

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Jointly with the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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May 8, 2024
Start: 9:20 a.m.
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HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS

B E F O R E: Justin L. Brannan, and
Selvena N. Brooks-Powers,
Chairpersons

COUNCILMEMBERS:
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Althea V. Stevens
Nantasha M. Williams
Julie Won

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

Ydanis Rodriguez
Commissioner
Department of Transportation

Margaret Forgione
First Deputy Commissioner
Department of Transportation

Paul Ochoa
Executive Deputy Commissioner
Department of Transportation

Eric Beaton
Deputy Commissioner
Transportation Planning and Management
Department of Transportation

Ricardo Rodriguez
Assistant Commissioner
Intergovernmental Affairs
Department of Transportation

Brian Fritsch
Associate Director
Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to
the MTA

Rosa Chang
Co-Founder
Gotham Park

Christopher Leon Johnson
Citizen, New York City

Glenn Balofsky
Citizen, New York City

Raul Rivera
Citizen, New York City

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, and welcome to
3 the Executive Budget Hearing of the Committees on
4 Finance jointly with Transportation and
5 Infrastructure. At this time, can everybody please
6 silence your cell phones? If you wish to testify,
7 please go up to the Sergeant at Arms desk to fill out
8 a testimony slip, even if you already registered
9 online. At this time going forward, no one is to
10 approach the dais. I repeat, no one is to approach
11 the dais. Chairs, we are ready to begin.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. Good morning, and
13 welcome to the third day of FY2025 Executive Budget
14 Hearings. I'm Councilmember Justin Brannon, Chair of
15 the Committee on Finance. Today's hearing is on the
16 Department of Transportation. I'm pleased to be
17 joined by my good friend and my colleague, Majority
18 Whip, Selvena Brooks-Powers, who serves as Chair on
19 the Committee on Transportation. We have been joined
20 this morning by Councilmembers Louis, Restler, and
21 Carr. Welcome to a familiar face, former
22 Councilmember and Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez and
23 your team. Thank you all for joining us today to
24 answer our questions. As a reminder, for this year's
25 executive budget joint hearing, we will take public

2 testimony on the agency's executive budget the same
3 day after the agency witnesses are finished, instead
4 of holding one day for all public testimony. So, if
5 you wish to speak on the DOT FY2025 budget today,
6 make sure you fill out a witness slip with the
7 Sergeant at Arms.

8 On April 24, 2024, the Administration released
9 the Executive Financial Plan for FY 24-28 with a
10 proposed FY 25 budget of \$111.6 billion. DOT's
11 proposed FY 25 budget of \$1.45 billion represents
12 1.3% of the Administration's proposed FY 25 budget in
13 the Executive Plan. This is an increase of \$43.4
14 million, or 3% from the \$1.4 billion originally
15 allocated in the FY 25 preliminary plan. This
16 increase is mostly due to funds for collective
17 bargaining costs, increased costs for road
18 resurfacing, conversion of Staten Island ferry boats
19 to biorenewable diesel, and an adjustment in utility
20 costs. As of March 2024, DOT has 551 vacancies
21 relative to their budgeted headcount in FY 24. In
22 the Council's preliminary budget response, we called
23 on the Administration to restore \$3 million for
24 Vision Zero outreach and education, and we are
25 disappointed to note that this cut was not restored

2 in the executive budget; it's one of our top
3 priorities on the Council. My questions today will
4 largely focus on the Capital Plan and DOT's federal
5 funding, along with the impact of fake license plates
6 on city revenue, among other topics.

7 The practice of paper and defaced license plates
8 to skip out on tolls and tickets has exploded, to
9 where it's costing New York City a significant
10 amounts of revenue every year, while also fostering a
11 culture of lawlessness and reckless driving. I look
12 forward to hearing more from the Commissioner and
13 team and how DOT plans to address these issues and
14 more. And I now want to turn to my co-Chair for this
15 hearing, Chair of the Committee on Transportation,
16 Majority Whip Selvena Brooks-Powers for her opening
17 statement.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Good morning and
19 welcome to the Committee on Transportation and
20 Infrastructure's joint hearing with the Committee on
21 Finance on the fiscal 2025 Executive Budget for the
22 Department of Transportation. My name is Selvina
23 Brooks-Powers, and I Chair the committee on
24 transportation and infrastructure. Today we will
25 hear from the New York City Department of

2 Transportation on its \$1.5 billion fiscal 2025
3 Executive Budget.

4 DOT's fiscal 2025 budget in the Executive Plan is
5 3% greater than its \$1.40 billion fiscal 2025 budget,
6 as of the Preliminary Financial Plan presented in
7 January. The DOT's Capital Commitment Plan totals
8 \$10.37 billion across fiscals 2024 to 2028. This is
9 around a \$1 billion decrease compared to the
10 preliminary Capital Plan.

11 As Chair Brannan indicated, the fiscal 2025
12 Executive Budget includes no needs or PEGs, and a
13 modest increase of \$43.4 million from other several
14 adjustments, including collective bargaining, fuel
15 costs, and road resurfacing.

16 As always, I hope to discuss with DOT how the
17 city can more equitably invest in historically
18 underserved communities across the city, from the
19 Bronx, to Southeast Queens and everything in between.

20 I especially look forward to discussing how we
21 can mitigate the potentially harmful impact of
22 congestion pricing on black and brown communities;
23 the city's slow pace of progress on the Streets Plan,
24 and the expansion of Accessible Pedestrian Signals,
25 both of which are legally mandated; as well as the

2 impact from the preliminary plan PEG on Vision Zero
3 education and outreach.

4 I would also like to learn more about the
5 implementation of Sammy's Law, which was included in
6 the final State Budget. As Adam Clayton Powell Jr.
7 once said, "It's time to move beyond the rhetoric and
8 into action." I look forward to better understanding
9 how this year's budget can ensure DOT can meet legal
10 requirements and more effectively serve community
11 city wide.

12 Before we begin with testimony, I would like to
13 thank Council staff for their hard work on preparing
14 for this hearing. Our finance team, including Chima
15 Obichere, Julia Halmouth, and Adrienne Drephol; our
16 legislative team, Mark Chen, Connor Mealey, Kevin
17 Kotowski, John Basile, and of course; my staff,
18 including Renee Taylor, my chief of staff, and Kira
19 Powell, my communications director. And with that, I
20 will now pass it back to Chair Brannan.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you Chair. We've
22 also been joined by councilmembers Salaam and De La
23 Rosa.

24 Before we get started my thanks as well to Julia
25 Haramis and Adrienne Tropol from the Council finance

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2 team, for preparing for today's hearing, Committee
3 Counsel, Mike Toomey, my senior adviser John Yeddin,
4 and all the finance analysts who support the hearings
5 that we're doing over the next couple of weeks, and
6 worked very hard behind the scenes. So I'll now turn
7 it over to Committee Counsel, Mike Toomey, to swear
8 in the witnesses and we can get started.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning. Raise your
10 hands please. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
11 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this
12 committee and to respond honestly to Councilmember
13 questions? Ydanis Rodriguez?

14 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I do.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Margaret Forgione?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: I do.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Paul Ochoa?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: I do.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Eric Beaton?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ricardo Rodriguez.

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I do.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you may begin.

24 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Good morning Chair
25 Brooks-Powers, and Chair Brannan, and members of the

2 Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and
3 Finance. I am Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner of the
4 New York City Department of Transportation. With me
5 today are First Deputy Commissioner, Margaret
6 Forgione, Executive Deputy Commissioner, Paul Ochoa,
7 Deputy Commissioner of Transportation Planning and
8 Management Eric Beaton, and Assistant Commissioner
9 for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs, Rick
10 Rodriguez.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on
12 behalf of Mayor Eric Adams on DOT's fiscal year 2025
13 FY Executive Budget, and Fiscal Year 2024-2033
14 Capital Plan.

15 This budget will allow DOT to continue to provide
16 for the safe, efficient, and environmentally
17 responsible movement of people and goods around New
18 York City. As you know, we are responsible to manage
19 27% of the land of our streets, while also being
20 fiscally responsible with our spending. We
21 appreciate The Mayor's continued investments in DOT
22 during these difficult financial times.

23 You can see a pie chart showing the breakdowns of
24 the \$1.4 billion in FY 25 Expense Budget. You have
25 it in your testimony. It is on the screen for the

2 purpose of time, I am going to be reading one-by-one,
3 because you have this information there. But that
4 money will allow for us to have all the resources
5 that we need for our expenses.

6 You can also see the chart showing the breakdown
7 of the \$26.5 billion in FY 24 to FY 33 Capital Plan.
8 DOT approved \$26.5 billion FY 24 to 33 Capital Plan,
9 which includes the breakdown that you also have in
10 your testimony showing over there, again, with the
11 resources that we need to take care of resurfacing
12 our bridges, street reconstruction, and many other
13 responsibilities that we have in our agency.

14 When it comes to improving how New Yorkers get
15 around, DOT continues to make traveling around the
16 city more efficient for all New Yorkers with
17 congestion pricing scheduled to begin this summer.
18 The agency has placed particular focus on providing
19 New Yorkers with convenience, safe and reliable
20 travel options to get into and around the Manhattan
21 Central Business District, CBD. Doing so is critical
22 to the lives and livelihood of New Yorkers from every
23 community across the five boroughs.

24 Last week we released, and you have a copy of
25 those, and the Counsel has a copy if you don't, and I

2 am more than happy to send you one, Connecting to the
3 Core, a plan highlighting and assisting incoming
4 projects to support multiple modes of transportation
5 to the Manhattan CBD. The report highlights 47 bus,
6 bike, and public rail projects that have been
7 implemented since authorizing the state law for
8 congestion pricing passed in 2019, and 37 new
9 projects for which the agency plans to begin public
10 engagement in the month ahead.

11 Here is, again, the photo of the of the recently
12 released Connecting to the Core action plan. These
13 projects include major safety and transit
14 enhancements on Second, Third, and Tenth Avenue
15 including a standing dedicated bike and bus lanes,
16 expanding pedestrian space, ensuring crossing
17 distances, as well as a new effort to look across
18 town bus priority, including a busway or other
19 improvements to 34th Street.

20 They also include projects to allow safe access
21 to and across the East River bridges, public rail and
22 pedestrian improvements around the city's major
23 transit hubs, and a bus priority projects far from
24 the CBD to improve the journeys to subway and
25 commuter rail that take many New Yorkers into the

2 zone. Together, these projects will make it easier
3 for New Yorkers and visitors to access everything
4 Manhattan's CBD has to offer, while leaving their
5 cars at home.

6 The agency also improved travel around the city
7 through so many of our other programs. We are
8 working to expand Citi Bike and incorporating
9 previously underserved parts of the city, while
10 adding more capacity to the parts of the system with
11 the highest demand. At present, more than half of
12 New York City residents live within five minutes'
13 walk of a Citi Bike station, and we have started work
14 on the next generation of greenway planning around
15 the city, including ongoing community engagement for
16 a new Harlem River greenway in the Bronx to better
17 connect from Van Cortlandt Park to Randalls Island.
18 To enhance accessibility throughout the city. DOT
19 continues to install and upgrade pedestrian ramps to
20 create an accessible transition between the sidewalk
21 and the crosswalk, install Accessible Pedestrian
22 Signals to provide information in non-visual formats,
23 and enhance accessibility at bus stops.

24 In order to keep The Mayor's commitment to
25 reserve 1,150 lane miles annually, including 50 bike

3 lane miles, The Administration added \$8 million
4 dollars this fiscal year, and \$14 million to the
5 baseline to keep up with the costs in our resurfacing
6 operation.

7 We also continue many critical bridge project to
8 maintain the city's over 800 bridges in a state of
9 good repair. This includes a project wrapping up
10 later this year that rehabilitates Westchester Avenue
11 over the Hutchinson River Parkway, which carries
12 Number 6 subway line. These projects, which require
13 extensive coordination with the MTA, increase the
14 clearance over the highway to reduce the number of
15 bridge hits significantly, and add a new protection
16 beam to protect the bridge from any future strikes,
17 enhancing safety on both the bridge and the parkway.

18 On the Staten Island Ferry, DOT continues to
19 provide free services between the St. George ferry
20 terminal on Staten Island's north shore, and the
21 Whitehall ferry terminal in lower Manhattan for over
22 45,000 passengers on an average weekday. Since 2022,
23 DOT has launched three new Ollis-class ferries,
24 featuring popular passenger experience upgrades, like
25 phone charging outlets, comfortable seating, and an
outdoor walking track, as well as enhanced safety

3 features for extreme weather. Here is a photo of the
4 newest Ollis-class ferry, the Dorothy Day, sailing by
5 the Statue of Liberty, as well as a photo as we held
6 a press conference together with Mayor Eric Adams,
7 when the contract with all those captains in the
8 ferry was already done.

9 When it comes to curb management and freight, DOT
10 is also taking bold action to better-manage the curb
11 to reduce congestion, double parking, and vehicle
12 emissions. In March we officially authorized the use
13 or more types of E-cargo bikes on New York City
14 streets, and establish key safety standards. The new
15 rules will make deliveries safer and more sustainable
16 by increasing low- or non-emission option for freight
17 deliveries, thereby reducing the number of large
18 delivery trucks on our streets. Last month, DOT
19 along with Mayor Adams launched LockerNYC, the first
20 one in the nation, a free pilot program that will
21 allow New Yorkers to receive packages secured in
22 lockers installed on sidewalk, while consolidating
23 deliveries at a central location to reduce delivery
24 truck traffic.

25 We also announced \$6 million dollars in the new
financial incentive of our delivery program to

2 encourage businesses to shift truck delivery to the
3 off-peak hours.

4 As required by Local Law 171 of 2023, DOT is
5 working to redesign the city truck route network to
6 enhance safety, increase visibility, reduce traffic
7 congestion, and improve the overall freight network.
8 Last week, we launched a public feedback portal for
9 the public to learn about the city truck route
10 network and provide feedback.

11 I am also happy to say that DOT, in partnership
12 with the Economic Development Corporation, recently
13 won a \$50 million grant from the US DOT to build a
14 first-in-the-nation, freight-focused electric truck,
15 and vehicle charging depots at the Hunts Point Food
16 Distribution Center in the Bronx, the busiest heavy
17 trucking destination in the state, and to take an
18 important step in transforming the city parking
19 management system.

20 Today, at 7:30 a.m., we kicked off this program
21 to upgrade the city's 14,500 parking meters to the
22 new pay-by-plate technology. This transition to a
23 license-plate-based system will improve parking
24 enforcement and end the need to display a paper
25 receipt on the vehicles. We were creating so many

2 receipts as we went to the to pay the meters, and
3 taking the receipt and putting it on top of the car,
4 that if we added those receipts, we could go from
5 here to L.A. So, from now on when people pay by
6 plate, they don't have to go back to put the receipts
7 inside the car. That we are starting in Northern
8 Manhattan, and in the next few years we will keep
9 going through Manhattan, going through Staten Island,
10 Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx until we change the
11 whole way of how we pay our meters.

12 When it comes to Vision Zero: Turning to our
13 Vision Zero, I want to acknowledge the difficulty we
14 are having in our work to reach zero traffic
15 fatalities in New York City. So far this year, we
16 have seen far too many people lose their lives on the
17 city streets. The loss of our family members,
18 friends, and neighbors underscores how important our
19 work is, and the urgency it requires. Yes, last year
20 in '23, we had a better year than ever. Last year,
21 we had the lowest number of pedestrian fatalities
22 over the last 113 year, since we started collecting
23 data in our city. But one dead is too many for Mayor
24 Eric Adams, and for myself, and I know for everyone,
25 at the Council and the Administration.

2 The Adams Administration is committed to getting
3 critical safety projects on the ground. The FY 24-33
4 10-year Capital Plan invests \$4.7 billion in Vision
5 Zero, and our expense budget invests an average of
6 about \$560 million annually. So, this number is
7 important for us to remember, because the question
8 always will come: How do we use the money from speed
9 cameras and from red light cameras? So, this is how
10 much we invest when it comes to our Vision Zero:
11 \$4.7 billion in Vision Zero in a 10-year Capital,
12 \$260 million annually on expenses.

13 We are undertaking a number of critical street
14 safety projects throughout the city, including
15 breaking ground on the fifth phase of our Grand
16 Concourse grade street reconstruction project this
17 fall. This project will deliver it grade-separated
18 bike facilities, pedestrian safety improvements, and
19 and a new street, and plantings to historically
20 underserved communities in Fordham and Bedford Park.

21 The majority of recent fatalities have occurred
22 at intersections. Based on this, our core commitment
23 is to make safety improvements at 2000 intersections
24 each year with design improvements like raised
25 crosswalks, leading pedestrian intervals, and

2 sidewalk extensions, as well as daylighting to
3 improve visibility between pedestrians and drivers in
4 1000 of those locations, which we know is of
5 particular importance to the Council. Thank you for
6 the level of advocacy for how hard you worked for us
7 to get to those 1000 intersections.

8 This troubling trends also show just how
9 important it is to reauthorize and expand the city's
10 red light camera program. Last year we saw the
11 highest number of deaths related to red-light
12 running, a record 29, and all those fatalities were
13 at intersections with no red light camera. The
14 current program, limited to just 1% of intersections
15 with signals, is too small to have a wider effect on
16 deterring dangerous driving behaviors. We need the
17 Council's help to enhance safety on our streets by
18 passing a whole rules S 2812, sponsored by State
19 Senator Andrew Gounardes, and A 5259, sponsored by
20 Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz.

21 Beyond the focus on intersections, the Adams
22 Administration is responding to these troubling
23 trends in targeted ways. For example, to address
24 rising E-bike fatalities and deadly single-bike
25 crashes. As you know, from those 30 cyclists that we

2 lost last year, 23 happen with individuals using
3 electric bikes, and we also started the E-bike safety
4 initiative. We launched Get Smart Before You Start,
5 a new public education campaign to inform E-bike
6 riders on how to properly accelerate, brake, and
7 operate at an appropriate speed. But the campaign
8 also educates those who use electric bikes to look
9 for pedestrians too.

10 Lastly, on Vision Zero, I would like to take a
11 moment to celebrate the recent passage of Sakky's Law
12 in the State Budget. These important measures give
13 DOT further flexibility to set speed limits in
14 thoughtful, targeted ways to keep New Yorkers safe.
15 We are extremely grateful for the years of advocacy
16 of Amy Cohen and family for safer streets and
17 transportation alternatives that got this over the
18 finish line, and look forward to working with
19 communities and local elected officials on any future
20 speed limit changes, as well as comprehensive
21 projects to make our streets safer.

22 As we know, the DOT will be able to go deeply
23 lowering the speed limits around the schools, senior
24 centers, and parks, but to lower the citywide speed
25

limit, the Council is the one that will have to make that decision.

