13 percent for Black, 14 for Asian, 30 for White and  
19 uhm, I think 44 or something.

20 DAVID DO: So, uh Council Member, we don't have  
21 that broken down but could I provide that for you  
22 right after the hearing?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Sure.

24 DAVID DO: I'm sorry.  
25

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1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you and in the  
3 driver part, what's the total number of medallion  
4 owners that you have now?

5 DAVID DO: So, there are 13,585 medallions in  
6 total and that's broken down to a variety of  
7 different owners, both big owners and small owners  
8 that own only one. And so, it's you know there is a  
9 whole gamut across the board of owners but you know  
10 obviously there are big fleets and then there are  
11 those owners that small businesses that we work with  
12 to try to help, especially if they do need it with  
13 the MRP+ program.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you. And the  
15 1,700 of the medallion owners that get the relief can  
16 you break that down into how much each receive  
17 approximately?

18 DAVID DO: Yeah, so a majority of them own just  
19 one medallion Council Member and there's some that  
20 own up to six. But I guess to put that in context  
21 Council Member, is that a lot of these owners had  
22 debts of almost 750,000 at the peak of the medallion  
23 prices. This program is able to not only give the  
24 driver or owner a grant of \$30,000 but brings down  
25 that debt from \$750,000 at the most, all the way down

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1 to \$170,000 and our goal was to get drivers to a  
2 payment of \$1,234 per medallion. And what that means  
3 is that you know, it's a city back guarantee and so  
4 their primary residents can no longer be taken by the  
5 bank. It means their personal car can't be taken.  
6 It means all the things that they built with this  
7 medallion, can't be taken except for the medallion.  
8

9 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Uhm, I'm not going to  
10 ask you any further questions but one thing I want to  
11 say that this industry have to remain viable and I'm  
12 counting on you like you said, you promised because  
13 this is kind of personal and I know there's many  
14 young folks like myself that depend on that to go to  
15 school, for their house, to have a roof over their  
16 head and their families to thrive through that. And  
17 they lost so much and I appreciate; you came at the  
18 right time, so please continue pushing for that  
19 industry. Thank you.

20 DAVID DO: Thank you so much Council Member.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. No further  
22 questions.

23 DAVID DO: Alright, thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you.

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3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We'll take a brief pause and  
4 then we're going to move onto public testimony.  
5 [4:17:14-4:22:13]. Okay, we will now turn to public  
6 testimony. Each panelist will be given two minutes  
7 to speak. For panelists testifying in person, please  
8 come to the dais as your name is called and wait for  
9 your turn to speak.

10 For panelists, if you are testifying remotely,  
11 once your name is called, a member of our staff will  
12 unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms will give you the  
13 go ahead to begin. Please wait for the Sergeant to  
14 announce that you may begin before delivering  
15 testimony. Okay, so we'll now call up our first  
16 panel. I'd like to welcome David Jones, Jean Ryan,  
17 Lisa Daglian and Eric McClure. [4:22:50-4:24:12].  
18 Okay, Mr. Jones, you may begin.

19 DAVID JONES: Well, I thank the Council for  
20 letting me speak. I'm David Jones and I am President  
21 and CEO of the Community Services Society.  
22 Essentially, we're one of the oldest charities in the  
23 city or in the country, 175 years old. And we're  
24 aiming at helping low-income communities and first  
25 the City of New York, now most recently statewide.

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3 My testimony today focuses on the city's Fair  
4 Fare Transit Discount Program, which offers half  
5 price bus and subway fares to low income residents  
6 with household incomes at or below the federal  
7 poverty line, which we're struggling with. That's  
8 \$23,000 for a family of three at this point.

9 Since inception, in January 2019, Fair Fares has  
10 provided a significant lifeline to low-income people.  
11 We do the only survey of its kind. It's been going  
12 20 years or more, called the Unheard Third and what  
13 prompted us to get engaged in the Fair Fares effort  
14 was the fact that one in four of our low-income  
15 respondents were saying that they were having real  
16 basic difficulty even affording transportation. And  
17 as we emerge from COVID, the transit affordability  
18 still remains a major challenge for many low-income  
19 communities.

20 Yesterday, I was pleased to be at the Sonya  
21 Sotomayor Community Center in Soundview to hear  
22 Speaker Adams State of the City's Address. In her  
23 remarks, the Speaker called for increasing the income  
24 eligibility threshold for Fair Fares up from 100  
25 percent to 200 percent of poverty. That will be big  
step forward.

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3 Just over a year ago, the Speaker and Mayor Adams  
4 announced an agreement to baseline funding for Fair  
5 Fares in the city budget, another milestone. It's  
6 essentially something we want to grow forward. We  
7 think with her announcement yesterday, the Speaker  
8 acknowledged that we will all come to understand the  
9 city is failing to tap the full potential of Fair  
10 Fares.

11 Today, 280,000 people have signed up. We'd like  
12 to see that grow to one million seven as eligible  
13 under a 200 percent poverty line. I'll stop there  
14 and answer any questions you may have.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No questions for me  
16 but thank you.

17 DAVID JONES: Okay. Thank you for the time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll next hear  
19 from Jean Ryan.

20 JEAN RYAN: Hi, I'm Jean Ryan, President of  
21 Disabled In Action of Metropolitan New York, DIA for  
22 short. I submitted longer testimony but today, I'll  
23 say something brief about each agency that testified  
24 today.