Turning to the public realm, this administration continued to reimagine the use of public space. Last month, DOT celebrated the largest open street, car-free Earth Day to date with 53 car-free streets and plazas throughout the five boroughs. But also we improved the level of activation. Last year we had like 60 activations of car-free. This year we had like 250, and those activations reflect the diversity of all cultures that we celebrate in our city.

These events alone, with our Summer Streets Program, gives New Yorkers a taste of what an open sea feels like, and motivates them to work with our agency and community partners to create more open streets in their neighborhood. The event also kicked off the start of the open-street season, with 132 initial locations, including two of those in new locations, with more to come.

DOT also recently announced that we are expanding the resources available to public spaces in under-resourced neighborhoods. Through the Public Space Equity Program, DOT will distribute new tools and services to open streets, plazas, and other public

2 spaces that will be selected based on partner
3 capacity, site context, and DOT equity goals.

4 We are also accepting applications from
5 restaurants for the Dining Out NYC Program, the
6 nation's largest and the best outdoor dining program.
7 Early this week, we announced the Dining Out NYC
8 Marketplace, an online marketplace for restaurants to
9 find vendors offering a range of services, including
10 installation, storage, and design of outdoor dining
11 materials and furniture.

12 When it comes to the MWBEs, under the Adams
13 Administration, DOT has been a leader in Minority and
14 Women-Owned Business Enterprise, or MWBE, contracting
15 investments. I'm proud to say what I also shared
16 with you before: DOT has increased our number for
17 all participation rates from 11% in FY 22 to 24% in
18 FY 23, and by the end of this fiscal year, FY 24, we
19 have to be close to the 30% MWBE utilization goal for
20 the first time. To do this, we are advertising our
21 procurements in community media outlets, using our
22 social media platform, and going to local communities
23 across the city to show how to do business with the
24 DOT.

2 That particular photo that you see there is what
3 I started when I became the Commissioner, doing a
4 yearly and annually doing business with DOT, bringing
5 Michael Gardener, the Director of MWBE, Lisa Flores
6 from the Mayor's Office of Contracts, Commissioner
7 from the SBA, and hundreds of MWBEs are already
8 certified, or those who would like to be certified,
9 they had an opportunity to be connected with all the
10 opportunity that we have at DOT.

11 In conclusion, I would like to thank the Council
12 for the opportunity to testify before you. We are so
13 proud of the work that the almost-6000 men and women
14 at DOT do every day to keep the city moving. We
15 thank The Council for your partnership in ensuring we
16 have the resources we need, and look forward to
17 continuing to work with you to make the city safer,
18 more equitable, and more accessible for generations
19 to come.

20 We will now be happy to answer any questions.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you, Commissioner.
22 We've also been joined by Councilmembers Narcisse and
23 Farías.

24 Okay, I want to jump right into-- Thank you for
25 your testimony. I want to jump right into the DOT

2 Capital Plan. The DOT 's Executive Capital
3 Commitment for fiscals FY 24 to 28 is nearly 9% less
4 than the Preliminary Capital Plan. It's a decrease
5 of just over \$1 billion. In addition to the
6 decrease, a significant amount of capital funding was
7 pushed to the out years. So, could you talk a bit
8 about why there was such a large decrease in the
9 DOT's Capital Commitment Plan?

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I will start it, and
11 then I would like also to pass it to Paul Ochoa, our
12 Deputy Commissioner, obviously, of Finance and
13 Budgeting, and then Margaret Forgione, who can also
14 add where we are when it comes to operations.

15 Look, I know. We know. We've been there. We
16 were there together. And we know that when we are at
17 BMT, we are in a leadership, we have to make
18 decisions. We went through tough fiscal challenges
19 in the city. We feel that the cuts within the
20 capital: Definitely more is always better. But as a
21 city, we have limited resources. We feel that we
22 had-- that we know to keep operations back. Paul
23 Ochoa, from Budgets and Finance, can add a little bit
24 more, and then Margaret from operations.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Hey, Chair, good
3 morning. The-- It wasn't actually a cut, it was a
4 stretch. So we-- The first thing we did was align
5 capital projects to their current timelines to ensure
6 that the-- the projects we have funded in the Capital
7 Plan are actually lining with construction timelines.
8 It that, we moved funds around to align them, which
9 means we pushed funds to the out years. It is not a
10 cut. We've also-- In conversation with OMB and City
11 Hall, we've gotten commitments that if the projects
12 move forward in the timeline that they should, we'll
13 be able to move that money up into the inner-year
14 window.

15 So, I wouldn't call it a cut necessarily. It's a
16 stretch exercise. We-- the City did have some debt
17 capacity issues that luckily were resolved in The
18 Governor's budget. But we do have that commitment
19 from OMB that we'll be able to move money around as
20 needed.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Was it a systematic
22 approach, or a project-by-project assessment, or did
23 you determine it, or did OMB determine it?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: No, we did. What we
25 do is look at all the divisions. We ask all the

2 divisions with capital projects, bridges,
3 reconstruction, and the same to tell us where we are
4 on the projects. From there we say, "Okay, well,
5 this is where the project is in terms of
6 construction, and this is where the project ends in
7 terms of the financial plan," and we align those. We
8 tried to-- we did not touch any projects, for example
9 that were close to registering this year, or close to
10 registering next year, in order to give us that
11 flexibility and not push-- not make this budget
12 exercise have any impact on the actual deliverable of
13 projects.

14 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Did you look at borough
15 equity?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yeah, absolutely. I
17 mean, this is-- this is the one of the core functions
18 we do at DOT. We don't see any sort of inequity in
19 terms of the Capital Plan. We look at-- We look at
20 everything. But again, the stretch exercise should
21 not have any impact on timeline deliverables for the
22 specific projects.

23 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Chair, if you don't
24 mind, since Margaret is our person-- the First Deputy

2 Commissioner that oversees oversees all operations,
3 she can add about how we are managing those items.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Thank you. The
5 one thing that I would add to what my colleagues have
6 said is that we have not sacrificed or compromised
7 any of our core services that involve capital
8 funding. So, we haven't reduced paving, we haven't
9 reduced streetlight or traffic signal installations.
10 We also very closely watch the-- the inspection and
11 the rating of all of our bridges to ensure that no
12 work that needs to happen on a bridge to ensure
13 public safety is delayed.

14 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you. That's helpful.
15 Let's talk about federal funding. How much federal
16 funding is DOT anticipating for FY 24 and 25?

17 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Again, I'm proud of the
18 work, led by Paul, [INAUDIBLE], and the whole team,
19 you know, at least have-- are eager with the team who
20 gets those works to be done. Paul will get into one,
21 sharing how much we've been able to get on federal
22 grant, and what is our projection for the future.

23 But when I look through our numbers, I think that
24 we definitely are, you know, getting a historical

2 record number of federal dollars that were have been
3 able to bring.

4 So Paul, if you want to share where we have been,
5 and what are the projections for the future.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yeah, thanks Chair.

7 So, there are several ways we receive federal
8 funding. As the Commissioner mentioned, the
9 bipartisan infrastructure law and the inflation
10 reduction law have brought in hundreds of millions of
11 dollars to the city in competitive grant
12 applications. We've won about \$90-- about \$100
13 million in projects for those competitive grants.

14 We also receive on a year-to-year basis what we
15 call formula funds. These are more traditional funds
16 that we use for paving, for streetlights, for
17 staffing of the ferry, for example. I can pull the
18 exact number that we get from the formula funds. It
19 is substantial. I will get that number before the
20 end of the hearing.

21 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: And one thing that I
22 learned, being a former Chairman is when Chima and
23 the whole team used to prepare me for the budget, one
24 of the questions was, "Why do we have less money by
25 this time, than the money that we had in October?"

2 So the reality, then the formula funding, there is
3 some of those money that will come later on during
4 the year. So a lot of the federal funding-- As you
5 know, it's very competitive-- That money goes
6 through the State. We have to apply through the
7 State. There's some less-- limited, but I feel that
8 resources that come directly, that we can apply
9 directly from the US Department of Transportation to
10 New York City. But I feel again, we have a great
11 team and we've been getting a good amount of dollars
12 in federal grants.

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Yeah, Paul, if you could
14 get us the accounting of--

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: I do have the number,
16 Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Good.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Pardon me. It's-- We
19 estimate about \$1.2 billion over the next five years.
20 And this is just an estimation. The number-- The
21 actual numbers come in year-to-year as the
22 Commissioner mentioned.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. All right. Let's
24 talk about road resurfacing. In the Executive Plan,
25 \$8 million in capital IFA funding was added in FY 24,

2 increasing to \$14 million in FY 25 in the out years.

3 According to OMB, this is due to increased costs for

4 asphalt. Per the recent-- The Mayor's management

5 report, the average cost per ton of asphalt in this

6 city was about \$52, compared to \$73 provided by

7 outside vendors. So has the city considered

8 increasing its in-house capacity for asphalt

9 production and procurement to reduce those costs?

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I feel that-- And

11 Margaret's the First Deputy of Transportation

12 including the Roadway Division led by Irena, who is

13 here. She will add. But I will say that-- We are

14 proud to say, you know, and this is the thing that,

15 when I walk, I was telling Eric-- When we see this

16 photo, for me it's about-- It is so interesting, when

17 we walk in the street, for all to know all the work.

18 Not myself as a Commissioner, but the men and women,

19 they do to take care of our streets. And one of the

20 things about the roadways: We produce-- As you say,

21 our team not only goes out, and you see them these

22 during the spring and the summer, resurfacing our

23 streets, but as you say we produce 50% of the

24 asphalt. And last year, for the first time in Staten

25 Island, we started mixing plastic to produce asphalt

2 too. But Margaret, you would like to-- may add to
3 it.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yes. So as we
5 know, asphalt is gravel and materials that are held
6 together with a petroleum based product. So as oil
7 prices rise, so does the price of asphalt production.
8 You do point out that our asphalt is cheaper.
9 However, we think the roughly 50/50 balance of
10 producing it in-house versus purchasing it is a
11 pretty good way to go. There's a bunch of
12 considerations that we take into account. Sometimes
13 we need to do service on our two asphalt plants, so
14 having capabilities in other places is helpful. And
15 then also having asphalt plants in various locations
16 around the city closer to our paving sites also makes
17 a lot of sense because in the colder months, we can
18 get the asphalt to the site more quickly.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Is that-- I mean, is there
20 a goal to get to 100% in-house, or that's not really
21 the goal?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: We have-- We have
23 not stated that that's a goal. No.

24 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I think that this is a
25 conversation, again, we definitely can have. We feel

2 that it-- we always work, led by Margaret and the
3 team, Irena in on Roadways, again not only having our
4 team to work on the street resurfacing, but producing
5 the asphalt. And one thing that probably we should
6 do one day is to visit the plant. So I offer for you
7 and the Chairman Powers to go and see the whole
8 operation. We think that our plants producing 50%
9 allows for us to keep a good balance on how much
10 we're spending. Moving forward, we can have a
11 conversation. It will mean continued upgrading,
12 continued investing more, identifying sites.
13 Everything is possible, but we feel that producing
14 50% allows for or to have a good control of how much
15 we spend for the material that we use to pave our
16 streets.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: I've got a couple more.
18 Let's talk about the Staten Island Ferry conversion
19 to the biorenewable fuel. The Executive Plan
20 includes \$1.4 million in city funds in FY 24 and \$6
21 million in baseline funding starting in FY 25 for
22 motor fuel. According to OMB, this funding relates
23 to the conversion of the Staten Island ferries to
24 biorenewable fuel. Can you walk us through the
25 conversion plan and the timeline?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: This is-- This is
3 incredibly exciting. Yes, we are piloting the usage
4 of biofuel for the ferry team. We tried it over the
5 winter. It worked great. The costs are slightly
6 higher, but they-- we do expect that cost to come
7 down eventually as it becomes more available. I
8 think the-- it's not just a ferry. We've been
9 working closely with DCAS. They're the ones leading
10 the citywide efforts to increase the use of biofuel.
11 Sanitation uses it. The firetruck uses-- the Fire
12 Department uses it. So it's a very exciting move
13 that the city is undertaking.

14 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: How many-- How many ferry
15 boats-- Staten Island Ferry boats are currently in
16 operation? Are any of them working on biofuel right
17 now?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Right. We're only
19 working with one of the ferries with the renewable
20 diesel right now.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: How many ferries do we
22 have?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Um, I think we
24 have about 14, but let me confirm the number.

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: But just one is operating
3 with biofuel?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. And is there-- So,
6 is the target still 2026 to convert them all? Is
7 that the target?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: As Paul said, we
9 are working with DCAS. We want to increase the
10 number. I don't think we can say for sure that we
11 will be converted by that point.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yes, Chair. Our
13 understanding is that the supply is not quite there
14 yet, but we do expect that New York City will set the
15 market for-- will be able to produce-- for producers
16 to provide that biodiesel.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. Okay, I want to talk
18 about the fake license plates, and the impact that
19 they have on revenue collection. Regardless of how
20 you feel about congestion pricing, according to an
21 audit by the City Comptroller, defaced, obscured, and
22 fake license plates have cost the city upwards, or
23 over \$100 million a year in revenue. And the
24 proliferation of fake and defaced plates has really
25 gotten out of control. And I think while there have

2 been occasional crackdowns, they're not enough to
3 truly address the issue. I think the city is leaving
4 a considerable amount of revenue on the table by not
5 addressing these fake plates. And I think-- You
6 know, I don't think the crackdown is really the
7 answer. I think it's really gotten out of control,
8 and any driver could tell you that. I think we need
9 upgraded technology to better address these
10 enforcement challenges.

11 I know that cars sold since 2019 are all
12 connected via this GPS Telematics API technology.
13 And I know that there's a new RFP coming out on the
14 cameras. So, are we upgrading the cameras? And in
15 light of this? You know, are we exploring the
16 updated camera technology that would allow--
17 Basically what I'm told is that this technology-- It
18 doesn't matter what your license plate says, or you
19 know, it's defaced or whatever it is, this technology
20 would be able to tell whose car it is, who owns it,
21 and you could properly toll or ticket that person.

22 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yep. First of all, this
23 is, like, a real issue that Mayor Eric Adams and
24 Governor Kathy Hochul, they've been taking very
25 seriously. As you know, during COVID, there were so

2 many cars with those fake tags everywhere. We
3 definitely can-- have seen a reduction. The Governor
4 and The Mayor recently announced a joint, multi-
5 agency task force to crack down on those car
6 placards, and those agencies mainly are led by NYPD,
7 the sheriff's office, MTA, Bridges and Tunnels, New
8 York State Police, Department of Motor Vehicle, Port
9 Authority Police. So, when it comes to how the City
10 and the State is taking this, it is, like, taking
11 very seriously.

12 But Paul, if you don't mind to also share a
13 little bit about, since we also are working in the
14 process for the new speed cameras, we are also
15 looking to add new technology in the new camera that
16 we will have in the future.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yeah, thank you
18 Chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Is that-- Has that RFP been
20 released yet?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Not-- Not yet. It
22 should be released in the next few weeks. I first
23 want to mention, and I always talk about this when we
24 talk about automated enforcement: It's never about
25 revenue, it's about compliance. But it is an issue.

2 I think you're absolutely right, and as the
3 Commissioner said, it is an issue. It does require a
4 state law, and as the Commissioner mentioned, we are
5 going to be working with The Governor's office. The
6 technology is there. It's called DNA of the vehicle.
7 It's sort of how they talk about it. You can just
8 have a few digits and the license, and with the color
9 and make of the vehicle, you should be able to match
10 the driver. So, we are working for that
11 authorization. It is also going to be included as
12 part of the new RFP, as the Commissioner mentioned,
13 that we're going to be releasing for automated
14 enforcement.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Yeah, because I think the
16 technology has greatly advanced since we-- Basically,
17 what we have now is a Kodak camera compared to what's
18 available, right? So...

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: The-- Our cameras are
20 capable of this technology. It does require a change
21 in state legislation.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: What's the what's the
23 legislation we would need?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: It's about-- Right
25 now you can only issue tickets for license plates

2 that are fully visible. So, the legislation will be
3 about-- It's sort of a due process issue with that.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, we should work on--
5 Let's talk about that.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Sure.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: That's important. I'd hate
8 to see that, you know, the new art-- I'd hate to see
9 us just-- If this new technology is available, I'd
10 hate to see us just put out the same cameras that
11 we've got now.

12 The last thing is about Citi Bike. At the end of
13 Citi Bike expansion phase three, which brought bike
14 sharing to the outer boroughs such as Elmhurst, and
15 Marble Hill, and Sunset Park. Unfortunately, growth
16 has now stalled just at the time when you're sort of
17 at the doorstep of other outer boroughs, suddenly
18 Citi Bike is saying they're broke.

19 What are the obstacles standing in the way of
20 further expansion? I know there's been discussion
21 about city subsidy. But you know, when you look at
22 the map, it looks like the transit rich areas,
23 they've got all the Citi Bike they need, but when you
24 get down to you know, southeast Queens or deep
25 southwest Brooklyn, we've got no Citi Bike, and

2 conveniently this is when they say they're broke,
3 just when it's time to expand. So, we'd like to
4 figure that out.

5 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: The commitment of Mayor
6 Eric Adams and us is to connect all communities with
7 Citi Bike and micromobility. As you know, the
8 Council with the previous group led by Councilmem--
9 Former Councilmember Rapheal Espinal, we passed a
10 pilot project, and we started scooter programming in
11 Councilmember Fernando Cabrera's district, that
12 proved it was very successful. As a former Council,
13 I pushed DOT at that time to be showing The
14 Administration, that we go to the different phases.
15 The Administration saw that we can expand Citi Bike,
16 and at that time we went up to Washington Heights.
17 We went to the Lincoln Hospital. So, definitely,
18 we've been seeing a lot of progress. I saw a Citi
19 Bike at 242nd in the Bronx. Like, you know, it's in
20 places that we never thought it would be when they
21 started with Citi Bike.

22 It is important that we all understand the
23 benefits of biking, and what we are doing versus
24 working to change the courtroom. In New York City a
25 lot of people see biking as being equal to be poor,

2 and a car became a symbol of progress. And I shared,
3 when I was sitting on that side: I was born in 1965.
4 My father had a bike in the Caribbean. But we were
5 told, going by the car, going by the car, and our
6 people gave up the bike. I know that for Chairman
7 Powers, we were riding bike with Henry Garrido,
8 right?, in [INAUDIBLE], and I know that they had fun.
9 I was riding a scooter with Councilmember David in
10 Israel, in the Holy City, and coming back from there
11 we saw all the benefits.

12 As I was riding a bike with the Minister of
13 Transportation of Ireland, he was saying, "A person
14 who rides a bike half an hour every day extends six
15 years to their life." So, we are expanding,
16 educating our people to know: Bike lane is not equal
17 to a community being gentrified. Biking is not a
18 luxury. Biking is good for the health, it is good
19 for the environment, and is good for the economy.

20 So, one of the things that we are doing, you
21 know, working with changing the culture, for people
22 to know that, no, biking is not only something for
23 the upper class and middle class, and people with a
24 high level of education. It is good for everyone.

2 Second, we are changing-- we continue working
3 building the infrastructure. I was having dinner
4 with Henry Garrido from District 37 Last week, and he
5 was talking about how he takes the ferry from where
6 he lives in Soundview to come here to his office.
7 But he said, "I would have had challenges if I used
8 my bike, because the bike lane is not there, nearby
9 me."

10 So, this is the work that we are doing. I feel
11 that we have to continue as working together, again,
12 one, to educate our people about the benefits of
13 biking, second, expanding our infrastructure, working
14 with Citi Bike, to continue expanding the new phases
15 so that we can connect more communities with biking.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: So, do we have a timeline
17 for when we might see that-- that next expansion into
18 the so-called outer boroughs?

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We are, right now, in
20 the process to see how we responded. We can get back
21 to you with a time, but we are in conversation with
22 Lyft and Citi Bike, on even expanding, going further
23 with phase three. We are on the phase three, that's
24 where we are so far. Would you like to add
25 something?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: I was just going
3 to add that we're also looking at other ways to reach
4 communities, such as expanding our Scooter Share
5 Program, which has been very successful in the Bronx,
6 Where Citi Bike is not present.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: I think we've come a long
8 way. And I think, you know, for my district, people
9 want more Citi Bike now, which is a big change from
10 how it was, say 10 years ago, or whatever. But, um,
11 you know-- but it's frustrating to see that map, and
12 just when it starts finally making some progress in
13 southern Brooklyn, Citi Bike says they're broke. So,
14 it's hard for us not to, sort of, take that
15 personally.

16 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: And I think that's, you
17 know-- The Mayor, Deputy Mayor Joshi and I, we
18 announced it in Queens, one of the most ambitious
19 plans for the greenway in Queens. We also announced
20 with The Mayor in Highbridge Park, you know, last
21 year, and we went back to announce how we are getting
22 the community engagement, to think about building the
23 greenway from Van Cortlandt Park to Randalls Island.
24 We're talking about eight miles that we also see as
25 potential places where we also can connect those

2 eight miles for our New Yorkers to-- especially those
3 in the underserved communities to have the same
4 access to walk to a bike. So it's about, again,
5 working. I think that we have the best public-
6 private formula with Citi Bike where we live. We are
7 also doing our own investment, and your support, you
8 know, is critical. We know that when I did the bike
9 lane attachment, the community wanted to kill me.
10 And now they see the benefit, though. So, this is
11 about, you know, doing our work together to educate
12 our community about how biking is not equal to a
13 community being gentrified. We can do it because
14 it's good for our people, especially those who died
15 doing COVID with asthma and obesity died because, you
16 know, sometimes in those communities, working class,
17 we had not built the infrastructure. So it's about
18 building the infrastructure, and it's also about
19 continuing working in this case with a private-public
20 formula with Citi Bike.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you, Commissioner.
22 I'm now going to turn it over my co-Chair. Before I
23 do that, we've been joined by Councilmembers Hanks,
24 Ariola, Banks, and Stevens.

2 Now I'm going to turn it over to Chair Selvina
3 Brooks-Powers.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, Chair.
5 Commissioner, we'll just start with the Streets Plan.
6 The Streets Plan is an enacted law, but in DOT's most
7 recent report released on the Streets Plan, the
8 Department admitted that it has only built 9.6 miles
9 of bus lanes, or 19% of the requirement. The agency
10 was also required to upgrade 1,000 bus stops, but has
11 completed only 6.8% of the requirement.

12 On the other hand, you've built out 58.2 miles of
13 bike lanes which is almost 72% of the requirement.
14 Why have you been able to come closer to meeting the
15 bike lane requirement, but not the targets for bus
16 lanes or bus stops?

17 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: There are some projects
18 that, in this case, DOT, we have a whole flexibility
19 to go out and do projects, right? But there's
20 others, such as this one, that require a lot of
21 different partners and even voices of the community.

22 Look, I was in Poland last week, last Monday.
23 And when I go in, I sat at the table, on the panel,
24 with the leadership with the USA Department of
25 Transportation, and mayors and leaders across the

2 nation. Everyone is looking at New York City, how we
3 did 32 miles are protected bike lane last year. That
4 number is larger than the numbers of protected bike
5 lanes built by all the largest city in the nation
6 together. So, we know that sometimes even our heart
7 is about, we would like to support this bus lane and
8 bike lane. But there are some basis that we also
9 represent that say, "No we can not support that bus
10 lane or bike lane." So as a co-sponsor of the Street
11 Master Plan that I was, as a chairman that passed the
12 bill, my heart and my commitment is to work with the
13 Street Master Plan. We feel that the 18 miles of
14 protected bus lane, new or enhanced, that we did last
15 year, with the 32 protected bike lanes, you know, we
16 definitely turned good numbers. When we met with the
17 advocate, they understand in the years, we had a goal
18 and the law established how many we had to build, but
19 also we focused on, you know, not only the quantity,
20 but also about equality: How many ridership do we
21 move even sometimes when we do one or two miles or
22 protected bike lane or bus lanes.

23 So yes, we have challenges in front of us. It is
24 difficult to accomplish this number. It is not only

2 around the DOT, is about also getting the support of
3 so many stakeholders.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I mean, one would
5 argue that you need to engage stakeholders on all
6 fronts. But there has been a clear prioritization on
7 bike lanes over bus lanes, where the buses are moving
8 people in the outer boroughs and communities of
9 color, low-income communities, compared to where the
10 access to-- as Chair Brannan indicated, the bike
11 sharing programs, and so what is the reason for DOT's
12 failure to meet its mandated targets in the Streets
13 Plan?

14 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Sometimes, even support
15 from a local Councilmember or elected official in the
16 community that they represent. As I said, when I did
17 a bus lane at 181st. Still, even today when I take a
18 taxi my community, the taxi comes to me, and he say,
19 "Why I cannot go straight at 181st from Broadway to
20 Amsterdam?" And I have to take my time to explain:
21 "Yes, because it takes three more minutes for you not
22 to go straight to 181st, but to make the right turn,
23 and go to 180th to Amsterdam, and it will take you
24 three more minutes. If you are inside the car, you
25 have a good air conditioning, you have good heat, you

2 can play your music. But those who come out from the
3 1 Train at 181st and Nicholas Avenue, that they were
4 waiting for 40 minutes to take the 13, the 36, and
5 with the bus lane, they reduced that time by 20
6 minutes. Our policy is thinking about the majority."
7 So sometimes myself believe that, myself who did the
8 bus lane audit first, I did it without support from
9 my community. I did the bike lane when there was
10 people saying we are putting ourselves in chains. We
11 can not allow--

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But Commissioner--

13 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: --if I do choice about
14 opposition in may locations

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And I have to stop
16 you there. Because the law stipulates that the DOT
17 is mandated and required to implement bus lanes and
18 bike lanes. It does not mandate the City Council to
19 do that. The City Council passed this legislation
20 for DOT to implement this. It is a requirement on
21 the agency to implement this. So, I don't think that
22 it's fair to continue to deflect onto the members of
23 this body for something that the agency is required
24 to implement.

2 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, you're right. And
3 again, I learned from Gale Brewer, you know, to go
4 straight and say the things I believe, not try to be
5 politically correct. What I am saying is a
6 councilmember-- let's say we ask each councilmember
7 to come back to us, "Do you support more bike lanes
8 and bus lanes in your district?" And we know-- And
9 we know that in many councils it is difficult,
10 because sometimes if you live in a transportation
11 desert area, that people rely on the car. If you go
12 out and presented a plan to do a bike lane, there's
13 opposition. And that's the reality.

14 You can say, "What about DOT?" When you want
15 something, we do it. We want to get there, to those
16 numbers. And by the way, when we-- when we passed
17 the Street Master Plan, we didn't include our time
18 dining out, which we did. We didn't include car-free
19 days, which we did.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But when you im-- But
21 when you implemented those, this legislation had
22 already passed and should have been taken into
23 account. So, 20/20 is always, you know, perfect
24 vision, but, however, when we moved on to outdoor
25 dining, and you Commissioner advocated very heavily

2 for it, because you felt that DOT had the bandwidth
3 and capacity to implement that. It should have been
4 taken into account that the agency is still required
5 by law to implement The Streets Plan.

6 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: No, it is. Again I
7 completely agree with you, and we are not-- You
8 know, we are so committed. And I can say-- and Eric
9 Beaton, who oversee that division, he can share all
10 of the great work that we have done, because I'm
11 proud. When I did the bike-- five-borough bike
12 tours, and-- and we were there together, Lincoln was
13 there. Gale was there. The other Councilmembers
14 too, , that girl was there, Marte. When I was there,
15 with the largest bike tour in the nation happening in
16 New York City, the second largest one, people from
17 all states, plus people from 65 different nations.
18 They just look at us and say, "How are you doing
19 this?" So what I say is, yes, it is the law. And as
20 a Commissioner, I take it -- and Mayor Adams too --
21 very seriously. I've been also open and transparent
22 to you. Sometime when I go and have my dinner with
23 you guys, you know, there's challenges for some
24 councilmembers to support those bike lanes and bus
25 lanes in your district.

2 So this is about continuing working together.

3 Yes, we passed a law. It is a law. We are committed
4 to follow that, but we sometimes hit big and tough
5 rocks when we tried to go through with bus lanes and
6 bike lanes through different communities. I wanted
7 to bus lanes at Fordham, like the opposite bus lanes
8 makes sense. We couldn't make it. There was not the
9 support there.

10 So, we are committed. But Eric, if you don't
11 mind also to share a little bit of information here
12 on everything that we have done on the Street Master
13 Plan.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Sure. And I
15 especially want to highlight it. As the Commissioner
16 said, we care deeply about quality, not just
17 quantity. That if all we wanted to do was, you know,
18 stripe miles and miles and miles, I'm sure we could
19 do that. But we want to make sure that these are
20 done correctly, that they're done safely, that
21 they're done working with communities to make sure
22 that they're done in the right ways. And we put a
23 lot of effort into that. So, we--

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But I only see that
25 type of contemplation when it comes to the bus lanes.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: So with the bus
3 lanes-- And you're right that the miles are lower,
4 but it's also a good example of looking at the
5 quality versus the quantity. The places where we
6 upgrade a bus lane from curbside only a couple hours
7 a day to offset it more hours a day, that doesn't
8 count under the Streets Plan Law, but it's still a
9 really good thing to do because it moves the bus
10 faster. The Streets Plan also has requirements about
11 camera enforcement for bus lanes, otherwise, you
12 don't get to count it.

13 As Paul mentioned, we're working on a new RFP,
14 we're working closely with the MTA to be able to get
15 more camera enforcement out there, so that more of
16 the work that we do does count towards that-- that
17 target.

18 So the-- You know, there's a lot of complexity to
19 how we count those numbers. But the goal at the end
20 of the day is to make sure we're benefiting as many
21 New Yorkers as possible. So, like, this year when we
22 upgrade the bus lane on Second Avenue, that's
23 something that, first of all, benefits a huge number
24 of people; it's the busiest bus are in the city. But
25 we're not going to get credit for it because it

2 already has a bus lane and we're just making it
3 better. We still think that that's the right thing
4 to do, because it benefits the most people.

5 But, you know, it's-- I think we're working very
6 hard in the spirit of the of the law. And we're also
7 trying to, with cameras and other things, make sure
8 that we're meeting the numbers as well.

9 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Let me also share with
10 you some other accomplishments. DOT met several
11 Street Plan benchmarks with record-setting numbers.
12 We installed a record of 666,000 square feet of
13 pedestrian space for a total of 1 million square feet
14 since 2022. We redesigned 1,464 intersections. We
15 install a record 866 assessable potential signals.
16 On most benchmarks where we fell short of the goal,
17 we increase our production over 2022, including the
18 most protected bike lanes ever installed in a single
19 year.

20 DOT improved the lives of 300,000 daily bus
21 riders in 2023, and 44 million annual bus riders. We
22 project that we have made their services faster and
23 more reliable. We also made our goal of upgrading
24 half of all delineated, protected bike lanes in the
25 city, over 20 miles, with starting material by the

2 end of 2023. We've been widening the bike lane at
3 Tenth Avenue and Third Avenue. And also we are
4 widening--

5 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: As I said, I contend, you
6 guys have been doing a fabulous job with the bike
7 lanes in terms of implementation. That's not my
8 concern today. It's the bus lanes. But I just want
9 to kind of move this along.

10 During the preliminary budget hearing, DOT stated
11 that funding was part of the issue preventing it from
12 meeting the Streets Plan benchmarks. You also stated
13 that sometimes more support is needed from
14 communities where new bus lanes and bike lanes are
15 created. Can you further detail the specific hurdles
16 DOT has encountered in meeting benchmarks, and what
17 you are doing to address them? Also, I'm curious to
18 know how much funding is budgeted in the Executive
19 Plan for implementation of the Streets Plan, broken
20 down by the fiscal year. And as it relates to the
21 Streets Plan, how are you utilizing DOT's existing
22 financial resources as effectively as possible?

23 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: As I say, we always can
24 do more with more, but this is like when I was there,
25 and you were there, and we go through the last day of

2 the budget negotiations, and you've been told you
3 have \$350 million to distribute, but you had a need
4 to \$300 million-- I mean, a billion dollars. So we--
5 - I feel that the way, or how, you know, we run our
6 finance, in this case, run by Paul Ochoa, and the
7 team, Elisabeth. You know, allow for us to maximize
8 every single dollar. We had to go through those PEGs
9 that, you know, the City went through. And I feel
10 that from the operations side. You know, we had a
11 great team, Margaret obviously, all the six top
12 operation units in our agency. So, we are doing the
13 best to accomplish all the goals that we have
14 following the Street Master Plan, or the law that we
15 have passed, and I was so lucky to be on that side,
16 being a prime or co-prime on those bills. So-- But
17 finance is always a challenge. We always can do more
18 with more. But, we are happy with the support that
19 we've been getting from Mayor Adams, as he increased
20 our budget in 2022 by 18%, as he added \$300 million
21 at the beginning of 2023, even though we went through
22 a PEG. But I can say that The Mayor has put his
23 money where his mouth is when it came to support for
24 us for other resources that we need to accomplish our
25 goals.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And just so I'm
3 clear, because what I didn't hear was the steps that
4 DOT is taking to manage the hurdles that you're
5 facing in terms of implementation. What tangible
6 steps are being taken?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Right. So I want
8 to reassure you that we are constantly meeting and
9 strategizing over all the elements in the Streets
10 Plan, and where we are falling short, and what we can
11 do. We work closely with the Borough Commissioners,
12 and in terms of bus projects that you're concerned
13 about, and we're also concerned about, it's not for
14 lack of locations, it's not for lack of ideas of
15 where we can do more. But, we work closely with our
16 Borough Commissioners, and then with you the
17 electeds, and with the community boards, to broach
18 the projects, talk about the projects. So, the key
19 thing there is we could probably do more if we
20 implemented projects like the Commissioner mentioned,
21 say Fordham Road, in spite of strong opposition,
22 okay?, and we're not at that point. We know both the
23 Council and the communities want us to work carefully
24 with the public and with the neighborhoods.

2 So we're going to keep hitting it, we're going to
3 keep pushing it. And we're going to do more and more
4 every year as best we can.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, and I
6 definitely encourage that because I know for me, I
7 talk pretty frequently to my Borough Commissioner
8 about day-to-day, constituent matters, but we haven't
9 really had a comprehensive conversation as Chair
10 about what the implementation could look like even in
11 my district, and how we could work together with the
12 community to implement it. So as Chair, if it's not
13 happening with me, I don't know what's happening with
14 my colleagues.

15 So--

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Okay. We would
17 love to sit with you and have that conversation.
18 We'd greatly appreciate it.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm totally open to
20 that.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I want to say this: If I
23 will have the support, or every single councilmember
24 to do the bus lane and bike lane that we need, we
25 will accomplish those goals.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I think equally, and
3 I-- and I don't want to speak out of turn, but I
4 think a lot of my colleagues feel the same. If DOT
5 approaches this body in a way of collaboration, where
6 we are being proactive and having these conversations
7 and bringing community and the members in on the
8 front end, right?, and leaving room to make the
9 adjustments in trusting the local climate before
10 implementation, I think you would see a lot less
11 resistance to some of these projects.

12 I want to move on to accessibility. A 2018
13 lawsuit brought against the DOT concerning the
14 installation of Accessible Pedestrian Signals, also
15 known as APS reiterated that the department is not
16 upholding requirements under several state and
17 federal laws, including the Americans with
18 Disabilities Act. In his opinion, Judge Paul
19 Engelmayer stated that the city had violated the law
20 hundreds of times by failing to equip the
21 intersections with accessible signals so visually
22 impaired pedestrians could enjoy the same level of
23 mobility and safety as sighted pedestrians.

24 The judgment set forth the requirements that APS
25 be installed across the city, as well as outlining a

2 detailed action plan to improve accessibility by
3 installing APS at 10,000 signalized intersections
4 over the next 10 years. By 2036, all signals in the
5 city should be accessible.

6 Funding for APS projects and the Executive
7 Capital Commitment Plan total \$115.1 million over the
8 five years of the plan, which is \$15.8 million less
9 than the Preliminary Capital Commitment Plan due to
10 funding that was pushed into future years.

11 Why has DOT not prioritized and installations of
12 APS on a more accelerated timeline? And last year
13 DOT exceeded their Street Plan APS requirements by
14 73%. How were you able to do this? Can we expect to
15 see an increased pace of expansion going forward?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: So we very much
17 share the concern about making sure our streets or
18 sidewalks and all of our crossings are accessible and
19 safe for the public. This is a top priority for us.
20 So, ever since we settled with the court, we have met
21 or exceeded-- actually, every year, we have exceeded
22 the court-mandated numbers for accessible pedestrian
23 signal installation.

24 So, to date we have installed 2500 APS. By 2031,
25 we will have completed 10,000 APS, which is the bulk

2 of all signalized intersections. We will keep going
3 after that.

4 We've also implemented sort of new procedures to
5 make sure that we're hitting this very hard. Every
6 newly signalized intersection has an APS installed
7 with it. So, if we have a brand new traffic signal,
8 we're doing the entire intersection while we are
9 there for efficiency, and we have committed the funds
10 that we need in order to get this work done.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How many do you
12 expect to install this year? And how many do you
13 expect to install next year,

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: We will install at
15 least 700 This year, and I will get the number for
16 next year, it could be 700 or 800. But we will, in
17 all likelihood, exceed these numbers. And when we
18 laid out the timing for doing APS is this was
19 something new for New York, we didn't quite know how
20 it would go. But again, we're putting all of our
21 resources into this and we're exceeding the numbers
22 that we had had in the court mandated order.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you. I'm going to
24 come back on round two for questions on that. I want

2 to just kind of get through a couple more topics to
3 allow my colleagues to ask questions.