25 The MTA, New York State is responsible for  
providing for and funding a regional transportation

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1 system in the Metropolitan region. We need good  
2 transportation in New York City for it to be the  
3 leader that it already is. But the plan to separate  
4 out Access-A-Ride funding from the rest of the  
5 transportation funding is a mistake. DIA is outraged  
6 about it because it sounds like discrimination  
7 against people with disabilities.  
8

9 The next step could be for the state to tell the  
10 NYC to run Access-A-Ride. Remember what happens to  
11 us can eventually happen to everyone else and we  
12 could just be the tip of the iceberg. We must fight  
13 against this. Department of Transportation, DOT, DOT  
14 is angling for control of the outdoor restaurants in  
15 New York City but they have been in control of them  
16 for three years and we do not have the accessibility  
17 despite accessibility being one of the few  
18 requirements for the outdoor restaurant sheds in the  
19 street and next to buildings. Complaints even from  
20 the Mayor's Office for People With Disabilities did  
21 not change a thing.

22 If DOT gets to regulate and enforce outdoor  
23 restaurants, will they continue to do nothing about  
24 accessibility? Will they have the staff, the know  
25 how and the will to do anything about it?

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3 Taxi and Limousine Commission, TLC. The TLC  
4 announced that all Ubers and Lyft's must be electric  
5 by 2030 but currently in 2023, no electric vehicles  
6 are accessible to wheelchair users. Are we going to  
7 be left further at the curb? This seems like a  
8 never-ending struggle for access. We want 100  
9 percent accessibility of taxis and for hire vehicles  
10 but nothing much is happening. The City Council  
11 could mandate 100 percent accessibility and we would  
12 have an equal chance of getting a ride. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll next hear  
15 from Lisa Daglian.

16 LIAM BLANK: Hi, my name is Liam Blank, I'm going  
17 to be testifying on behalf of Lisa Daglian. I'm the  
18 Associate Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory  
19 Committee to the MTA. An independent organization  
20 established by the State Legislature in 1981.

21 Driven in large part by the drop in ridership,  
22 both during and after the pandemic, the MTA is in a  
23 huge deficit that will lead to devastating cuts in  
24 bus service, subway and rail service in crippling  
25 fare increases if not addressed. We are reassured  
that you understand the severity of this situation



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1 and know that none of us want to see the horrific  
2 fare hikes in horrendous service cuts that could be  
3 the unfortunate reality without adequate funding. It  
4 is imperative that you, our leaders in the City  
5 Council work together and with the state to ensure  
6 that transit is fully funded both this year and in  
7 the future. To this end, we support the funding  
8 proposals that Governor Hochul put forth in her  
9 executive budget as a great starting point for budget  
10 negotiations. This includes asking the city to pay  
11 more to fully fund Access-A-Ride and cover the  
12 current costs of student metro cards, as well as to  
13 help the state offset revenue losses that result from  
14 exemptions to the Payroll Mobility Tax.  
15

16 We also support Fair Fares and baselining \$75  
17 million for the program and we strongly support  
18 doubling eligibility to 200 percent of the federal  
19 poverty level, so that many more people can take  
20 advantage of this lifeline. We would like to see  
21 fair fares implemented on commuter rail, so that  
22 riders who have access to the Long Island Railroad  
23 and Metro North but not a subway could ride at half  
24 the cost an Atlantic ticket or city ticket.  
25 Including the option to purchase a weekly metro card

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1 with the expanded city ticket as we proposed in our  
2 freedom ticket recommendations, which further open  
3 transit to New Yorkers who live in subway deserts.

4  
5 But even beyond the Governor's proposals focused  
6 on the city, we believe that there are additional  
7 revenue alternatives that are worth including in the  
8 conversation. We have testified repeatedly to the  
9 state legislature about the dozens of options that  
10 could be used to raise billions for transit,  
11 including options for the City Connect.

12 On our website [pcac.org](http://pcac.org), we have a list of  
13 funding alternatives in the form a dynamic tool that  
14 allows you to consider different accommodations of  
15 revenue streams that we strongly encourage you to  
16 take a look at that. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and we'll next hear  
18 from Eric McClure.

19 ERIC MCCLURE: Thank you. Thank you Madam Chair  
20 for the opportunity to testify today. My name is  
21 Eric McClure, I am the Executive Director of  
22 StreetsPAC.

23 New York City's failure last year to meet the  
24 benchmarks for the creation of physically separated  
25 bus lanes and bike lanes required by the Streets

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1 Master Plan was deeply concerning and that failure  
2 raises significant red flags for Fiscal 2024. Since  
3 both of those benchmarks increased this year from 20  
4 miles of protected bus lanes to an average of 30 per  
5 year over five years and from 30 miles of protected  
6 bike lanes to an average of 50 per year through 2026.  
7

8 While the Department of Transportation has  
9 testified in these Chambers that their funding is  
10 sufficient, the missed targets in 2022 bely the  
11 reality. DOT, like many agencies face a significant  
12 staffing shortages and filling unstaffed positions  
13 while also funding future staff growth will be  
14 essential to meeting the streets plan benchmarks.  
15 And the need for increased funding goes well beyond  
16 personnel issues.