4 I'm pivoting now to Vision Zero. New York City
5 has recorded 78 traffic deaths during the first four
6 months of 2024, which marks the deadliest start to a
7 calendar year under the city's Vision Zero program,
8 which launched a decade ago. In the Council's budget
9 response, we called on the Administration to restore
10 \$3 million funding for Vision Zero education and
11 outreach that was cut in the Preliminary Plan, but it
12 was not restored in the Executive Plan. Did DOT push
13 for restoration of this cut in the Executive Plan?
14 And how does the City justify reducing funding for
15 education and outreach for traffic safety when our
16 streets are becoming more dangerous for pedestrians,
17 cyclists, and drivers?

18 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: As you said when we lose
19 a loved one, friend, family, and I go and talk to the
20 interfaith community, I say when family lose a loved
21 one, they come to your religious institution, they
22 cry with you, and they are asking for support,
23 spiritual support. So, definitely Vision Zero is
24 something that is critical and we have seen that it
25 is working.

2 To get the lowest numbers of pedestrian
3 fatalities last year in our cities since we started
4 collecting those data 113 years ago, is showing that
5 the work that we're doing is producing a [INAUDIBLE]
6 outcome. When, again, the nation had the highest
7 numbers of pedestrian fatalities since 1980, we had
8 the lowest number last year or pedestrian fatalities.

9 Also, so let me give you-- Last year we lost 55
10 individuals on motorcycle. And as you saw that
11 campaign that we did in the NYPD going with education
12 and enforcement, from those 55 individuals using
13 motorcycle that we lost, only 13 had licenses. And
14 that's why we are doing educational, for them to know
15 how to dress, you know, with color when they get onto
16 the motorcycle, how to get insurance, to work with
17 the Department of Motor Vehicles. From those
18 cyclists that we lost last year, 30 of them, 23 were
19 cycling using electric bikes, and 7 of them,
20 unfortunately, they were not hit by a car. They lost
21 their lives when they fell, when they hit a wall.

22 So, we are not sitting there. And that's where,
23 again, the educational component is so important for
24 both. For educating on motorcycles, we launched a
25 campaign in the social media with the NYPD and the

2 Department of Motor Vehicle, Governor Hochul, and
3 Mayor Adams. With the electric bike safety, we also
4 launched a campaign, Get Smart Before You Start, so
5 that people also learn how to accelerate, how to use
6 their brake when they use electric bike.

7 So, definitely Vision Zero had the three E's:
8 One is the Engineer, which is led by Eric Beaton,
9 leading a great team, redesigning our streets to make
10 our streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists, and
11 for the most vulnerable, in this case, who are senior
12 citizen. The second E is about Enforcement, working
13 with the NYPD, using the automatic enforcement, the
14 speed camera. We need the Council and us working
15 together to continue working with Albany, to renew
16 and to expand the red light cameras. This is a pilot
17 project, a pilot project for 30 years. We have
18 14,000 intersections in New York City. And only--
19 I'm sorry, 44,000 intersections in New York City, and
20 only 13,700 of those have signals. But New York City
21 is only allow to have the red light camera in--

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Sorry, Commissioner,
23 I just want to get back on--

24 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: --150-- If you don't
25 mind, the red light cameras, because it is important,

2 the red light cameras save lives. I want to
3 highlight the part. And I know that this is
4 something that we have advocated together. This will
5 expire in December. So, we just need to work
6 together again with the educational and enforcement.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yes, I'm sorry. I
8 just want to get us back on track. I need answers to
9 the questions that I actually asked. So, to be
10 clear, did DOT push for the restoration of this cut
11 in the Executive Plan? Yes or no?

12 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We definitely had good
13 conversations and support from OMB and from City
14 Hall. More is always better, and we maximize
15 everything--

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So yes, DOT
17 advocated.

18 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We always have good
19 conversations. Again, more is always better, the
20 funding for education of Vision Zero has making
21 important, positive impact.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And to be clear, how
23 does the city justify reducing funding for education,
24 and outreach, for traffic safety, when our streets,
25 as we all know, have become more dangerous? Not

2 looking at last year's numbers, but there were 78
3 traffic deaths in the first four months of this year.
4 So, I just want to know: What is the justification
5 from the Administration for this cut?

6 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Well, that-- Listen, the
7 administration had to make a tough decision. And if
8 we will be, you know, leading the Administration, you
9 have to be fiscally responsible. Sometime the
10 decision is taken that is not popular. Sometimes,
11 you know, when any PEG is happening, and any areas is
12 reduced, what we do is to focus on the more in house,
13 to maximize every single dollar. But again, more is
14 always better.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Given the record uptick in
16 fatalities and the PEG, how does DOT plan to ensure
17 that city residents benefit equitably from efforts to
18 reduce traffic violence?

19 Given the record uptick in fatalities and the PEG
20 How does DOT plan to ensure that the city residents
21 benefit equitably from efforts to reduce traffic
22 violence?

23 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Well, I've got to say
24 that I didn't enjoy this moment being a Commissioner.
25 Because everyone knows, I've been very open, everyone

2 on my record, very involved in civil disobedience,
3 very involved with you know, community and student
4 activists, being the teacher, being the
5 Councilmember, making agencies accountable. I'd like
6 to move MWBE from 11% in two years and 11 months to
7 24%. It takes a lot of initiative. And what I get
8 also is the support of the leadership that works with
9 me a DOT.

10 One dead is too many Councilmember. As I say
11 what we're doing is working 24 hours redesigning
12 dangerous intersections. As a council, we passed a
13 bill, where now when there's a crash and someone ends
14 in critical condition, NYPD responds for the criminal
15 investigation. DOT, we the Council, when I was
16 mandated DOT, now we're accountable to do it, DOT had
17 to send someone when there's a crash. And we look at
18 those crashes from the perspective of looking at if
19 there are any changes that we got to make.

20 So, we are taking the redesigning very seriously.
21 But I also-- we also need hope. Because, like when
22 we talk about, let's say, reducing the speed limit,
23 some people come and say, oh, New York City, they
24 don't want to drive. And what we're telling people
25 is we are voicing: Drive in the speed limit. If you

2 drive at 25, people are safer. The driver gets to a
3 destination safer. Pedestrians and cyclists, they
4 will not lose their life. So, we are doing the
5 redesigning, we are investing in the educational, but
6 also we need to come together, all of us, and working
7 with all the advocates, the interfaith, the cultural
8 institutions to expand our resources, educating our
9 people about the street doesn't belong only to people
10 that have cars. We need to protect pedestrians and
11 cyclists.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,
13 Commissioner. I'm going to pause my questions for
14 right now so we can hear from my colleagues, and then
15 I'll come back to this.

16 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you, Chair. We've
18 got questions. We've also been joined by
19 Councilmembers Powers and Sanchez. And we're going
20 to start with questions from Restler followed by
21 Louis.

22 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Great. Thank you so
23 much, Commissioner Rodriguez and team for being here.

24 I'm going to try to cover three topics, so I'm
25 going to ask for brief answers. I'm going to start

2 by just showing you a video. Last week-- A few days
3 ago, we had yet another very scary crash on McGinnis
4 Boulevard. This is McGuinness and Nassau. I imagine
5 you've seen it already. We've had 140 crashes at
6 just this intersection. We have a crash with a
7 serious injury on McGuinness Boulevard, less than a
8 mile long, every single week. We were told last year
9 that City Hall was going to be reducing a lane of
10 traffic, south of Calyer, between Calyer and Meeker.

11 We don't know what's happening now. We were
12 promised an answer in the spring. My community is
13 clamoring, demanding for safety on McGuinness. Is
14 there any timeline when we are going to get an answer
15 about whether this mayor is actually committed to
16 making McGuinness safe? Just a timeline?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Sure. So, again, as
18 you know, what we said in the fall was we were
19 getting started on the north section. And we've
20 we've done that, we think it's working well, there's
21 a few more pieces to finish up.

22 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: It's not what the
23 community has asked for.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: But we're-- As we
25 said, we're evaluating all the data and we will get

2 back to everyone shortly with what how we're going to
3 move forward.

4 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: No timeframe?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: We'll get back to you
6 soon.

7 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: And the data from the
8 fall and winter demonstrated that in fact, a road
9 diet would be an eminently reasonable policy. Is
10 that right?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: We are going through
12 the data right now.

13 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Okay. Well, everything
14 I've heard from folks who have looked at the data has
15 told me just that. So, we're very much hoping and
16 expecting that a road diet is in the future on
17 McGuinness Boulevard.

18 Secondly, the BQE: Everyone's favorite topic.
19 There's just \$174 million in the five-year Capital
20 Plan to fix the triple cantilever. Does that mean
21 that there's no large scale-- the significant amount
22 of funding that you all have allocated is actually in
23 the 10-year Capital Plan not anticipated for the next
24 five years. Does that mean that without the federal
25 funding that the city's application was rejected for,

2 that we're expecting major capital work to begin
3 within a five-year timeframe?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Thanks for that
5 question, Councilmember.

6 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Good to see you.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Thank you. The
8 funding is currently aligned with the construction
9 timeline of the BQE. The current funding we have is
10 enough for all the interim repairs and all the
11 environmental work that is happening. The stretch
12 that we did will not impact at all the timelines that
13 have been discussed.

14 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: So you're expecting the
15 major capital work that the Administration is hoping
16 to pursue to be five years out from now? Between 5
17 and 10 years from now?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: The timeline-- The
19 current capital timeline of fiscal-- calendar '28
20 start is what we are operating under currently.

21 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: But only \$174 million
22 being spent in that?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: That is what we need
24 to continue that work, and lead up to that start
25 date. Yes.

2 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Okay.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: So, we do not need
4 the money earlier in the Capital Plan.

5 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Okay, because I think
6 that The Administration intends to come for parkland
7 alienation and ULURP projects in the near future,
8 it's good to understand that there's nothing
9 happening for at least 5 years of substance.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: I mean, there's a
11 lot of environmental work that is happening right
12 now. There's interim repairs that are which are
13 happening right now.

14 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Which are important.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Right. If we get to
16 the point where we need the money earlier, we have a
17 commitment from OMB and City Hall to move that money
18 up.

19 [BELL RINGS]

20 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Last question I just want
21 to ask I. I will say something nice. I generally
22 really enjoy working with the Department of
23 Transportation. So thank you, Commissioner Rodriguez
24 and team Paul, Ricardo, Margaret, Eric, and Keith,

25

2 and everyone else, Danielle. We all appreciate the
3 partnership in District 33 between DOT.

4 One of the areas that I've been concerned about
5 is lighting. Like we'll get a traffic signal
6 approved. What's the average time it takes to
7 actually install it? And Deputy Commissioner
8 Forgione, might you answer that, if you have that?
9 Like it is-- The timelines are just bonkers. We are
10 seeing, in the lighting areas in particular, less
11 responsiveness, less effective partnership than we
12 see in many other areas of working with the agency.
13 I'm just wondering, is this on your radar as an area
14 of concern? Is there anything that we could do to
15 help be supportive? We've got some legislation to
16 increase pedestrian lighting that we're really
17 excited about. I'm happy to dig into this further
18 with you.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Are we talking
20 about traffic signals or street lights?

21 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Traffic signals in
22 particular are the area of concern, but I will tell
23 you I've got streetlight contracts that we've been
24 waiting years. We got approval three and four years
25 ago from DOT for streetlights in an area and still no

2 progress: Livingston (I can give you a long list),
3 Montague, Brooklyn Heights. But we really need help
4 and attention on both street signals, where the delay
5 from approval to implementation is significant, and
6 on pedestrian lighting where it's taking years, three
7 or four years before approved projects are actually
8 getting implemented.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: So the good news
10 on traffic signals is that we have an increased level
11 of funding, which will allow us to install about 200
12 per year. So, that is a great improvement over what
13 we've had previously.

14 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: What was it previously?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: I don't have that
16 offhand. And we have--

17 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Do you have the timeline
18 from approval to implementation of what you're
19 looking at right now?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Well, it all-- it
21 fluctuates depending on the number of requests that
22 we get. And we do get a large number of requests.
23 We have recently streamlined some of our review
24 processes in order to be able to do them more
25

2 quickly. So, we expect that to go down. So, we can
3 get the exact numbers as well to review in full.

4 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: I'm happy to hear that
5 you're already looking at this and making progress.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: But we agree it's
7 our priority, once a signal has been approved to get
8 it installed ASAP.

9 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Thank you. And on the
10 pedestrian lighting, and just the extraordinary
11 delays that we face there from project approvals to
12 actual implementation: Is there anything you can say
13 about how-- more sped up--?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: So, it's funny you
15 say that because just this week, we were, kind of,
16 focusing on that internally, what we can do to
17 expedite some of the contracts that we already have.
18 We agree that that needs to happen more quickly.

19 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Right. Well, as I said,
20 generally, I really appreciate the partnership with
21 DOT. The BQE and McGuinness aside, you guys have been
22 a very responsive and-- agency for our concerns in
23 District 33. The lighting issue is one where I think
24 we can do better, and I'm happy to hear you already

2 looking at it. So, thank you all appreciate your
3 time.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: We've also been joined by
5 Councilmember Moya on Zoom. Now we have questions
6 from Councilmembers Louis followed by Carr.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Chair.
8 Commissioner, thank you for being here with your
9 team. And thank you for hosting the Commissioner in
10 our borough, and in Councilmember Narcissee's
11 district a couple of weeks ago. We appreciate the
12 time that you spent with us in TriniJam.

13 I have three questions, one on capital projects,
14 pedestrian safety, and the Brooklyn bus redesign.

15 So, Commissioner, you and your team came out to
16 our district, in March 2023, where residents have
17 been experiencing the most amount of challenges with
18 infrastructure in our neighborhoods. Out of two
19 sites where DOT informed us of prioritizing on their
20 Capital Plan, we still are waiting on some type of
21 resolve. In fact, the most common complaint from
22 constituents have been-- that have been contacting my
23 office after receiving little feedback on a project--
24 ultimately returned as requiring a capital

2 reconstruction will actually be completed. That's
3 the response we got back.

4 So, I wanted to know if we could get a reasonable
5 update on the record on the Nostrand Avenue and
6 Avenue L case that was created last year. So,
7 there's hazardous flooding conditions in that
8 corridor, and Chair Brooks-Powers also visited the
9 area, which creates a very hazardous condition for
10 those that are either entering the synagogue or
11 attending the middle school across the street.

12 In addition, can we get a reasonable update on
13 the capital reconstruction roadways of Nostrand
14 Avenue, Farragut Road, and East 29th Street that also
15 have flood conditions that are exacerbating in that
16 area.

17 Now I'm going to go on pedestrian safety. The
18 Administration is currently budgeting \$312 million
19 for safety projects in our district, ranging from
20 Accessible Pedestrian Signals, left turn signals, and
21 Vision Zero safety improvements. Over the past year
22 I've been receiving an increasing amount of
23 complaints from the community regarding the timing
24 for street safety projects and studies to be
25 completed. So, I wanted to know: Does DOT plan to

2 use the increase in funding from FY 24 as one of the
3 few agencies not receiving cuts in FY 25's Executive
4 Budget, and can we get a commitment from DOT to
5 expedite these critically needed resources to often
6 proposed issues that we're having in our community.

7 And the last question is on the Flatbush redesign
8 that we've been discussing over and over again. I
9 wanted to know what the plans were moving forward,
10 since we're going to be experiencing some traffic
11 safety infrastructure changes. There are community
12 boards that have said that DOT has not met with them.
13 You've met with one out of three. And Flatbush takes
14 up at least 98% of the District in the area where you
15 guys want to change. So, I just wanted to know if we
16 could get feedback from all of you on what those next
17 steps will look like. Thank you.

18 [BELL RINGS]

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: On the part related to
20 Flatbush, I will let Eric Beaton, our Deputy
21 Commissioner from the Planning Division to take on
22 it.

23 Overall, you know, I don't want to say-- As you
24 know, I think that I have basically most of your
25 Council District in-- or we have met when I had done

2 the convention in your borough. As Mayor Adams says,
3 when he goes to town hall meetings, his whole
4 approach about when any resident brings any concern,
5 he wants his team to immediately follow it up.

6 So, this is also the same approach that, you
7 know, following his leadership, I also do that as a
8 Commissioner. I don't want to go to a Council
9 District, highlighting any issue that is important
10 for you, and then coming back in months and months,
11 and not no come back with a solution.

12 So, I don't want to go back to your district,
13 seeing the same problem.

14 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: So, can we get a commitment
15 on the record today.

16 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: No, what I'm saying is,
17 if there's any-- I will follow with our key-- our
18 Commissioner in the in the borough, to see what is
19 specific-- what are we with a timeframe. That's my
20 commitment, because to get into the field, I also
21 need to speak to the Commissioner.

22 But on the Flatbush, Eric, if you don't mind to
23 take on that one.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Sure. And as you
25 know, Flatbush is a very important street, a very

2 busy bus route, very important for lots of reasons.
3 When The Mayor announced this project a little bit
4 ago, I think we're-- You know, it took us a little
5 while to get all the-- all the funding and the data
6 together. But we're now-- we are now re engaging.
7 We are working our way through the corridor. We
8 haven't gotten to all of the Boards in your area yet.
9 But we will be, and we want to be kicking off that
10 conversation.

11 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: It's just very interesting
12 how you can say (and I appreciate your response) but
13 it's just very interesting how you could say that,
14 "We're trying to get to all the areas in the
15 district," but you're quick to put in a bike lane,
16 and, you know, Citi Bike, but can't have a
17 conversation about new infrastructure coming to a
18 district in an area that not only I represent, but
19 some of the other folks here on this committee. And
20 we have three Community Boards in my district. One
21 was approached and not the others.

22 So, I don't think it's fair, I think you need to
23 consider in the FY 25 budget, how much of those funds
24 you could use to do a comprehensive outreach to the
25 entire community.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Yeah. Absolutely.

3 And we do have that in the works. We had to put
4 together a contract to help analyze all the data.
5 That took a little bit of time. But we are there
6 now, and we are going to be engaging all up and down
7 the corridor.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: And Councilmember, we
10 are, again, more than happy to look into any area
11 that we can improve from the community engagement, to
12 following the project. Rick Rodriguez -- the person,
13 our person who oversees the whole Intergovernmental
14 Division -- he knows when I go once a month, I spend
15 the whole day in a borough.

16 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: So, I'm more than happy
18 to decide, you know, that our team go and go to the
19 Community Board. If there is any part-- To all of
20 you, if there is any particular need that you feel
21 for me directly to go and meet us-- We have met
22 before with some members of the Community Board that
23 you have brought together to office, I will follow
24 with that one too.

2 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: I appreciate it. Thank you
3 Chair.

4 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Yeah, I would just say,
6 Commissioner, I think, and I think you know this too,
7 as we served together, and certainly I think it's-- I
8 think you've done a great job, and your team has done
9 a great job with trying to change that narrative. I
10 think there's a long history of, at least from-- for
11 councilmembers that if DOT wants to do something, it
12 gets done. If it's something that the Councilmember
13 brings to your attention, it's much harder to get
14 done. And I think that's something that we have to
15 work towards fixing, because, you know, if DOT
16 decides that there needs to be some sort of safety
17 changes made, it'll get done overnight. If we want
18 to get it done, we've got to do 10 studies and
19 whatever it is.

20 And I think your team has been great with
21 accommodating us where you can. But, I think you'd
22 agree. I mean, it's unfortunately it's-- there's a
23 history there with DOT with just, if they want to do
24 it, it gets done. If we want to do it, it's much
25 harder, much harder.

2 Okay, questions now? We're joined by
3 Councilmember Brewer. Questions now from Carr
4 followed by Narcisse.

5 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Thank you, Chair.
6 Commissioner, good to see you. My question is about
7 road resurfacing. What is the allocation for road
8 resurfacing in the Executive Budget, and how many
9 lane miles does DOT expect to resurface with that
10 allocation?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yeah, so the lane
12 miles are 1,150. That's 1,100 miles plus 50 bike
13 lane miles. In most years we meet, and plus exceed
14 it, and we anticipate meeting it or exceeding it this
15 year as well.

16 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Okay, well, I like to make a
17 call for something a little bit more than 1,150.
18 1,150 historically is very good, particularly when
19 you look back at the Bloomberg years. But I'll
20 remind the folks here that, you know, there was a
21 commitment from the agency and the prior
22 administration to do 1300 lane miles a year as we
23 approached the pandemic. And unfortunately, it was a
24 casualty of the budget deficits at that time. And I
25 think that this is important work, because we did

2 have a lot of work to make up for because of the
3 substandard rate of resurfacing that was done during
4 the Bloomberg administration.

5 Is this something that you'd be willing to
6 reconsider as we move to a budget adoption?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Right now we have
8 this consistent amount funded in the future years.
9 We feel this is a good balance of numbers of lane
10 miles resurfaced. A good indication of how well
11 we're keeping up with our streets are pothole
12 repairs: how many we get, how many are out there, how
13 quickly we can get to them. We are in a pretty good
14 place in New York right now, so we feel this is a
15 good level of funding.

16 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: I think that though, you
17 know, I still receive solicitations for additional
18 capital allocations for more resurfacing in my
19 district. So clearly, more could be done and should
20 be done. But this is the core mission of your
21 agency. It's not something a member should have to
22 allocate their own budget funds for.

23 And I think that one of the other challenges
24 we're facing, I think we have to work together on, is
25 the damage being done by utility cuts, to the city's

2 investment on our roads, into protected streets in
3 particular. There are roads that you have done in
4 last several years which were beautiful, that are now
5 being destroyed, even though you give plenty of time
6 in between milling and paving for them to come in to
7 do what they need to do.

8 Can you talk about how you're trying to maybe
9 address that issue?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yes. It's a very
11 important issue. So, as we know, in New York, we're
12 very challenged because everything is under the
13 streets. Everybody needs to get to their
14 infrastructure by cutting through our streets.

15 We work very hard prior to paving to meet with
16 all of our partners, whether it's Con Ed, Empire
17 City, every single utility, and every single city
18 partner to let them know that we are planning paving
19 in a certain area. Then, as some of you are probably
20 aware, we have a period of time in between the
21 milling and the paving. And that is the time we want
22 everybody to come in and fix their structures in
23 order to make sure that we don't have to go back and
24 do it again.

2 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: I think we have to do more
3 to make sure that they're actually doing the work
4 afterwards, according to the standards of the law.
5 And I'd love to talk to you offline a little bit
6 about that moving forward.

7 And my last question is related to the ferry
8 labor force. The Administration, finally, was able
9 to end the decade plus long stalemate with the ferry
10 workforce in terms of a contract. So, can you talk
11 about how hiring up is proceeding, and budgeted
12 headcount for the Staten Island ferry, and whether
13 you think you're going to be able to staff up so that
14 we don't have these issues with staffing and having
15 to cancel legally mandated services overnight?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yes. It's an
17 important question. We are already seeing an
18 improvement in the ferry. We have been bringing on
19 dozens of people. I think last month, Paul, it was
20 40 or 50 people? It was actually 70 people that we
21 brought in. We had a very big chunk of deckhands,
22 marine oilers, and other titles. So we are looking
23 much better in terms of ferry staffing, and we hope
24 to provide that very consistent overnight service.

2 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: That's phenomenal news.
3 Thank you, Commissioner for all your work, and for
4 our Borough Commissioner, and the good collaboration
5 we have between our offices. Thank you Chair.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. We have questions
7 from Narcisse followed by Hanks.

8 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: Good morning,
9 Commissioner, and thank you for coming to my district
10 and, TriniJam. The food was great. So--

11 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I'm sorry I couldn't go
12 to your birthday party.

13 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: And I want to say thank
14 you for working on MWBE. As you know, that's a great
15 concern of mine, and make sure that we create
16 opportunity for our MWBEs.

17 Coming to the question. I'm going to do like my
18 colleague. I have a few.

19 Given the recent tragic collapse of the Francis
20 Scott Key Bridge, right? Can you detail what
21 measures are currently-- I read some here but
22 currently in place to ensure the structural integrity
23 of New York City bridges? Specifically, how
24 frequently are these bridges inspected, and what
25 criteria are used to prioritize maintenance and

2 repairs? Additionally, what proactive steps are
3 being taken to embrace the resilience of the bridges
4 against unforeseen accidents and natural disasters?

5 And before you answer, because I'm going to take
6 my time: In the Executive Budget Capital Plan,
7 funding for the Broadway Bridge Harlem River Project
8 is \$9.6 million less in fiscal 2024 as compared to
9 the Preliminary Capital Plan. What is the scope of
10 this project? Why was funding in fiscal 2024
11 decreased? Is this due to a delay? Please detail
12 What is the project timeline? What is the estimated
13 completion date? Keep that in mind.

14 Given the historical support for establishing a
15 ferry service in Canarsie (I want to answer some
16 question on that one), both from my office and The
17 Mayor Eric Adams during his tenure as a Brooklyn
18 Borough President, can you-- Because he was for that
19 one-- can you clarify whether the current budget
20 includes any allocation, if you can, for examining or
21 initiating ferry services in Canarsie?

22 I think I have one more that I was struggling
23 with.

24 Do the current speed-- I know is a lot. Do the
25 current speed traffic cameras provide real-time, live

2 locks in to traffic conditions? Too, how does the
3 the DOT in the speed traffic enforcement vendor
4 determine new locations for cameras? Thank you.

5 I know it's a lot.

6 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: You did the same thing
7 that I used to do. Let me throw those questions in
8 my three minutes.

9 Yeah, so thank you. I will answer a few of
10 those. And then Margaret and Paul, they can also
11 complement them. When it came to what happened in
12 the bridge, it would not happen here in our bridge
13 under DOT. New York City DOT is responsible to
14 manage almost 800 bridges and tunnels. All those
15 river bridges are under our responsibility. Of
16 course, not the Verrazano, not the GW.

17 So in our bridges under our responsibility, it
18 wouldn't happen because those types of boats are not
19 allowed to go through the water in those bridges. So
20 that's one.

21 And then with the ferry, that extension of the
22 ferry is not on our portfolio. That's EDC. We only
23 manage the Staten Island ferry, and the ferry that
24 connects to Hart Island. But the other lines-- And
25 Mayor Adams, when he was in Staten Island, he's so

2 clear on when-- when he talked to Jimmy Oddo, and he
3 said, "We've got to figure out how to do it," and
4 gave a big-W win with the ferry, the Staten Island
5 ferry to to Brooklyn. But, again, that's EDC.
6 Margarit, if you--

7 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: If I may. Anyhow, the
8 way that transportation is going, when you live in a
9 transportation desert like ours-- and that's why so
10 many constituents are against bike lanes and all
11 this. By the way, it's the culture. We need to
12 start it from kindergarten to add-- you know, get our
13 kids in the culture providing bicycles, providing
14 their helmets, until we get to that point. We have a
15 long way to go. But I'm not against the start.
16 Because we need that. I always say that. I'm for
17 bikes. Like I said, my grandfather was biking when
18 he was 98 years old. So I'm into bikes. But, right
19 now, let's get to the bridges. I understand that.
20 And when it comes to the ferry, I understand that.
21 But you can tell me if there is any planning for
22 going forward, because we cannot address
23 transportation and trying to decrease it, you know,
24 without making transportation possible for folks.

2 And I'm for the ferry as well. So can you help me
3 with that?

4 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes. So what I say that
5 EDC is the one-- EDC it is the one who manages. Our
6 NYC ferry is now DOT. So, I don't-- you know, we
7 don't-- we can talk about, and I'm more than happy as
8 DOT to talk to the sister agency, but as someone that
9 also asked EDC when I was a Councilmember, together
10 with Councilmember Levine, and Margaret Chang, to
11 bring the ferry, I don't think-- I don't know if Gale
12 was also a Councilmember at that time or Borough
13 President, but we sent a letter asking to bring the
14 ferry to lower Manhattan, but EDC is the one that
15 runs the numbers, and says, "No, the numbers doesn't
16 make it." So that extension of the ferry there, you
17 know, the Staten Island ferry, that's the EDC ferry.

18 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: I know but I still want
19 your input in there to what you know, because we've--
20 if we cannot get the bike lane, we can't get all
21 that, we have to keep in mind, this is a
22 transportation, and if you don't want to share your
23 knowledge on that, that's fine, we can take it off.

24 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Oh no. I believe that
25 using our water, you know to move people, is good.

2 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: It is a-- that's the
4 present and the future.

5 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: That's right.

6 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: So, definitely, you
7 know, I think that when we look our-- even our NYC
8 Ferry today, if you think about 20 years ago, like
9 it's a big improvement. So any opportunity that we
10 can look at, to expand connecting, you know,
11 communities with a ferry, I think this is good for
12 the city, it's good for everyone.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: I'll answer two of
14 your questions and then Paul will answer about the
15 Harlem River Bridge funding.

16 So you asked about bridge inspections, how can we
17 make sure we're taking care of our infrastructure.
18 Every two years, every bridge is inspected by a
19 licensed engineer by the State. We work really,
20 really closely with the State. They immediately give
21 us any conditions that they have found. These
22 conditions are called flags, and we address them
23 immediately.

24 Generally, we are excellent at predicting the
25 deterioration level of bridges, so we seldom have any

1 surprises in these biennial inspections. However, if
2 there's any condition we address it right away. And
3 if we have to adjust where that bridge is in the
4 capital program for repair or replacement, we will do
5 so. So, we have a whole system of categorizing
6 bridges into different categories: Good, fair, poor,
7 and scheduling that work.

8 Did you ask about--

9 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: I have a line of
10 questions on there. That's what I was about to tell
11 you.

12 The one in Bridge Harlem River, that's the \$9.6
13 million that was allocated for 2024 fiscal Year, as
14 compared to the Preliminary Capital Plan. What is
15 the scope of the project? And what-- why was funding
16 in fiscal 2024 decreased? Is this due to a delay?
17 So if you can detail that out. What is the project
18 timeline? What is the estimated completion date?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yeah, I can talk
20 about the movement of the funds. There are generally
21 two reasons why we move funds from the inner years to
22 the outer years: One, is if there are any-- if the
23 contract was over and there are any funds left over,
24 this is usually in the hundreds of thousands. It's
25

2 not that much. We move them to the out years to sort
3 of park them there, and leave them for future
4 projects. In this case, the second option-- the
5 second reason is to better align with project
6 timelines, which is exactly what happened in the
7 Broadway Bridge. It was not a cut. It was just to
8 align, as I mentioned, with the project timelines. I
9 can get you the timeline of the project and the scope
10 of the project before the end of the hearing, if
11 that's okay with you. But it is not a cut, it is
12 just an exercise that we do to align both the
13 construction timeline with the capital budget
14 timeline.

15 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: Okay. What is the
16 estimated completion date?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yup, that's what--

18 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: You're going to get the
19 timeline, the total timeline.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: I'm going to give you
21 the expected--

22 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: The project and the--

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Correct.

24 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: The completion of the
25 project. Okay.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Okay. And last,
3 for our cameras. Were you asking how we site the
4 cameras in different neighborhoods, how we select
5 where we put them?

6 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: Yeah.

7 Right. Very good question. So, all of our
8 camera placement for speed and red-light cameras are
9 data driven, based on the incidence of speeding, red-
10 light running, crashes, and injuries. For the speed
11 camera program, we also have 750 zones that we place
12 the cameras in across the city.

13 One very key point I want to make about our
14 program is we don't have revenue sharing, meaning the
15 contractor that we work with does not make money for
16 every violation given there is no incentive to give
17 too many violations or to make money in that fashion.
18 They get paid a flat rate per camera.

19 So, I don't know if you have any further
20 questions--

21 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: Is that compared to the
22 timeline-- I mean, the timing of the traffic is
23 compared-- like, when you take the picture, can we
24 tell how is the traffic going in that area?
25

2 Sometimes you find that you already engaged and you
3 get tickets, a few of them sometimes.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Okay. If you have
5 any locations that you want to talk more about, we're
6 happy to talk about it. But the way they're designed
7 is that you have the opportunity to stop on the
8 yellow rather than proceed through, and you will not
9 get that violation for a red light. But if we can
10 sit down and talk to you exactly about the number of
11 seconds, and the timing, if you want to dig into a
12 deeper with our traffic folks.

13 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: All right, I think I'll
14 stop there. I took too-- Thank you Chairs.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: We've been joined by
16 Councilmembers Hudson and Ayala. And now we have
17 questions from Hanks followed by Ariola.

18 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: Thank you chairs. Good
19 afternoon. Good afternoon. I have two questions.
20 Just to follow up on the speed-- speeding and red-
21 light cameras: It always it was always perplexing to
22 me why there aren't sufficient signage that alerts
23 people that there's speed light cameras in order to
24 really modify that behavior as opposed to speeding
25 and then getting a ticket in the mail. I think that

2 that would go much further as to modifying behavior,
3 as opposed to, you know, most of us think it's-- it's
4 a money grab. So, if we really want to modify
5 behavior, like yellow lights, if you don't have your
6 phone on that is giving you directions where it says
7 speed light camera ahead, then you notice to slow
8 down. So the signage is not sufficient. So I just
9 wanted to know, is there any thought to making the
10 signage, and alerting the public that there is a
11 speed light camera as not to speed through the
12 camera, get a ticket, and then risk harming someone?

13 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: As I said, the red light
14 camera is a pilot project of 30 years, which doesn't
15 make sense, to it continuing to be a pilot program.
16 And that's why the support of everyone is so
17 critical. We do have signs up. If people are near
18 any enforcement, automatic enforcement, red-light
19 camera, or a speed camera, there's a sign around
20 those locations.

21 But we also have two things that I want to share
22 with you. One is, there's a common thing that we
23 have in all those, unfortunately, New Yorkers that we
24 lost being hit in intersection where people were
25 speeding: There was no red-light camera in none of

2 those locations. Second, when it comes to the red-
3 light camera, 85% of people who get the first red
4 light camera, they don't get the second one. And 95%
5 who had the second one, they don't get the third one.
6 So, definitely, this is about a tool that allow us to
7 change the way on how we drive too.

8 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: Thank you. I appreciate
9 that. So my colleague, Councilmember Carr, really
10 asked the meat-and-potato questions when it comes to
11 a lot of the issues in our borough regarding DOT. So
12 mine is kind of going to focus on the Whitehall Ferry
13 Terminal on the Staten Island side.

14 We currently have three vacancies totaling
15 440,000 square feet. St. George Ferry Terminal has
16 five vacant storefronts totaling 60,000 square feet,
17 100,000 square feet of vacant retail space. I've
18 been taking the ferry often and it is a real issue
19 that it looks like we're losing revenue. Besides
20 being lost revenue to New York City during the
21 fiscally-tight budgets, it's also a disservice to the
22 75,000 Staten Islanders who take the Staten Island
23 Ferry each day. So, what is the current cost per
24 square foot on both terminals for retail space? And
25 is that on par with the surrounding neighborhoods per

2 square foot? And what are the agency plans and
3 timeline doing to fill these vacancies with what kind
4 of amenities, and I just want to give a shout out to
5 my Staten Island Borough Commissioner who's here,
6 Roseann. I'm hoping that this is under your purview
7 and not EDC, so I just-- Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. And by the
9 way, Roseann is a great commissioner in Staten
10 Island, one thing that I do is also, when I come to
11 my hearings, I bring all my Commissioners and also so
12 many of the leadership.

13 So, the question is only for me to now go back to
14 my team. They are listening to your needs, and they
15 will be following with you. And they are individuals
16 that I know all of you work very close with.

17 Mayor Adams's commitment is to deliver to the
18 city. And as we work together, yourselves and The
19 Mayor, in the new ferry and the question came to hand
20 about all those vacancies. He gave direction to say
21 move and expedite this process. So, definitely we--
22 led by his leadership, we take it, we work with EDC,
23 and we are moving on, and Paul Ochoa, our First
24 Deputy Commissioner, he can give you more details
25 about where we are on the RFP in that process.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yeah, so it is very
3 exciting question because we have a very exciting
4 answer. The there are two types of concessions
5 happening at the ferries: The concessions in the
6 ferries themselves, which have stopped for a couple
7 of years at this point. We had an RFP process with
8 EDC, who manages the site for us. We have selected a
9 vendor. We should be coming to you very shortly with
10 a timeline of reactivating the concessions within the
11 ferries. The other-- The vacant storefronts is also
12 an issue. We have also released an RFP to bring on
13 vendors. We have gotten really good responses.
14 There are some improvements that we at DOT and EDC
15 need to make to the actual sites to get them ready
16 for future business establishments. But our goal is
17 absolutely to bring in new folks, activate that area,
18 and make Whitehall the space that it deserves.

19 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: Thank you so much for your
20 testimony. Thank you for being here today,
21 Commissioner. Thank you for you for everything.
22 Bye.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: And questions from Ariola,
24 followed by Brewer.

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE Jointly with the
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 100

2 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you. Thank you,
3 Chair. How are you, Commissioner? Good. Good.

4 I have a question also on the speed cameras. I
5 just wonder, how often are they maintained and
6 calibrated?

7 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: They-- We are--

8 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: In speed and red lights,
9 actually.

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Do you want to take
11 this?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yeah. They are
13 maintained-- So, we pay a flat fee for the
14 maintenance. So, if they break the vendor needs to
15 replace them or fix them immediately. And they are
16 calibrated once a month, I believe.