17 More money is required to procure materials, many  
18 in short supply that are essential to street safety  
19 projects such as Jersey barriers for the hardening of  
20 bike lanes. Bringing more capacity in house that DOT  
21 would help speed critical aspects of road work, like  
22 restriping following milling and repaving projects,  
23 which can take weeks if not months when left to  
24 contractors. More robust funding will also help  
25 address the significant equity gaps that exist in our

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1 streets and public spaces. The streets plan rightly  
2 focuses on addressing those equity issues,  
3 prioritizing investment in those areas in the city  
4 whose residents are predominantly people of color,  
5 where incomes are lowest and where investment  
6 infrastructure has lagged the most. Ensuring the DOT  
7 has the capability to implement projects quickly in  
8 tier one priority investment areas should be a budget  
9 priority as well.  
10

11 Now that Mayor Adams is appointed the city's  
12 first ever chief public realm officer, it's critical  
13 that her work is supported by funding for important  
14 public realm improvements like Open Restaurants and  
15 Open Streets. The Open Restaurants program brought  
16 outdoor dining to some parts of the city that had  
17 never had it and Open Streets have been a literal  
18 lifesaver for communities lacking green spaces. We  
19 need to ensure that we can create the equivalent of  
20 Paseo Park and neighborhoods across the five  
21 boroughs.

22 Lastly, we want to shine a spotlight on the need  
23 for vastly increased funding in two specific areas  
24 that will engender continued expansion of cycling  
25

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1 which has seen robust growth but has more room to run  
2 if properly supported.  
3

4 As we have many times before, we again call for  
5 public funding of the city's bike share system to  
6 facilitate its expansion into all corners of the  
7 city. Notably, the Chairs of the Transportation  
8 Infrastructure and Finance Committees have both  
9 expressed the desire to see bike share expanded to  
10 their respective districts. Bike share is the only  
11 mode of public transport that receives no  
12 correspondent public subsidy in New York City and  
13 it's time for the city to make that investment as  
14 well as to invest in the safe, protective cycling  
15 network to support it.

16 Lastly, we also urge the city to not spare  
17 expense in creating safe, secure bike parking  
18 infrastructure. Following successful demonstration  
19 projects last spring with Oonee, the company that  
20 continues to rapidly innovate secure bike parking  
21 facilities. Its time for DOT to go big. We know  
22 that the ready availability of secured storage is a  
23 critical driver of increased cycling and it's also a  
24 partial solution to the dangers of substandard e-bike  
25

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3 batteries. Let's commit to making a substantial  
4 investment and secure bike parking. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you all. We'll now  
7 call up our next panel. Michael Ring, Danny  
8 Pearlstein, Christopher Schuyler, and Amanda Berman.  
9 [4:35:05-4:35:37]. We'll begin with Michael Ring.

10 MICHAEL RING: Hi, thanks for having me here.  
11 For those who need it, I'd like to offer a verbal  
12 description of my appearance. I'm just a White guy  
13 wearing a green hoodie that happens to say Disabled  
14 In Action, that's the organization I'm representing  
15 today. And I'd also like to mention that one of  
16 founders Judy Yumen(SP?) she passed away this past  
17 weekend, so we're all thinking about her.

18 I want to talk today about the Access-A-Ride on  
19 demand program that I'm lucky enough to be in. The  
20 MTA is talking about extending it or changing it or  
21 they've been talking about changing it for a long  
22 time. And I want to talk about what it means to me.  
23 It means I can come and go like everyone else does.  
24 I could leave my house when I'm ready to leave and  
25 more importantly, like this meeting, I thought it  
would have been over by now. I would have reserved

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1  
2 my Access-A-Ride for now and I would be sitting here  
3 but instead, I could walk out and press a button and  
4 be taken home or I can have a cup of coffee and then  
5 go home.

6 And people who go to work, pay taxes and this is  
7 a program that enables people to go to work. Regular  
8 Access-A-Ride, it makes it easy for you to get to the  
9 doctor or to visit your family because you're always  
10 going to be late and you're always going to be  
11 hanging around but if you have a job, you just can't  
12 do that. So, it looks like pretty soon the city is  
13 going to be paying some more money for Access-A-Ride  
14 as part of the MTA, so you guys will be able to look  
15 into the books and see how much it costs. So, when  
16 you do that, I hope you guys can keep in mind that it  
17 makes money. It makes money for the city because  
18 people get to go to work and it does work. It's a  
19 system that everyone who is in it, likes it. We  
20 don't have that many accessible vehicles in the edges  
21 of the outer boroughs but that's going to change and  
22 I'm just hoping that you could give this feedback to  
23 the MTA and not end the program and in fact extend it  
24 to more people. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

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3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll now hear  
4 from Danny Pearlstein.

5 DANNY PEARLSTEIN: Good afternoon Madam Chair,  
6 Committee Staff, thank you so much for hearing from  
7 us. My name is Danny Pearlstein, I'm the Policy and  
8 Communications Director at the Riders Alliance. I  
9 want to express our tremendous gratitude and  
10 excitement about the speakers announcement yesterday  
11 and we are eager to work with her and with you and  
12 with the Committee to see Fair Fares expanded along  
13 with our community partners at Community Services  
14 Society when the budget is adopted at the end of  
15 June.

16 I'm here today though because I was here three  
17 years ago on the precipice of COVID to talk about bus  
18 lanes and that was a tough year 2020 in so many  
19 different respects. In particular, we thought that  
20 there would be no bus lanes built. The budget was  
21 cut dramatically and yet in 2020, the previous  
22 administration built more bus lanes than the current  
23 administration build last year in 2022, despite the  
24 law having taken affect and requiring a significant  
25 number of bus lanes be built. And so, this is the  
year that is pivotal for the city's bus lane program.



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1  
2 The Mayor has promised to speed up the slowest  
3 buses in America. He's promised an aggressive  
4 timetable of 150 miles of bus lanes in four years but  
5 to achieve his promise to follow the law, the mayor  
6 will have to either sextuple the pace of bus lane  
7 installation. And so, I am here to urge you to make  
8 sure that the money that the Council put aside last  
9 year is spent. Right, the money is there. This is  
10 not one of those issues where bus lanes are  
11 tragically underfunded. We have the money to build  
12 bus lanes. We need to move the obstacles out of the  
13 way that my colleague Eric McClure discussed just a  
14 moment ago, to get the bus lanes done. And I think  
15 you know, the important focus is on bus riders,  
16 right. There are well over one million people riding  
17 New York City buses every day. They are the slowest  
18 buses in the United States. They are often inhumanly  
19 crowded in a way that's surprising these days  
20 considering what you know reduced crowding exists on  
21 the subway. And it is a testament you know to the  
22 city's humanity to the ability to get things done at  
23 all, for anybody and certainly to the idea that we  
24 are a city of yes, and we embrace change and we're  
25 able to achieve equity in our other goals that we

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3 improve bus speeds this year in a dramatic way and we  
4 look forward to working with you on the Council to  
5 hold the Administration accountable and making it  
6 happen. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Perfect timing.  
8 Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll now hear  
10 from Christopher Schuyler.

11 CHRISTOPHER SCHUYLER: Thank you to Chair Brooks-  
12 Powers. My name is Christopher Schuyler. I'm a  
13 Senior Staff Attorney with the Disability Justice  
14 Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.  
15 I am a person who studders.

16 So, to begin, I just want to commend the Council  
17 for pushing to expand the Fair Fares program, as well  
18 as its continued funding of the streets plan, which  
19 includes creating accessible public spaces and bus  
20 stops, installing accessible pedestrian signals and  
21 upgrade intersections to improve safety,  
22 accessibility for all New Yorkers.

23 So, on Open Streets and Open Restaurants, we've  
24 received reports about those programs being  
25 inaccessible including the dining sheds, blocking  
sidewalk clearance and with Open Streets, the

1  
2 barricades being immovable or actually Access-A-Ride  
3 drivers refusing to move the barricades when picking  
4 up passengers. On Bike Share, we know that the  
5 program is a huge success for the city and City Bike  
6 has not provided accessible options for people with  
7 disabilities. That needs to be remedied. For NYC  
8 Ferry, there's significant funding allocated toward  
9 improvement of boats and landings. We're aware of  
10 complaints inaccessibility in terms of lack of  
11 signage and other accessibility issues and some of  
12 that funding needs to go to improving accessibility.

13       So, for the MTA, we oppose the funding increase.  
14 We think that - I'm sorry, I blanked out. So, I'll  
15 actually just kind of cosign what Michael Ring said  
16 before about the on demand program being expanded and  
17 closing up the use of the assessment centers, which  
18 are expensive and I'll kind of finish up with saying  
19 that the Council just needs to exercise whatever  
20 power they have in terms of pushing congestion  
21 pricing along with its absolutely crucial component  
22 in funding accessibility improvements with the MTA  
23 system.

24       So, I'll submit written testimony that will  
25 provide more detail. Thank you.

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3 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and yes, we  
5 encourage everybody to submit written testimony if  
6 they have not yet. Finally, we'll hear from Amanda  
7 Berman.

8 AMANDA BERMAN: Thank you. Good afternoon Chair  
9 Brooks-Powers and members of the Council Staff. My  
10 name is Amanda Berman, I am the Deputy Director of  
11 Regional Programs with the Center for Court  
12 Innovation. Recently we renamed our organization to  
13 the Center for Justice Innovation, formerly the  
14 Center for Court Innovation and for the past 25  
15 years, the Council has been an indispensable partner  
16 of ours in the work that we do to advance equity and  
17 empower communities and also increase safety, and  
18 that includes safety on our streets as well.

19 And as we all know, we have record breaking  
20 levels of traffic violence and fatalities over the  
21 past several years. At our organization we have  
22 leveraged our experience and footprint in the court  
23 system to develop innovative responses to this  
24 crisis. Since 2015, we've operated the Driver  
25 Accountability program, which is the diversion  
program for low level vehicular offenses that come

1 through our criminal courts throughout the city.

2 Instead of relying on punitive responses, such as  
3 jail or fines, our program encourages behavior change  
4 through self-reflection, collective warm setting and  
5 we use a facilitated group discussion model. And  
6 thanks to the support of this Council, we have served  
7 over 1,000 drivers citywide just last year alone with  
8 a proven record of changing drivers behaviors.  
9

10 Most recently, we piloted an expansion of this  
11 program, which we call Circles for Safe Streets. And  
12 this program addresses crashes that result in serious  
13 injury or fatality using restorative justice model  
14 that brings together drivers and their victims. And  
15 through this process, victims have an opportunity to  
16 tell the driver about the impact of their actions and  
17 to hear the driver apologize and take accountability  
18 for the harm that they have caused. The program,  
19 which we operate in partnership with families for  
20 safe streets, addresses a critical gap in the systems  
21 response to these cases which has historically left  
22 victims feeling unheard and their needs unmet.  
23 Collectively these programs play an essential role in  
24 a holistic response to street safety issues that  
25 reduces harms that are caused on our roads as well as

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3 those that are caused by the systems that respond.