17 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: Once per month, okay.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Correct. And I would
19 just mention, because we've had a couple questions
20 about this, as a reminder there are two steps to
21 reviewing every single violation. The vendor reviews
22 the violation, which then sends the package to us,
23 and a DOT city employee reviews the violation and
24 the-- and the video to ensure that there was no foul
25

2 play, and that there was actually violation occurred.

3 So I wanted to make sure that everyone knew that.

4 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: Okay, great. Yeah.

5 Because we get a lot of complaints that say, "Oh, the

6 speed camera on whatever street is always catching

7 me. There must be something wrong with it." So...

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: I doubt it.

9 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: I promised I'd ask that
10 question. So I did.

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Can I just add
12 just a little bit of color on the red light camera?

13 You know, one of the things that does not happen,

14 that you won't be issued a violation for is, if you

15 stop and you enter the box and you don't proceed

16 through that light cycle, you don't get a violation.

17 So--

18 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: I don't know that that's

19 true in practice, only because of what we're-- I'm

20 seeing myself while sitting at a light and people are

21 coming through a red light. So, I don't see that in

22 practice. But--

23 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I think that what is

24 most important is what Paul says about--

25 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: --we use the technology,
3 but then we also have the men and women in our
4 command center, like, verifying that that ticket has
5 happened.

6 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: Right.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: And just one extra
8 step: A New Yorker can always appeal and we have
9 OATH review those violations, and an ALJ reviews
10 those violations-- those appeals, and if they
11 determined that the New Yorker (in this case, your
12 constituent) was right, they would dismiss the
13 violation. So, we have several steps in every step
14 of the process, from the vendor, to DOT, to finance,
15 and OATH, to make sure that we're not giving
16 violations that should not be given.

17 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: Great. And when a camera
18 is installed, which is-- this is really specific for
19 my district, and I know what's happening in others,
20 where the camera-- for a speed camera is installed on
21 the wrong side of the street, not where the speeding
22 is happening. And my amazing Borough Commissioner,
23 Nicole Garcia, her team is so responsive, we all
24 agree. But yet there's such a length of time from
25

2 when we all agree that it should be moved to the
3 other side of the street, from when it happens.

4 So why is there such a lag when we're all in
5 agreeance? And yet, just to move that to the other
6 side, and we're not saying "remove it"?

7 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We can follow. And I
8 would say overall, like, as you know, we-- our team
9 is coordinating--

10 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: Yeah.

11 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: --and we work very
12 closely with you and all the Councilmembers. We are
13 more than happy to look at, if there's any particular
14 case, I feel that we the work that we do, you know,
15 with our team, they definitely move as quick as
16 possible.

17 [BELL RINGS]

18 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: The only other lag
19 question I have is that, when the streets get paved,
20 from the time they're paved to the time that the
21 yellow lines-- you know, four lanes go in, there can
22 be a very long period of time, and people forget how
23 to stay to the right or to the left, because there's
24 no yellow line. So, I think we need to work on
25 closing the gap from when the DOT finishes paving to

2 when the vendor who paints the lines comes and does
3 that.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Yeah, we agree.
5 This is something that we're focused on. Last year
6 was better than the year before. But we certainly
7 have room to improve, and we're focused on it.

8 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: Right. I just want to say
9 again that our team in Queens, under the leadership
10 of Nicole Garcia, has been amazing. Always call,
11 always call back, and are always responsive. Thank
12 you, Nicole. I appreciate it.

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. I have questions
14 from Brewer followed by Powers.

15 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much. So I
16 have to shout out Ed Pincar, Jr. and everybody in the
17 Manhattan office. And to say that just the other
18 day, you know, a bus stop shelter not liked by
19 residents, and in a meeting on Zoom. Residents
20 happy, and DOT happy. So congratulations. All of
21 that works. And, of course, Margaret Forgione is my
22 hero.

23 So blue highway: Now that's more EDC than you,
24 but is there any allocation for the notion of a blue
25 highway? Obviously, there's a RFP going out in the

2 downtown teleport. There's infrastructure issues.

3 So that was question number-- I have-- I'll just
4 give you all my questions, and then... Then the
5 second--

6 So that's one question. The second is (this is
7 really mundane, but as Borough President) those
8 goddamn kiosks near the municipal building, those are
9 your kiosks, what's with the kiosks next to the
10 Municipal Building. They've been empty for many,
11 many years. I've been complaining for many, many
12 years.

13 On the red light, and lights in general, speed
14 cameras, I know that the summonses once they are
15 allowed by you, supposedly they get paid, I guess
16 through OATH. So I want to know-- I think it's
17 finance that determines whether people are paying.
18 But I just want to know-- Because I have a feeling
19 people are not paying some of these fines. I know
20 they're not paying others. Maybe they're paying
21 yours.

22 And outdoor dining. I just want to know: What's
23 the plan? How many people-- Do you have-- Do you
24 have enough funding? Are the vacancies in the
25 inspections?

2 And then on the E-bikes: Congratulations. I am
3 so sick of these E-bike issues. But the education
4 that you're doing: Is it working? Are there fewer
5 311 calls? Are there any other ways, financially,
6 that we can be helpful in keeping people following
7 the rules of the road?

8 And then I'm really excited about Popwheels.
9 We're trying to get batteries to be non-causing
10 fires. So that means new batteries. I just want to
11 know the status of Popwheels or other places, like
12 companies that are doing installations that can keep
13 the batteries to be safe.

14 Those are my questions. Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I want to take a few of
16 those, and then pull in Margaret and the team.

17 With the blue highway, it is us, together with
18 the EDC.

19 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Definitely we have seen
21 that-- We opened the process to hear from the
22 private sector. They are responding, and they show
23 an interest, and we feel that very soon we can hear,
24 you know, a plan for some of the private sectors that
25 do a lot of those deliveries to get into coming with

2 a concrete proposal on using our water to move our
3 goods, so that we can replace those trucks.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Is there any money
5 allocated, like the merit grant is only \$5.6 million.
6 That might be EDC and not you.

7 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Any funding that's
9 allocated to the blue highway from--

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes. We can get to you
11 on this specifics, but the answer is yes. And we've
12 been visiting some of those sites with those private
13 sectors that are already are interested on-- on
14 taking advantage of this initiative.

15 With the E-bikes, I feel that as-- You heard the
16 number.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We lost 30 cyclists last
19 year, and 23 of those unfortunately, sadly, that we
20 lost, they were using electric bikes. We feel that
21 there's a pattern of some individual not knowing how
22 to use the brakes or accelerate the bike. So that's
23 why we are doing this campaign. We don't have to yet
24 results, so that we can say we have seen how the
25 educational campaign that we are doing already is

2 producing the results. But we can get back to you on
3 sharing that information.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: I'm going to tackle
6 two more of your questions.

7 As for the fines they are paid. There is
8 generally a lag. So, when we-- we see the violation,
9 we end up getting the money usually the month after,
10 at the latest two months after, but we do see our
11 fines paid. This is-- The Department Of Finance, the
12 Sheriff's Office, calculates if there are outstanding
13 fines-- I believe the current threshold is over
14 \$300, they can start booting vehicles and they do
15 scans of the entire city. So, these types of
16 violations would yield to the booting. So, we are
17 seeing people paying fines.

18 As for the--

19 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Do you have some
20 percentage of the-- you know who don't pay? Or you
21 don't know?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Uh, we can get back
23 get back to you?

24 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: You can back to us about
25 that? And the amounts.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yeah. We only see
3 the revenue that comes in and the amount of
4 violations. It's not a huge number that don't pay.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: It adds up.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Sure.

7 As for the blue highway, The Commissioner is
8 correct that it is an incredibly important project,
9 and it is in partnership with EDC, but we do have
10 funding for it. We have about \$19.2 million in
11 expense from fiscal year '24 to '28. And that is
12 mainly for PS and OTPS cost for studies, and anything
13 we might need.

14 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: For studies. Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: And I've got to give
16 credit to Charles and Denise from our team and the
17 policy team lead by Julie and Will, who are the ones
18 who really are great leaders when it comes to being
19 creative when it comes to freight, and in this
20 particular case with the blue highway.

21 Margaret? Take over.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yes.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Yes.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Thank you for the
25 question about enforcement of outdoor dining.

2 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Yes.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: So, just some
4 quick numbers: Since the inception of the program,
5 we have removed 650 noncompliant or abandoned
6 structures. We've issued 182 summonses. The real
7 test will come in August, August 3rd, by which time
8 everybody has to apply or remove their structures.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Right.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: We have 10
11 dedicated inspectors who just solely work on outdoor
12 dining. But for August 3rd, once we start enforcing
13 more widely, we're going to put almost all of our
14 inspectors on this function for a few days to really
15 make sure we hit all the restaurants, and make sure
16 they're aware that they either-- that they had to
17 apply, or they need to remove their structures.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: So, we feel we're
20 in a good place for that. The kiosk by City Hall:
21 We will follow up with you. I know that--

22 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: The municipal building.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yes, sorry. The
24 three of them. And I know that we are much closer.
25 I got an update a few months ago that we had

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE Jointly with the
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 111

2 identified a vendor for-- it was either one or two of
3 the structures. So we will get the schedule today
4 for when they should be coming.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Can you let me know? It's
6 only been seven, eight years.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: A long time. We
8 had some mishaps. We had selected somebody, and then
9 during COVID they went out of business, and then we
10 had to start the process all over again.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: All right. Okay.

12 Popwheels installation. Last one. Or something
13 to do with-- I mean, if there's funding attached to
14 making sure that the batteries don't blow up. So, is
15 there some aspect of that that's being worked on?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: So we have put in
17 several locations as pilots.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Yup.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: And I believe we
20 have several more coming. I know you gave us a
21 suggested location that we should be able to get back
22 to in the next few days regarding that location.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay, thank you.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: We should also give
25 credit to the Council. I think it was Councilmember

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE Jointly with the
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 112

2 Powers who passed a bill to do a pilot for an E-bike
3 exchange program, which we did get \$2 million and
4 we're in the process of moving that project forward.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Oh, good.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: We expect that to
7 have-- to launch the program later this year.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Terrific. Thank you very
9 much.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. We have questions
11 from Stevens followed by Ayala.

12 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Good af-- Well, it's
13 still morning. Good morning. I just have a few
14 questions, and then a little bit of a follow up from
15 councilmember Louis around, like, community
16 engagement.

17 How much money does your agency spend on
18 community outreach and engagement? Do you have a
19 budget for that? Yeah, in community engagement?

20 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Community engagement
21 happens in different ways.

22 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Mm-hmm. But do you have
23 like a specific unit? And is there a specific budget
24 amount allocated for community engagement in your
25 agency? Or is it by project-by-project?

2 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: It's-- It's not-- First
3 of all, it's led by Rick Rodriguez, who monitors all
4 the inter-governmental. That also includes--

5 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: So you do not have a
6 budget amount for community engagement? I'm just
7 asking, because-- I'm asking a specific question. So
8 I would like a specific answer, please.

9 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. But I say--
10 Margaret?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Just to add to
12 what the Commissioner is saying: community
13 engagement is throughout every single program that we
14 have. However we have certain offices--

15 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: That's the question
16 there, because that's the next question.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Okay. We have
18 certain offices dedicated to community outreach. Our
19 Borough Commissioner--

20 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: So do you have a budget
21 for that? What does that budget look like?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: So what I would
23 want to get for you is the-- the budget for our
24 Borough Commissioners' offices, maybe our Street
25 Ambassadors, some of the people that work under

2 Ricardo. So if you put those together, that would
3 probably be the public--

4 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Yeah, because I think-- I
5 think our definition of community engagement looks
6 different, and it feels different in every community.
7 And that's why I'm asking this. And so especially--
8 Because you're like, "Oh, it's different projects,
9 and da-da-da-da." And so--

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Councilmember, if you
11 don't mind.

12 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Mm-hmm.

13 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: So, as Margaret say, we
14 have an educational division. So they go and work
15 with 200 schools, working with senior centers. We
16 have community engagement through the Office of
17 Intergovernmental. I myself go and do community
18 engagement once a month in the boroughs.

19 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: So, again, I think our
20 definition is a little bit different. So, I think
21 maybe we should be thinking about coming up with a
22 common definition of what community engagement looks
23 like. Because I think when we're talking about
24 projects, you guys just say you'll do community
25

2 engagement. And then I'm, like, "Who did you talk
3 to?" And then it's, like--

4 My next question is, other than community board
5 meetings for projects that are going on in districts,
6 what does your community engagement consist of?

7 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Rick, do you want to
8 take that?

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. So our
10 Street Ambassadors is a case study here. You know,
11 they go out--

12 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Not a case study. I--
13 Like, what does it look like, please.

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. So they
15 go out, and they will go to communities. They speak,
16 and present information in over 10 languages to--

17 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: To whom?

18 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: In communities
19 that they can-- So the Street Ambassadors will reach
20 out to local CBOs, they will go and camp out in front
21 of -- for example, in my own neighborhood -- they go
22 to the Parks Department. That would be--

23 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Where-- Because I just
24 want to say, this has never happened in the Bronx.

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: --the Parks
3 Department, that would be Red Hook Pool and they'll
4 have information kiosks where they can talk about
5 projects that are coming online.

6 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Hmm.

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: And again,
8 it's-- it's where people are congregating and
9 visiting. So, it's where New Yorkers are.

10 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: So that's subjective.
11 Because this is the problem. And I--

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: The Red Hook
13 Pool is very busy.

14 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: No. No, listen to me,
15 because I'm being serious. And it's a really serious
16 problem for me. Because what happens is: Every time
17 there's a project, and half the time my office isn't
18 reached out to. Let's take a bike lane that was put
19 in my district. My office isn't reached out to. And
20 then I'll reach out to DOT, and I'll get a comment,
21 like, "We've done community engagement." And I'm
22 like, "Well, what did you do?" They'll say, "We went
23 to the Community Board meeting." Then I'll say, "Did
24 you even go to the full body Community Board
25 meeting?" And then no, they went to the

2 Transportation Subcommittee of the Community Board
3 meeting.

4 And so for me to say like, "Oh, they're going to
5 CBOs, and da-da-da, why-- what does it look like when
6 there's a project coming? Why are we not talking to
7 the NYCHA leaders? Why are we not talking to the
8 schools? Like-- Because those things actually
9 affect those things, the businesses.

10 And so for me, it looks like you're cherry
11 picking, and going where you're where you're going to
12 get the feedback that you're looking for. So, you
13 can then say you're doing community engagement.

14 So, I just want to say we really need to think
15 about having a working definition of what community
16 engagement looks like, because that's not happening.

17 And I want to be clear, I love our new Borough
18 Commissioner. Very nice to see you here. He's been
19 great. He works with our office greatly. But I'm
20 not the only person that you need to engage when
21 projects are happening.

22 And what I am going back to my community and
23 talking to my NYCHA leaders, talking to my
24 principals, and talking to families, they're like,
25 "What are you talking about? There's nothing being

1 sent out." And I asked about the budget piece,
2 because: Why aren't we doing mailers? What does it
3 look like? Like-- Like, the engagement isn't
4 happening? And even our Chair already said it, who
5 said: When you guys have projects, you will find the
6 data and the people to support the project instead of
7 actually saying like, "You might get some pushback,
8 but that doesn't mean they don't want it." Sometimes
9 it's just about having a conversation. And maybe
10 they don't see something you see. So again, I think
11 that we have to really think about getting a working
12 definition of what community engagement looks like.
13 Because, right now, my community feels like they are
14 not heard, and that you're not listening to them.

16 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: So I've got to say, I'm
17 proud of their work, on how we've been improving
18 community engagement, and how under the leadership of
19 Mayor Eric Adams and myself, we've been bringing the
20 agency to the community. Like when we do projects,
21 like, and again, we're more than happy to hear for
22 any particular cases where you have seen that it has
23 not happened. But overall, looking at the
24 relationship between the agency and the body of the
25 51 Councilmembers, we are committed to working

2 closely with any one of you, and also with the
3 voices.

4 That's why when I do the Commissioner of the
5 Borough every five months, I go back to the same
6 borough. The first thing that I told my teams about
7 be: Be sure that the Councilmember is also asked for
8 any institution that would like to invite. And one
9 of the items on my visit to the borough, one is
10 sitting with leaders of the community. And I've been
11 very specific: I invite NYCHA leaders, I invite PTA,
12 I invite Business Improvement District, I invite the
13 elected officials.

14 So, if there is any particular suggestion, one
15 that happy to, again, work with you--

16 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: So again, and I will say
17 this: I think that you have been trying to be more
18 accessible in the sense of when you come to the
19 district, and people know you. However, when there
20 are projects going on, that accessibility does not
21 feel felt. So, there's a big difference. And I
22 think that we have-- Which is why I'm saying we need
23 to get a working definition of what community
24 engagement looks like. Because again, when projects
25 that you think you're going to get opposition, you go

2 to the bodies of people that are going to give you
3 the support, and not actually listen to everyone.

4 And that is what my community feels at this moment.

5 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Listen--

6 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: And I'm being clear. And
7 so, like, I get it. I'm not saying that you're not
8 coming to the district. I'm not saying that I don't
9 speak to your Borough Commissioner on a regular
10 basis. That's not what I'm saying. But what I am
11 telling you: My community does not feel heard when
12 there are things that are going on, when there--
13 where there are streets that are cracked, when
14 there's potholes: Those things often get put on the
15 back burner. But when there's projects and a new
16 bike lane, or you want to put in Citi Bikes, those
17 things just magically happen.

18 And so again, I think we need to get a better
19 working understanding.

20 I have another question before, because one of
21 the things that I'm noticing in my district, I have a
22 lot of Citi Bikes. In one-- one part of my district,
23 I have a dock that has like 50 or 60 bikes. I'm
24 trying to get an understand-- and it is always
25 packed. What is the evaluation process for the Citi

2 Bikes? Do you guys do an evaluation to see if this
3 is a dock that's being used consistently? What does
4 that process look like? Because I've asked this
5 question a number of times, and I haven't really
6 gotten an answer. But what does the evaluation
7 process look like if people aren't using it, how do
8 we make sure that we either are, you know, making the
9 bike dock smaller? Or are thinking about like-- One
10 of my docks, they just have regular stationary bikes,
11 and I'm like, "Well, maybe that's not using it."

12 What is the evaluation process for the Citi Bikes?

13 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Well, we definitely have
14 a great team with the bike division. Michelle, John,
15 and the rest of the team. And they work, and they
16 work, we work together with [inaudible]. We follow
17 the data. We look to see how busy are those stations
18 that we have. Again, I have seen it, I'm being
19 always leaving the underserved area, like Inwood, so
20 to the east of Broadway, I have seen how in some
21 places, near the NYCHA, in the area where I live that
22 I used to represent, we can do more to educate our
23 people for the using of bikes, to understand the
24 benefits of biking.