4 The demand for our programs continues to grow and we  
5 hope that we can continue to look to the support of  
6 Council in this moment where these investments are  
7 needed more urgently than ever. Thank you for this  
8 opportunity to testify. I'm happy to answer any  
9 questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you all. And now we'll  
12 hear from our final in-person panel Denise Keehan-  
13 Smith, Joshua Steinberg, and Raul Rivera. [4:45:44-  
14 4:46:19]. We'll hear first from Denise Keehan-Smith.  
15 Sure, sure, yeah. When you see the red button.

16 JOSHUA STEINBERG: Okay, I think we're on, good.  
17 Good afternoon Chair Brooks-Powers and Council Staff.  
18 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My  
19 name is Josh Steinberg and I'm here representing  
20 Friends of the QNS, which a local nonprofit  
21 organization that advocates for activating passenger  
22 service on the Long Island Railroads lower Montauk  
23 Branch.

24 The lower Montauk Branch cuts a straight line  
25 between two of the city's fastest growing work live  
districts, Long Island City and Jamaica. It passes

1 through diverse communities and some of the city's  
2 highest potential industrial districts. The line  
3 also passes through an area that is known  
4 colloquially as a transit desert. Meaning that the  
5 people who live and work in this area do not have  
6 access to public transportation. We cannot have  
7 transit deserts in New York City if we are to have  
8 transit equity in New York City.

9  
10 Activating the lower Montauk Branch will help New  
11 York City achieve its most ambitious and important  
12 goals, including related to job creation, affordable  
13 housing, and sustainability, and to do so at a  
14 reasonable cost.

15 A feasibility study released in January 2018,  
16 confirmed that to be the case. The return on this  
17 investment is very favorable when compared this  
18 projects projected capital cost to other transit  
19 projects. And with transit-oriented development and  
20 the right value capture mechanisms in place, the  
21 project can actually pay for itself. It's also worth  
22 noting that the 2018 feasibility study did not take  
23 into account the existence of the IBX which is moving  
24 forward. The IBX intersects the lower Montauk Brank  
25 and the network effects between these lines are

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2 enormous. Each line makes the other more valuable.

3 Activating the lower Montauk Branch for passenger  
4 service is a smart investment in our city's future  
5 and we ask this Committee to secure modest funding  
6 from next years budget to conduct an environmental  
7 impact study of the project.

8 The capital cost of construction for this project  
9 would of course be funded in the future by the MTA  
10 but we need to be shovel ready for the MTA's next  
11 capital program. And moving forward on the same  
12 timeline as the IBX. The way to do that is to fund  
13 the EIS from the Council budget, just as the  
14 feasibility study was funded years ago. We're happy  
15 to meet with your offices to further discuss this  
16 opportunity and answer any questions. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

19 DENISE KEEHAN-SMITH: Hi, good afternoon Council  
20 Member and Committee Chair Brooks-Powers. Thank you  
21 for the opportunity to testify before you today. My  
22 name is Denise Keehan-Smith and I'm the Board Chair  
23 of the Friends of QNS, a proposed light rail which  
24 would run passenger service along the Long Island  
25 Railroad, lower Montauk Branch line.



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3 Currently, there are ten trains that run per day  
4 from Long Island City terminus to Jamaica Station on  
5 the Long Island Railroad. Six during the morning  
6 rush hours and four during the evening rush hours.  
7 It's simply not enough.

8 Since 2018, when the concept of reactivating the  
9 line was first proposed by former Council Member  
10 Elizabeth Crowley, I was an eager participant. I  
11 could see that this line was one of opportunity for  
12 the residents in Jamaica to Long Island City, the  
13 fastest growing neighborhood in the country and  
14 everyone in between. Small businesses, large  
15 businesses, light manufacturers, every day working  
16 people, all could be served by this line. As you  
17 move forward and our populations have exploded, we  
18 see you could also become a lifeline for the greater  
19 borough of Queens and Brooklyn. The Jamaica Central  
20 Business District could expand economic growth by  
21 welcoming more people to shop in their stores and eat  
22 in their restaurants.

23 The QNS is unique and that it runs east to west  
24 in the center of Queens, an area primarily known as  
25 the transit desert. Our projected stations would  
closely intersect with the proposed IBX at the Metrum

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1 Wall and the Long Island Railroad Rockaway Beach  
2 Branch Line at Woodhaven Boulevard. The  
3 implementation of the passenger service would include  
4 bike paths and green ways that would run parallel to  
5 the line as well as offering full accessibility to  
6 those with those different physical abilities. A  
7 world class city demands world class infrastructure.  
8 The communities along the line deserve to commute in  
9 a reasonable fashion. No longer would residents have  
10 to take a bus and train to get where they're going.  
11 The line could effectively reduce peoples commute by  
12 30 to 40 minutes each way every day. That's more  
13 time to spend with family and better work life  
14 balance. Additionally, it could reduce emissions and  
15 the number of cars on the road. Imagine the  
16 possibilities of reducing traffic on the Expressway  
17 for travelers going to JSA Airport. Can I just one  
18 more quick paragraph?