2 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Well, I don't think it's
3 about the education. Because, like, let's be clear,
4 we all know High Bridge is hilly. So some people--
5 And that's why some of the places, I was like, "I
6 don't know if we've got a bike, because this is
7 aggressive. This hill is aggressive. We're not
8 going to be riding this bike over here." But if
9 we're seeing that these stations aren't being used
10 adequately, or not using, is there another option?
11 Can we make the docks smaller? What is the
12 evaluation process? Because it's not about just
13 educating people about riding bikes. People don't
14 always want to ride bikes. And understanding that
15 every community doesn't necessarily are going to use
16 them at that pace. Because when they were put in,
17 some of the questioning was, "Why are we putting in
18 40 bikes right here?"

19 And they were like, "Oh, we have the data to show
20 that it's going to be used." And right now I'm
21 telling you, it's not being used. So then, what is
22 the evaluation process of saying this is a dock that
23 is being used consistently, and they need 40 bikes
24 here, and a dock that's not being as used, and we
25 could make it smaller? And how do we-- And if there

1 isn't one, how do we get one? And how do I get some
2 of these docks either expanded at places where they
3 are using them, and it is always empty, and we have
4 20 bikes, and then other places where there's 80
5 bikes, and they're not being used.
6

7 So, what is the evaluation process? How do I get
8 this? And when this is going to happen?

9 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. IM more than
10 happy to sit down with you, Councilmember. But I--
11 You know, what we're doing, you heard from the
12 beginning, and that's-- you know, how important it is
13 for us to have this conversation. Like, we are
14 building a network where we want cyclists. It
15 doesn't matter if they move from downtown Manhattan,
16 and they want to ride a bike across the 5 boroughs,
17 or if they leave me in the Yankee Stadium, or they
18 live in Inwood, for them to be able to find a bike
19 near their location as they go through the City of
20 New York.

21 So yes, one is-- We do the assessment, and can
22 get back to you to see if there is any particular
23 location--

24 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: There are several in my
25 district, but I feel like it needs to be evaluated.

2 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: But-- If you don't
3 mind.

4 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Again, we should expand.
5 And there's places that we need to decrease.

6 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: But if you don't mind,
7 the answer is yes. We will follow with you.

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Councilmember,
9 we can check that right now.

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Educational-- Sorry
11 Rick. Educational is key. Again, I know. I know,
12 because I live in the same area. And having the
13 movement of people from Manhattan, Northern Manhattan
14 to the Bronx. One of the reasons people are not
15 biking in working class communities is because many
16 times our people-- and I pushed from that side, Citi
17 Bike, DOT to say, even having this conversation that
18 we had already with District 37. And we talked a
19 little bit about, we need to look at cycling--

20 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Commissioner, I just want
21 to say I think it's a little bit disrespectful for
22 you keep saying "education" because people have
23 different-- it's people with disabilities that can't
24 ride bikes, people who have multiple children and
25 families can't ride bikes. Some of our seniors have

1 ailments that can't have them ride bikes. And to say
2 that it's just education is a little disrespectful.
3 Because for me, I know that especially in my
4 community, I've had plenty of seniors saying, like,
5 "Althea, I would love to ride a bike, but I can't."
6 And so that's not an option. And so saying education
7 to them (and I've gotten yelled out about this)-- too
8 dumb is disrespectful.
9

10 And so, I think we need to be careful about
11 saying like, "Oh, we just need to educate, because
12 they don't know, and these are working class people."
13 No. Some people have real ailments that can't have
14 them ride bikes. And so that, to me, is a little
15 disrespectful. Should more people ride bikes? Yes.
16 Great. But it's not just education. So, I think we
17 should just be a little careful about the language
18 and the things that we're saying, because it sounds a
19 little disrespectful to my community.

20 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: No. Listen, I was-- One
21 of the things that I can tell as a teacher for 15
22 year that I was in the city. When it comes to
23 education, talking about, being-- it's about, like--
24 I'm working hard to push our people for all to know
25 the benefit of biking. That's what I meant. I'm

2 working with Lauren Cortés, the Commissioner of the
3 Department of Aging. We are also working closely to
4 see how we can make bike accessible for senior
5 citizens. So, this isn't about being disrespectful
6 to say, I'm working with Henry Garrido in
7 conversations to see how-- UNESCO passed a
8 resolution, already calling to establish biking as an
9 instrument of physical education.

10 So, there's a lot that I feel that we can do when
11 it comes to putting the facts on the table, for
12 people to see the benefit of biking. That's what I
13 meant when I say education. But also, affordable use
14 too. Like, I think that biking is part of the mode
15 of transportation. And I think that, you know, it's
16 not--- yes, we rely on our train, and the buses, and
17 the taxis, and the cars. But biking and walking is
18 good for the environment, it's for the health, and
19 it's good for the economy too.

20 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: And I love that you love
21 biking. But everybody doesn't have that same
22 passion. And so to say to educate me on it, again I-
23 - it's just-- it's just a little inappropriate.
24 Should we encourage people to do it? Yes. But like
25 to say like, "Oh, it's all these things. We know

2 those things. But again, everyone doesn't have the
3 option to do it. And so, to say that you're
4 excluding a lot of people. We know in the city, we
5 have over-- thousands of people who are disab-- who
6 have disabilities, who can't do that. And so you're
7 taking them out of the conversation. And especially
8 as someone who is in charge of transportation in this
9 city, you should be thinking about everyone, and not
10 just a selected few people who can ride bikes.

11 So I just want-- I'm done with my questioning,
12 because it just really got me upset, because my
13 mother, she has a walker, and she can't ride a bike.
14 And so, you're saying that like, "Oh, I'm going to
15 educate her on how to get on the bike." How? Like,
16 that's a problem for me. And there's a lot of people
17 in my community like that, and in those situations.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, we have questions now
19 from Ayala followed by Hudson.

20 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: Thank you. Good afternoon.
21 I think it's afternoon. I'm not sure. I've lost
22 track of time. But I have three questions. One is
23 regarding a conversation that was had at yesterday's
24 Public Housing hearing. So Councilmember Salamanca
25 was-- asked a question to NYCHA about the sidewalk

2 repair at NYCHA properties. And so, I would love to
3 get to the-- you know, I would like to get to the end
4 of this conversation, and really get to the root of
5 who is responsible for sidewalk repair work at NYCHA
6 developments.

7 According to NYCHA, it's DOT. If it is DOT, then
8 I would love to know, you know, if you could tell us
9 what is the budget for that, and how are projects
10 prioritized?

11 I think your mic is off.

12 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. Thank you,
13 Councilmember. We collaborate a lot with Department
14 of Parks, and with the light work and the light poles
15 that they have. You know, we also want to think that
16 Mayor Adams had instruct all of us about continuing
17 working together among agencies. So, there's-- Some
18 of the work that we can say is NYCHA, but we also
19 collaborate. By Margaret, if you don't just taking
20 that particular one.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yes. So, we do
22 the work for NYCHA. We collaborate with them on the
23 locations, as the Commissioner said. They define for
24 us which are the highest priority locations. So,
25 this season, we are spending \$6.3 million on NYCHA

2 sidewalks. I have the list of locations. It might
3 be too much to get into, but in the Bronx, it's \$2
4 million Manhattan, it's \$2.3 million, and we can give
5 you the developments in both of those boroughs for
6 your reference.

7 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: Can you tell us what the
8 actual cost of one sidewalk repair is?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Well, it all
10 depends. We go by square footage. So sometimes it's
11 one side of a development. Sometimes it's all the
12 sides. It really depends on the site.

13 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: Okay, because I did a
14 similar project at Millbrook Houses several years
15 back, and it was quite costly.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yes.

17 COUNCILMEMBER AYAL: So, if you are working,
18 let's say, in the Bronx with \$2 million, how many
19 sidewalks would that get me?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Right. So, the
21 work that we're doing in the Bronx is Morris, Monroe,
22 Pelham Parkway, Randall Avenue, Throgs Neck, Forest,
23 and Mitchell houses. So, we would have to get you
24 more details, a breakdown of, you know, is it 300
25

1 square feet, is it, you know, much more? It can
2 vary.
3

4 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: And so does DOT wait for
5 NYCHA to highlight a specific sidewalk? Or is there
6 a department within DOT that goes out and assesses
7 the conditions of the sidewalks and then has a
8 conversation with NYCHA? How does it work?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yes. We meet with
10 NYCHA several times a year to, kind of, set the tone
11 of where we want to go for the year, and what are
12 their priorities, and what we have seen in the field.
13 So, it's sort of a meeting of the minds. But the
14 final word, NYCHA prioritizes the locations for us.

15 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: Okay, because they kind of
16 washed their hands of it yesterday and threw the
17 responsibility on DOT. So that's why we're trying to
18 get some clarity on this issue, because this has been
19 a-- you know, a question that has been kind of
20 roaming around as long as I've been on the Council,
21 and I've been here for a while, of who's responsible.
22 Even when I was a staffer and we were working on the
23 Millbrook Project, you know, it took us a long time
24 because no agency would assume responsibility. And I
25 would like to highlight-- and I'll have Councilmember

1
2 Salamanca speak for himself and send over the
3 information on the specific development that he was
4 referring to. But you know, he has a-- actually, you
5 can go to his social media, and you can see the whole
6 video of a resident that lives at the development who
7 is wheelchair-- is a wheelchair user, and cannot, you
8 know, safely travel throughout the confines of his
9 development, because the sidewalk repair is so-- is
10 in a state that makes it impossible to do that so
11 that he has to go into the street in order to get
12 around, which is dangerous, right?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: That's not
14 acceptable.

15 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: Exactly.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: And, we will make
17 temporary repairs. I think we may have done so at
18 that location.

19 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: Yes.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: So, if you or any
21 of the colleagues here have NYCHA locations, that you
22 have conditions that are unsafe, we will go in and do
23 repairs in asphalt until such time we can do them in
24 concrete.

25

2 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: Yeah. And I think that
3 that's the important part: Is that if we're putting
4 in the asphalt, it would be nice to know what the,
5 you know, the timeframe for--

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Permanent.

7 COUNCILMEMBER AYAL: Exactly. The permanent, you
8 know, job being done, because it's I think there's a
9 lot of confusion about that.

10 And then I have two other questions. One is
11 around the FDNY. We had a hearing last year where we
12 brought up the issue of EMT response times being
13 significantly delayed. I'm not sure if you-- if this
14 is something that you've heard about. But in my
15 district alone, I've had over-- I would say at this
16 point, I have them documented and I'm happy to share
17 you can speak to those people yourself-- at least ten
18 cases where folks have called an ambulance and have
19 waited, one as long as six hours before she called
20 me. And it was probably roughly around eight hours
21 before she was picked up. I had a senior at
22 Millbrook Houses who passed out in-- in the lobby and
23 they called an ambulance. It took an hour. You
24 know, I mean, like I can share story after story.

2 But the point is that when we had this
3 conversation with-- with the agency last year, one of
4 the things that they highlighted was that the traffic
5 redesigns are creating a condition that is also--
6 when traffic is slowing down, it's also slowing down
7 the response time, because they're getting stuck and
8 jammed in that traffic.

9 Is this something that you're aware of? Is this
10 something that you're working with the agency on?
11 Because, obviously, when I call 911, you know, it's
12 for dire emergency. I would, you know, we're
13 expecting folks to get there as quickly as possible.

14 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yep. Thank you,
15 Councilmember. And I will start it, and Eric Beaton,
16 who again, oversees the whole planning division, can
17 add to it. I've got to say that, you know, in most--
18 First of all, when we do any project, we always ask
19 and get the okay from the Fire Department and the
20 NYPD. We don't compromise safety, including the
21 moving of fire-- fire trucks or NYPD. In most
22 cases, I've got to say, especially my observation as
23 a commissioner is about being in the community. A
24 lot of the traffic jam that we have is not because of
25 the designing. It is by the people doing double

2 parking and triple parking. So again, before a
3 project is taken on, we work and we need to have an
4 okay from the NYPD and the Fire Department.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Yeah. And just to
6 build on that, we are working directly with the Fire
7 Department to see if there are locations where
8 traffic speeds have been declining and affecting the
9 response times. You know, we're trying to dig deeper
10 into the data. What we've seen on a citywide basis
11 is that traffic speeds aren't any slower than they
12 were five years ago. So, this isn't a global
13 problem. Like, even as we've made street changes
14 we've seen traffic speeds stay right about the same.
15 But, it could be that there's some specific location
16 where there's an issue, and that's why we're happy to
17 work with the Fire Department. As the Commissioner
18 said, we take public safety-- public safety very
19 seriously. And if there's a location where fire
20 trucks or ambulances are getting routinely delayed,
21 we want to work with them. Whether that was caused
22 by something we did, or whether--

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm sorry. I just
24 have to interject, because this is actually not true.
25 When I think about the bike lane on Beach 20th and

2 Rockaway, the local firehouse, the big house, was not
3 consulted before that bike lane of hard
4 infrastructure was implemented. It has also slowed
5 down the response times as well. And I know that-- I
6 think that Councilmember Ariola has legislation in
7 right now that would require that they be brought in
8 on the front end of a lot of these conversations.
9 So, I just wanted to point that out.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Yeah, and just for
11 that particular project, that was a DEC capital
12 project. The Fire Department was included in all of
13 their mass mailings. It goes to the Central Fire
14 Department. It's on them how they coordinate amongst
15 themselves to get responses. But they were very much
16 included in that process.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Even their
18 headquarters in past conversations have indicated
19 that they would like more communication with these
20 projects. Because when they are brought in, it's not
21 on the front side of the project, and what that looks
22 like. So they may come in, but it's not at a point
23 that it would be beneficial to them or take into
24 account what that impact is going to be.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: We're happy to talk
3 more about all the ways that we do communicate with
4 them.

5 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: Yeah. I-- No, And again, I
6 think that's, you know, what-- It may be an
7 unintended consequence, right?, of the way that we're
8 designing, or the approach that we're having to
9 ensuring that people are not double parking,
10 whatever. Whatever it is, it's a problem. And, you
11 know, we are hoping to have an oversight hearing on
12 it soon just to try to get to the bottom of it,
13 because it's so prevalent in my life that I cannot,
14 you know-- It's hard to believe that it's just a
15 coincidence at this point, right? So many people
16 have reached out with the same scenario. Case in--
17 There was one case this winter. It was freezing, and
18 a gentleman was collapsed and unresponsive at
19 Randalls Island. And I guess it was a pedestrian
20 that was walking by and saw this and called 911. And
21 they said they couldn't be there for an hour. So, we
22 had to call the NYPD to go and respond. And, like,
23 that's unacceptable. So, there are things-- And I'm
24 not saying that this is all specifically, you know,
25 geared to the street design matter, but it was one of

2 the things that was highlighted by the FDNY as one of
3 the contributing factors.

4 So, I would love it if, you know, there was some
5 conversation just to try to figure out, like, where
6 and what the root cause of those problems are.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: And part of the
8 reason why we are excited to work with the Fire
9 Department down this is, if we did something that
10 caused a delay, we should fix it. If there's
11 something else. If there's a new store that opened,
12 and there's a lot of double parking, and we can go in
13 and try to address that location. Whatever is on the
14 street that's causing a delay, we want to work with
15 them.

16 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: And I mean, I think for me
17 it is a little bit frustrating, because as a
18 legislator, I'm-- you know, I assume and I think that
19 normal, you know, people are, like, assuming that
20 there's conversation between the agencies whenever
21 there's a hiccup somewhere, or they're identifying
22 something that they're calling and saying, "Hey, you
23 know, what guys like this is, you know, this is
24 becoming an occurrence," you know, and the work that
25 we're doing, and, you know, we're concerned about it.

1 But I don't think that that's happening. So, I'm
2 really just-- We're trying to connect the dots here
3 and try to figure out what is creating-- is it
4 because we're short staffed? Is it because we don't
5 have enough ambulances? Is it a traffic pattern
6 issue? But that was something that was brought up by
7 the FDNY as a contributing factor. And I just want
8 to pitch it some-- You know, I do drive. I'm a
9 driver. I know that I-- You know, people have
10 shouted me out on Twitter for driving a vehicle. I
11 am not ashamed of driving my vehicle, but when I am
12 on the FDR Drive, I also realize that there are a lot
13 of ambulances that are stuck behind me in traffic.
14 And so, I am always puzzled, because there's like a
15 whole side of the highway that could be used as an
16 emergency lane. And so I'm doing my throw that out
17 there. You know, I don't work for DOT, but as a
18 suggestion.

19
20 And then finally, I would love-- Yes? I think
21 your mic is off.

22 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We, as I said-- Let me
23 elaborate again: Before any project we get the okay,
24 from the Fire Department and the NYPD on any project.

25 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: Yeah.

2 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Definitely, as Eric
3 said, we are more than happy to-- so agencies talk.
4 In this case, any project that we do that has any
5 impact with another agency, they come to the table,
6 and we participated with them. And we don't move it
7 without-- unless we have also the okay from them.

8 And, as I said, there's many factors that can
9 contribute in any project that we take on, and we
10 have to get back and learn on things that we can
11 improve, we will do it.

12 Double parking is one of the major contribution
13 of those traffic issues. And I can say, like, if you
14 go through [inaudible], people will say, "Oh, the
15 bike lane, now the ambulance doesn't go through."
16 Well, because people go to-- go to the bakery to buy
17 the coffee. They do double parking and triple
18 parking. So, when I say it's about-- Yes, more than
19 happy to continue working with the other agencies
20 that work together. But, we also have to understand
21 and realize that double parking and triple parking
22 contributes a lot to those a traffic issue that we
23 have on our streets.

24 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: I think that that's a
25 that's a conversation that should also be had with

2 other city agencies that also double park and use
3 their city-owned vehicles to obstruct traffic in bus
4 lanes and create the problem. Well, at least they're
5 contributing to it.

6 And then lastly, I think I would love to be able
7 to get an update at some point regarding the 138th
8 Street and Third Avenue redesign project. Under the
9 de Blasio administration, we got a commitment to
10 fully fund the redesigning of that intersection,
11 because it is-- it has a higher than normal adult
12 population that lives in that community, that has to
13 play chicken every time that they're trying to cross
14 at either part of the of the intersection. And I
15 have-- It's been quite a number of years. This was
16 funded, predating your time in office, but it is
17 something that's really important, considering the
18 number of older adults in that-- in that community,
19 and I have not heard anything.

20 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Is that the area that
21 you and I, we walked together with the principal?

22 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: We went-- You didn't get to
23 go to 138th and Third. I went there with Keith, but
24 we went to [inaudible].

25 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Inside the school right?

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2 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: Yeah. Not the school--

3 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: The school nearby.

4 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: The school is something
5 different. It's an area on 138th Street and Third
6 Avenue. The traffic patterns there are, like,
7 ridiculous. It's-- Even if you're driving, if
8 you're crossing, if you're walking, it's very
9 difficult to get through, because nobody knows where
10 they're going.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Councilmember, we
12 have a brief update, and we can get you more details.