19  
20 Okay, so we believe now is the time to take  
21 action. Governor Hochul has called for environmental  
22 review at IBX and we'd like to ask the same for the  
23 QNS, both are similar in concept and benefit to be  
24 enormous. We respectfully ask that you fund the  
25 environmental studies to confirm what we believe to

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3 be crucial investment for our communities, borough  
4 and city. We say please, just say yes to the QNS.  
5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and we'll now hear  
8 from Raul Rivera.

9 RAUL RIVERA: Good afternoon. My name is Raul  
10 Rivera. I'm a New York City TLC driver. I'm a TLC  
11 driver advocate. I'm a Native New Yorker. I'm a  
12 member of Families for Safe Streets, I'm also a crash  
13 survivor. I was almost killed in an accident.

14 I didn't write anything down but I do have a few  
15 points that we're going to go over. When it comes to  
16 congestion pricing, I'm totally against it completely  
17 but it seems like what I'm listening to today, it's  
18 going to pass. It sounds like it's going to be  
19 enforced on us. So, we ask that the driver, the TLC  
20 driver be exempt. Exempt the driver from congestion  
21 pricing.

22 Also, the TLC, when we're talking about budget.  
23 The TLC does make over \$15 million per year when it  
24 comes to fines and tickets against the driver and New  
25 Yorkers, so just keep that in mind, \$15 million,  
that's like the average. Also, we ask for a cap of

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1  
2 the TLC license because we want to bring value,  
3 respect and we want to bring envy. We want people to  
4 envy that license so we want people that are coming  
5 on board be professionals. So, we want to protect  
6 the drivers that are here already, whether there's  
7 175,000 or 200,000. We need to slow down how to give  
8 the license out. We need to bring respect back to  
9 the license because companies like Uber and Lyft love  
10 to deactivate drivers. When you have an unlimited  
11 supply of workers, you don't have to respect them.

12       When it come to Access-A-Ride, you got 175  
13 drivers willing to do the trips but I don't know who  
14 is making it difficult for them. It's difficult to  
15 make the trips with Access-A-Ride. Make it easier  
16 for us and we'll make the trips. Also, WAV vehicles,  
17 WAV vehicles should be designated for people who have  
18 wheelchairs. There's people that are using WAV and  
19 don't have a wheelchair. A regular driver could just  
20 pick them up and take them to their destination and  
21 the WAV should be more dedicated to the wheelchair.  
22 That's all I have to say. Thank you.

23       CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

24       COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you all. We'll now  
25 move on to Zoom panels. We'll start with Natasha

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3 Elder and then move on to Paul Mohammad and Sharon  
4 Mclennan. [4:54:18-4:54:25]. Is Natasha on?

5 NATASHA ELDER: Yes, I'm here. Hi, good  
6 afternoon.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hi there. Okay, you may  
8 begin when ready.

9 NATASHA ELDER: Good afternoon, my name is  
10 Natasha Elder, I'm a Regional Director with NYPIRG  
11 representing our campaigns to [INAUDIBLE 4:54:39  
12 4:54:42] has advocated on behalf of the millions of  
13 subway and bus riders for better, faster mobilized  
14 service.

15 Thank you Committee Chair Brooks-Powers and  
16 members of the Committee on Transportation and  
17 Infrastructure for the opportunity to testify today.  
18 We can all agree that New Yorkers need and deserve  
19 faster, reliable and equitable service along with  
20 affordable fares.

21 To summarize our full testimony, the New York  
22 City budget must fully fund the Department of  
23 Transportations Streets Plan, while ensuring that the  
24 city is reaching policy benchmarks mandated in that  
25 plan. These benchmarks as we know are not currently  
being met. The city must also increase funding to

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1  
2 Fair Fares eligibility to include CUNY students and  
3 New Yorkers at 200 percent of the federal poverty  
4 level and to increase outreach and promotion to help  
5 people learn about how to apply for these benefits.

6 Street design is one of our most viable  
7 instruments for improving bus speeds. The Streets  
8 Plan will do exactly that. The DOT has failed to  
9 reach its bus lane and bus improvements targets in  
10 2022 and so bus lane installation delays leave our  
11 buses crawling through routes at an average speed of  
12 a mere seven miles per hour. With installation  
13 targets increasing this year under the plan, it is  
14 critical to accelerate the project. This  
15 necessitates increasing the DOT's capacity by filling  
16 positions that have been open for way too long.

17 While we are advocating at the state level for  
18 increased funding for MTA to invest in more frequent  
19 service and to hold the line of fares, New York City  
20 must do its part to expand fare discounts when it  
21 matters most for college students and low income New  
22 Yorkers. Financial woes and transportation  
23 affordability gets even worse for New York City  
24 college students, where costs extend beyond the  
25 classroom. Afforded a metro card swipe or omni tap

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1  
2 can be the difference between earning a degree or  
3 dropping out altogether. While individuals with a  
4 college degree continue to have better career  
5 opportunities and higher wages than those with less  
6 education, a recent survey by the Center for Urban  
7 Future founded affording metro card –

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is over. Thank you.

9 NATASHA ELDER: Financial barriers provided by  
10 students. I'm wrapping up. Proposed funding in the  
11 Executive Budget remains flat for Fair Fares program  
12 for FY24 which is still lower than pre-pandemic  
13 levels. City Council has been a fierce advocate for  
14 this program. We thank you and we urge you to  
15 continue by increasing funding for these necessary  
16 expansions. Thank you so much.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you and we ask  
18 that everyone please adhere to the time limit.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll hear next  
20 from Paul Muhammad followed by Sharon McLennan and  
21 Elizabeth Adams.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

23 PAUL MUHAMMAD: Good day. Can you hear me?

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.  
25

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1  
2 PAUL MUHAMMAD: Okay good day and thank you Chair  
3 and thank you City Council for this ability to give  
4 my testimony. I'm Brother Paul Muhammad, I'm a  
5 member of the Coalition for Community Advancement as  
6 well as s member of the Community Board 5 and also  
7 Vice Chair of East New York Diagnostic. I'm here to  
8 testify on behalf of the MTA's plan for the ADA  
9 accessibility at Broadway Junction. We here in East  
10 New York know that the effects of COVID-19 wreak  
11 havoc on the nation and the world but here it exposed  
12 the comorbidity of the deals that we were already  
13 suffering, housing, the economic injustice and other  
14 things that are happening in this community. We're  
15 talking about equity, access and opportunity at  
16 Broadway Junction. Broadway Junction already funded;  
17 we've met the coalition with the MTA. They have  
18 assured us that they are fully funded for over a half  
19 a billion dollars' worth of funding to what happened  
20 at Broadway Junction. We're just pushing for  
21 continued support for MTA, for Department of  
22 Transportation, to support that plan and make it a  
23 priority. We're here. We're not against other folks  
24 from the community but the party should be  
25



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1 strengthened in what we have here, which is the  
2 junction.  
3

4 Right now, I know that there's at least 8,000  
5 apartments coming online within two miles of the  
6 junction and there's no parking spaces. And Broadway  
7 Junction will become a key hub of getting these folks  
8 around, so they can get the equity, access and  
9 opportunity. We're asking for sourcing of local hire  
10 and sourcing to local vendors. This will cause a  
11 jolt in this community, so those who are here know  
12 housing isn't affordable without a job.

13 We want to thank you for this support and  
14 continue to push for the benefits of our people in  
15 this community. Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll next hear  
18 from Sharon McLennan followed by Elizabeth Adams and  
19 Tally Canter.

20 SHARON MCLENNAN: Hi, good afternoon. My name is  
21 Dr. Sharon McLennan where I am the Executive Director  
22 for the Center for Independence of Disabled New York,  
23 CIDNY. I'm here to advocate for the millions of  
24 disabled people in New York City.  
25

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1  
2 My first comment is regarding the level of  
3 discourse. These hearings are here to talk about the  
4 impact of New Yorkers, all New Yorkers, regardless of  
5 their disability status. I have a recommendation for  
6 the Council. I think it would be appropriate for  
7 future hearings that we hear, first hear from the  
8 advocates and from New Yorkers themselves. We spend  
9 many times just giving us two minutes to speak but  
10 it's really not enough to deliver the impact that  
11 these critical issues face New Yorkers.

12 My second comment is regarding Fair Fares. For  
13 many New Yorkers regardless of disability status,  
14 it's important to be able to work. With working,  
15 allow for taxes, with taxes allow for services.  
16 Doesn't it make sense to ensure that each and every  
17 New Yorker has the ability to go to work regardless  
18 of their level of ability to walk or to navigate the  
19 streets?

20 Is it important that all New Yorkers if they use  
21 Access-A-Ride, or they use MTA transit, to be able to  
22 travel to work safely and get to any destination may  
23 it be an appointment, may it be school or a medical  
24 situation that could get there safely. My next  
25 comment is about accessibility. We must think about

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1 universal design and all the initiatives that we try  
2 to do within the New York City system. When you bill  
3 for everyone regardless of their ability status, you  
4 bill for all. When we think about New York City  
5 transportation for those individuals that live in New  
6 York, as well as travel to New York, if we do  
7 universal design in the beginning, we won't have  
8 these problems. It is imperative for the MTA to be  
9 reliable for what they have promised, disability  
10 advocates within their settlement agreement regarding  
11 elevators. It is important that we have the money to  
12 ensure that every subway system -

13  
14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 SHARON MCLENNAN: Thank you so much for giving  
16 this testimony.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you and if you  
18 could just submit the rest of your testimony in  
19 writing and also, just so that you know, we've had  
20 several hearings where the public has spoken and the  
21 advocates have spoken before the Administration and  
22 we continue to find ways to ensure that their voices  
23 are heard in the conversation but we do have to  
24 adhere to the time constraints because we want to be  
25

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3 respectful of everyone that is participating in the  
4 public hearing. Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll next move  
6 to Elizabeth Adams and then we'll here from Tolly  
7 Canter.

8 ELIZABETH ADAMS: Hi, thank you Chair Brooks-  
9 Power and the Committee for convening today's  
10 hearing. I'm Elizabeth Adams, Senior Director for  
11 Advocacy and Organizing at Transportation  
12 Alternatives.

13 For nearly 50 years, TA has led the movement for  
14 safe, equitable streets in New York City. I want to  
15 thank the Speaker and the Council for her call for  
16 equitable and increased city investments for street  
17 safety infrastructure for communities most impacted  
18 by traffic violence in her State of the City  
19 yesterday.

20 We agree, traffic calming measures, better  
21 transportation access, and infrastructure like bike  
22 and bus lanes are critical to building a city that  
23 serves all of our needs and connects our communities.  
24 New Yorkers deserve an effective and efficient  
25 Department of Transportation. And so, we cannot  
continue to delay projects required by the Streets

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1  
2 Plan. The missed benchmarks are deeply concerning.  
3 These are projects that our city has committed to.  
4 We need to get them in the ground now. We need to  
5 prioritize underserved communities and transit  
6 deserts and we need to significantly ramp up the  
7 speed of new bus and bike lanes. Young people in  
8 particular are impacted by traffic violence. 2022  
9 was the deadliest year for child traffic deaths. We  
10 need safer routes to schools, streets improvements  
11 and more open school streets to keep our children  
12 safe from traffic violence.

13 As such TA is calling for an increase in funding  
14 for the School Streets Program along with additional  
15 resources for Title I schools applying. Prioritizing  
16 car centric infrastructure at the expense of public  
17 transit, isn't just unfair but expensive. Each year,  
18 New York's traffic clogged streets cost residents  
19 more than \$6 billion a year in traffic crashes and  
20 lost time. We leave money on the table and we fail  
21 to build safe and equitable street space for  
22 everyone.

23 In addition to calling for equitable street  
24 safety investment, TA commends the Speakers plan to  
25 expand Fair Fares eligibility. Public transit is a

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2 public good and it should be funded as such. Thank  
3 you for today's time and we'll follow up with written  
4 testimony.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and we'll move now  
7 to Tolly Canter.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts.

9 TOLLY CANTER: Thank you Chair Brooks-Powers and  
10 members of the New York City Council Transportation  
11 Committee. My name is Tolly Canter and I am Director  
12 of Planning at the Union Square Partnership. We are  
13 the nonprofit business improvement district working  
14 to create a clean, safe, vibrant and enjoyable  
15 neighborhood for Union Squares residents, businesses  
16 and visitors.

17 In 2021, we released the Union Square 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
18 District Vision plan, a community led blueprint for  
19 transforming the greater Union Square area. A core  
20 job center and cultural hubs serving all five  
21 boroughs into New York City's most accessible place.  
22 The plan prioritizes multi-mobile accessibility,  
23 districtwide connectivity and substantial increases  
24 in public open space. We followed the Vision plan  
25 with the Street Scape and Lighting Master Plan, which

1  
2 received conceptual approval from the Public Design  
3 Commission last spring. The plan advances the long-  
4 term vision through short term street scape upgrades  
5 using a recommended suite of city standard elements,  
6 including lighting, green infrastructure and transit  
7 amenities. Through our engagement efforts for these  
8 plans, our community members have repeatedly voiced  
9 that nighttime safety and security are some of the  
10 biggest concerns and that higher quality lighting is  
11 needed.

12 Since the start of the pandemic, seniors  
13 especially have expressed that they are not  
14 comfortable leaving their homes after dark. Our plan  
15 proposes replacing the old, nonstandard 14 street  
16 poles and antique teardrop fixtures with New York  
17 City DOT standard poles and modern LED fixtures.  
18 These new fixtures will make street and pedestrian  
19 lighting more energy efficient and help to ensure  
20 that there are bright, even light levels along the  
21 active 14<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor. This project will serve  
22 the millions of people who utilize 14<sup>th</sup> Street each  
23 day for transportation on the subways and buses,  
24 shopping at local businesses, accessing our

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1  
2 neighborhoods hospitals, schools and residences and  
3 leaving the work place or arriving home after dark.

4       So, we're asking the Council and the city to  
5 support and partner with us to advance the street  
6 scape work along 14<sup>th</sup> Street to support our  
7 neighborhood vision. As a first stop, we have  
8 submitted capital funding requests for \$600,500 to  
9 Council Member -

10       SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11       TOLLY CANTER: Thank you. We'll submit written  
12 testimony following this meeting.

13       CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Did you want to  
14 finish that sentence though? It sounded like it was  
15 your last sentence.

16       TOLLY CANTER: Sure. We've submitted capital  
17 funding requests to Council Member Carlina Rivera and  
18 Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine for the first  
19 three phases of work for DOT to provide upgraded  
20 street lighting on 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Thank you.

21       COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you all. If we have  
22 inadvertently missed anyone that is registered to  
23 testify today and has yet to have been called, please  
24 use the Zoom hand function if you are testifying  
25 remotely, and you will be called in the order your



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3 hand has been raised. If you testifying in person,  
4 please come to the dais. Seeing no one, I will now  
5 turn it over to Chair Brooks-Powers for closing  
6 remarks.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you to the  
8 agencies and the advocates that participated in  
9 today's preliminary budget hearing. We look forward  
10 to continuing the conversation as we enter into the  
11 budget season. And we are looking to see as we've  
12 discussed quite extensively today, greater equity and  
13 much more implementation of the infrastructure work  
14 that is required by law.

15 And so, with that, this hearing is concluded.

16 [GAVEL].  
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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 26, 2023