13 So that's a DDC project. It's being built out
14 capitally, and it is now scheduled to happen in 2025.

15 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: Okay. All right. Thank
16 you. I appreciate that.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: We have questions from
18 Councilmember Hudson.

19 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Thank you so much. Hi,
20 Commissioner. How are you? One quick question just
21 as followup. I've heard you talk a lot about double
22 parking and triple parking. Are you all doing
23 anything around enforcement with-- with NYPD?

24 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: This is a priori-- The
25 answer is yes. We know that-- As I say, we're

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2 taking responsibility for our role. You know, our
3 agency is responsible to organize our infrastructure,
4 roadways, and sidewalks for people to move, people
5 and vehicles to move efficiently now in our streets.

6 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Right.

7 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: So enforcement is
8 important. We work closely with NYPD, with
9 Commissioner Caban and Chief Rivera. And we know
10 that this is something that, you know, they also take
11 very seriously.

12 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Okay. I was just
13 wondering if you've had those direct conversations,
14 since it was mentioned a number of times.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Councilmember, if I
16 may too: The MTA cameras were also authorized to
17 start enforcing on double parking. So, we do it--

18 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Cameras on the buses,
19 right?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Correct. So, we do
21 expect that-- that we will have even more enforcement
22 coming from the MTA as well.

23 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Okay.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Aside from all the
25 work that the PD is doing.

2 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Thank you. Just curious.
3 I wanted to ask a few questions about the Open
4 Streets Program. I have many successful open streets
5 in my district, but there's no real uniformity, I
6 would say, across the board. And so, I'm wondering
7 how many open streets programs are currently
8 operating across the city? What's the budget for the
9 Open Streets Programs? And how many staff are
10 assigned to the open streets programs?

11 Your microphone please.

12 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Open Streets is one of
13 those great things that came out from COVID. You
14 know, during COVID, we had to be created, and there
15 were so many spaces where previous administrations,
16 they put a barricade, and they gave a space to the
17 community to be able to have an area where they can
18 walk, being safe. In 202, this administration, led
19 by Mayor Adams and us, we decided to make Open
20 Streets more permanent. In 2022, we did 217 open
21 streets. In 2023, we increased those numbers to 237.
22 And all of those open street, they are-- We've been
23 able to get a partnership with a not-for-profit, a
24 Business Improvement District, and also we provide
25 financial support.

2 We recently last year, was able to go into the
3 process, find the institutions that hold cultural--
4 that I know the work closely with many of you guys,
5 and they got a contract for \$27 million, where also
6 that money is also used to hold those-- not-for--
7 open street-- operator of the open street too.

8 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: So \$27 million going to
9 Open Streets Programs?

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: No. We have a-- We
11 have, say-- That particular one was a \$30 million
12 contract. \$27 million went to the whole cultural for
13 them to hold--

14 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: I see. But can you give
15 me a number for the total budget allocation for open
16 streets, for the Open Streets Program?

17 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Paul-- Paul can add a
18 little bit more. But I can say-- Eric-- But again,
19 I'm giving you the biggest picture, which is about--
20 We continue providing support to those not-for-- the
21 open streets that they don't have-- a not-for-profit,
22 or a Business Improvement District, they don't have
23 the resources for them to get up to \$20,000. That's
24 the amount of dollars that we are providing in
25 support.

2 We also have \$30 million: \$27 million through the
3 to the whole cultural. We also provide \$3 million
4 for MWBE, that they also help with the management for
5 the Open Street. And also we do the car-free day on
6 summer streets. So, you know, we took seven miles of
7 summer streets that used to be only happening from
8 Brooklyn Bridge to 79th street. Last year, we went
9 up to Harlem. We went to the five boroughs. And
10 what we do in the summer street also, we put money in
11 the car-free Earth Day, is give the community an
12 opportunity for them to enjoy what an open street can
13 look like for a day. So, we can encourage more to
14 apply to be part of the Open Street.

15 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: So, can you talk a little
16 bit about the open streets that are actually managed
17 by DOT? I have one in my district on Willoughby.
18 And we've heard that when it's time for the
19 barricades to be up, they're not up on time, so that,
20 you know, people are not being able to safely walk
21 through the open street. Can you just talk a little
22 bit about what happens when DOT is actually managing
23 an open street?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Sure. And we'll look
25 into what is specifically going on in Willoughby.

2 But as you said, in some cases where we work with a
3 partner who does a lot of that management, and we can
4 fund them, and help them through our cultural
5 society. In some-- In some cases where there's a
6 good open street, and that partner isn't able to do
7 that, we do take on that management, where we have a
8 contractor who gets out and can move the barriers and
9 can deal with a lot of the other maintenance aspects
10 happening on the street. They are supposed to be out
11 at certain times.

12 You know, if we have a number that all open at
13 the same hour, they can't move every barrier at
14 exactly the same moment. But if they're regularly
15 happening, we will go and see what's happening on
16 Willoughby.

17 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Yeah. That's what my
18 office has been hearing: That since it was changed
19 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., the barricades aren't out on
20 time. I don't know if that's one specific corner,
21 you know, versus, like, what you're saying, like,
22 somebody-- if it's one person that's doing it,
23 obviously one end is going to be out maybe at 8
24 versus the other end.

2 But generally, we're hearing that the barricades
3 aren't out, or even removed on the other end at 8
4 p.m. in a timely fashion.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yeah. We'll check to
6 see exactly what's happening.

7 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Okay, great. And then
8 does DOT have programs to accommodate and support
9 businesses that might be negatively impacted by the
10 Open Streets Program?

11 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: What we have seen is
12 that open streets benefit small businesses too. What
13 we have seen is that, what people say at the
14 beginning, which is about there's an open street, it
15 will have a negative impact on my business. On
16 average, what we have seen is either the same or an
17 increase in sales in those small businesses.

18 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Well, I think there's--

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: But if there is any
20 particular location where a small business feels that
21 their business is being hurt, I'm more than happy to
22 look at it. But on average, small businesses sales
23 doesn't decrease when we do open streets.

24 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Yeah, but I think there's
25 diversity in the types of businesses that are on any

1 particular open street. So, some businesses rely
2 more on people who might be traveling by car but also
3 by bus, and when there's an open street the buses are
4 rerouted, and then people are unable to necessarily
5 walk to those businesses from wherever the rerouted
6 location might be.
7

8 So, you know, I'm just asking if there's any
9 specific support programs that might be, you know,
10 allocated specifically for businesses that are, you
11 know, negatively impacted.

12 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Most locations around
13 any open street, they are part of the process and
14 they are integrated. I-- Again, if there's any
15 particular case, that anyone feels that their sales
16 have been decreased, I'm more than happy to look at
17 it. But on average, what people believe at the
18 beginning, that sales will be decreased when there's
19 open streets, doesn't happen. An open street
20 benefits the whole of people who use it, and also
21 help the economy and the small businesses who around
22 those locations.

23 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Yeah. I understand. I
24 don't disagree with you. But like I said, there are--
25 - there are, you know, diverse types of businesses.

2 Not everything is necessarily just a restaurant. I
3 do have a restaurant in my district that is having
4 challenges. So, I would be happy to talk with you
5 about that. But also, you know, hair salons and
6 other type of businesses that aren't selling food,
7 you know, that also need their customers to be able
8 to get to the businesses. So, if there are ways that
9 we can, you know--

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We will look at it.

11 COUNCILMEMBER HUDDSON: --think more creatively
12 to think about, you know, potential solutions, or
13 workarounds, accommodations that might be able to be
14 created. My office has reached out about, you know,
15 shuttle buses and things like that from some of the
16 rerouted bus locations. But that wasn't an option
17 that we were-- That's what we were told. So, we'd
18 be happy to talk to.

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We will follow with you.

20 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Great. Thank you.
21 Thanks, Chairs.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you. Chair?

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Next, I
24 wanted to touch on Sammy's Law. Sammy's Law was
25 recently passed as part of this year's final State

2 Budget. This measure will allow the city's
3 Department of Transportation to lower the speed limit
4 by five miles per hour on a specific road starting on
5 June 19th.

6 The law applies to any road that has two lanes or
7 less in either direction. To lower the speed limit
8 citywide, the state law requires the Council to vote
9 in favor of such change, after which there would be a
10 six-month period where speeding drivers would get a
11 warning rather than a ticket.

12 However, an aspect of the bill that has been
13 widely reported on allows DOT to lower the speed
14 limit on specific streets without council approval.
15 All that's required is a 60-day notice to the local
16 Community Board, followed by the same six-month
17 warning period for drivers.

18 Has The Administration had any conversations
19 about the implementation of Sammy's Law? And if so,
20 what was the scope of those conversations? And what
21 are the city's plans for implementation?

22 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: The Mayor said
23 yesterday, when we reduce the speed we save lives.
24 And we know that speeding ruins lives. I am happy
25 that, together we were able to get Kathy Hochul, the

2 Governor, the Mayor, the Council, the Assembly, the
3 Senate, to work together, work with Amy, Families For
4 Safer Streets, TA, and get Sammy's Law to the
5 crossing line.

6 Now the question is how do we use it? For DOT to
7 continue using this tool with more flexibility to
8 review the speed limit, especially around the
9 schools, senior centers, parks, is a tool that we
10 will continue using. And we are in the process, yes,
11 again, to look at any area where we will use it
12 immediately.

13 When it comes to reducing the speed limit
14 citywide, this is a conversation that I know the
15 Administration will have with The Council. Is the
16 Council ready to pass a bill to reduce the speed
17 limit to 20 miles per hour? This is a conversation
18 that, again, I know will continue happening between
19 City Hall and the City Council. But you heard The
20 Mayor yesterday here say, definitely, when we reduce
21 the speed limit, we save lives.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, to the question
23 to ask because it was not answered: Has the
24 Administration had any conversations about
25 implementation of Sammy's Law? If so, what was the

2 scope of those conversations, and what are the City's
3 plans for its implementation?

4 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Uh, yes. The
5 Administration that we've been implementing is DOT.
6 And what I say is DOT has already been using the tool
7 to reduce the speed limit around the schools to 20
8 miles per hour. Now we have the tool with more
9 flexibility, we're ready to use it immediately.

10 Now, the question is: to pass a law that will
11 reduce it citywide, the Council will have to take the
12 vote. I know that conversation will be happening
13 between City Hall and you guys to make a decision if
14 we are ready to pass the bill.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Is the department
16 considering immediate speed limit reductions on any
17 already-identified streets? And if so, can you
18 provide a list?

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We use it-- The answer
20 is yes. We will keep-- We will give you again.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm sorry. The
22 answer is...?

23 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: The answer is yes, we
24 will use the tools, because now that--

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No. The question is:
3 Do you have the streets already identified?

4 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Not right now. And
5 again, the bill says that you're up to June now when
6 we have to-- when we have the flexibility to
7 implement the tool.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, you're not
9 already looking at what streets? You're looking--

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: It's not just that. We
11 use it every day. As any project that is done on
12 the-- on the planning. And when we-- You know, at
13 the beginning of '22, I announced that we would
14 implement safety around 150 schools in New York City.

15 So every day as we go with our team to improve
16 safety, to reduce the speed limit, we will now have
17 this tool that we can use with more flexibility.

18 So, I-- we can we can get back to you with any
19 particular project that is in process to take place
20 in the next couple of months, and give you a-- and
21 share that information about where and when we're
22 looking to use that flexibility. But still, it is
23 going to be in June when this bill is on effect.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Has a department
3 conducted a study to determine which streets would
4 most benefit from a reduction in speed limits?

5 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Around schools, around
6 senior centers, and around parks are the top
7 priority, and we are ready to go and use the tool to
8 reduce the speed limit at those locations, because
9 that will save lives. When it comes to citywide, the
10 Council will have to make the decision. When the
11 Council is ready to work with the Administration to
12 reduce the citywide--

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I understand that.
14 When we have a bill to talk, about we can talk about
15 that. I just want to get through these questions, in
16 the interest of time.

17 What statistics or metrics does DOT consider
18 when deciding where to lower speed limits?

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Crashes. Data. NYPD.
20 Like, we rely on data on any location that we install
21 only the tools from the speed camera, to the red
22 light camera, to a crosswalk, to a speed bump, this
23 is about following the data. That's what we do.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Will the
3 Administration engage local elected officials for
4 their recommendations and input?

5 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We always do, and we
6 always will.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Will the department
8 consult local Community Boards for their
9 recommendations and feedback?

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: All the time, because
11 that's the law. The law say that we need to also
12 consult with the Community Boards.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Is the notice--

14 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We have 60 days. The
15 bill will establish that we have-- we will definitely
16 consult with the Community Board.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Well, just to be
18 clear, the law says that you have to notify-- notice
19 them, I'm asking if you will consult, so take in
20 their feedback as well.

21 Will DOT consider the feedback received from the
22 Community Boards and integrate that into the plans?

23 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Listen, that's what we
24 do every day. We have ambassadors. We have a
25 Borough Commissioners. I myself go to the Community

2 Boards. I invite everyone for community input to
3 allow for us, to the community to develop ownership
4 with the project that we do, and this is priority for
5 Mayor Adams and for me.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And will DOT consider
7 hard infrastructure investments alongside this to
8 ensure that there are speed-- actual speed
9 reductions?

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: You know, the
11 flexibility that-- you know, the change with Sammy's
12 Law is that in order for us to have the speed limit,
13 we had to do some infrastructure work. So we don't
14 have that flexibility. Like, I can say that there is
15 not another city that had a planning division like
16 the one that is led by Eric Beaton and the team, you
17 know, from Emily to Shawn, with the Plaza. It's
18 like, this is the best team that we have in the
19 nation. So, definitely, you know, to invest, to pool
20 the resources, our dollars in capital projects, you
21 know, doing more crosswalks, you know, is important.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Speed bumps.

23 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We work-- the
24 daylighting too. This is something that, you know,
25 you pushed for. We heard you, and we know how

2 important is daylighting also. So, we're doing it
3 from-- We're doing 2000 intersection improvements,
4 like in every year from now on. Among those, 1000 of
5 those will be daylighting. So, definitely we'll be
6 using other infrastructure projects, as also we will
7 be doing, and also we're going to be reducing--
8 lowering the speed limit.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What is the DOT's
10 estimate of the cost of new signage that would be
11 required for the speed limit changes, and how much is
12 currently budgeted for signage and installation?
13 Will more funding be needed to adequately cover the
14 projected costs?

15 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: We had to do a lot of
16 changes, because now you also mand-- you know, we
17 work on doing the daylighting. It means that we will
18 also have to do signs. If Eric has any numbers that
19 we can share, we know we can get back to you.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Yeah. It does
21 depend very much on the location, and any single sign
22 is not especially expensive. You know, it's-- a
23 sign costs \$50 to \$100 to make typically, plus the
24 cost of going out and installing it.

2 But, you know, we're a big city. Any one
3 location is not expensive. Doing a lot adds up very
4 quickly.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How does the
6 department plan on informing and educating city
7 residents about this new law?

8 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: About the new law?

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Mm-hmm.

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Continue doing what
11 we're doing. I feel that, you know, from relying on
12 elected officials to help you through their social
13 media, through your town halls, to go to the
14 Community Boards, to go into the Business Improvement
15 Districts, to use our ambassadors, from our Borough
16 Commissioner in each borough, to work working with
17 the interfaith community, PTA, NYCHA leaders. Those
18 are the leaders that we always work with, and we will
19 continue doing that.

20 And by the way-- And we also had, with Kim, who
21 is our person who leads our educational division, I
22 don't think that there is another department of
23 transportation that has a large division or
24 educational team. They-- We work with more than 200
25 schools in the city, meeting with the teacher, with

2 the students, developing curriculum, working with the
3 PTA. So, also we're going to be working with the
4 schools.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: There is-- I'm
6 switching now to Safe Routes to Schools capital
7 projects. There is \$117.3 million in funds allocated
8 for Safe Routes to Schools projects across fiscal
9 2024 to 2028 in the executive Capital Plan. What
10 types of changes do these projects entail? And how
11 were these school routes selected for these projects?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: I can take it, Chair.
13 So, the Safe Routes to Schools is one of the critical
14 programs we have in our capital street reconstruction
15 plan. As you mentioned, we have different contracts
16 for different boroughs. The types of improvements
17 that we do are anything from curb extensions, to
18 median expansions, to pedestrian islands, and
19 everything in between. We also do-- We can also do
20 lightings, leading pedestrian intervals, and any sort
21 of geometrical designs needed for the schools.

22 It is also a data-driven approach. We look at
23 crash data, we look at VIS speed data to pick those
24 schools. It is a very equitable distribution.

25 Again, we have contracts in every borough. So, we do

2 look at, not just the equitable distribution within
3 the city, but also by borough.

4 So, it's a very exciting program. It's a large
5 investment and a large part of our Capital Plan.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What are some Safe
7 Routes to Schools projects that DOT anticipates
8 completing in fiscal 2024 and 2025?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Give me one second.
10 I should have-- We have the Bronx-- So the Bronx
11 schools-- So we have it by contract. I can get you
12 the list of the schools after the hearing. But we
13 have the Bronx School Safety Contract should be
14 completed later this year. Same as the Brooklyn one.
15 The Staten Island contract should be completed in
16 next calendar year. And we're going to be breaking
17 ground on the contracts for Queens and Manhattan in
18 the next calendar year.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: But just to add, in
20 addition to the capital projects through our in-house
21 street improvement programs, we do safety upgrades
22 around schools as well, because we know capital
23 projects can take a long time, and we don't want to
24 wait to get improvements to the schools. So, we'll
25 often go in earlier and-- Like we-- I know we're

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2 doing a number of projects in the South Bronx. Like,
3 there's projects all over the city, where we're going
4 to be doing safety improvements specifically around
5 schools, so that we can get those in very quickly.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Are the projects
7 broken up equitably across the city? Like, is it
8 like one per bour-- what's the number per borough?

9 So it's-- We can get you the exact number, but
10 it's a few dozen and they are spread across all five
11 boroughs. We spend a lot of time particularly being
12 focused by our priority investment that came out of
13 the Streets Plan, that we're focusing our efforts in
14 in the high-need areas, the historically
15 underinvested areas.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Can someone get that
17 for us while we're here?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Sure.

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: One thing that we are
20 doing as we do the projects around the schools in
21 many locations, we also use the students, for them
22 also to be part of what we do. When I announced at
23 the beginning of '22 the numbers of improving safety
24 projects around the school, I did a 190 and Amsterdam
25 Avenue, where the students from-- I challenged

2 myself. They were also part of working with the DOT
3 team, learning the process. First of all,
4 identifying the challenge of safety around the GW in
5 PS 189, but they also participated in the whole
6 process of the project that we are doing so. And so
7 again, we are, you know, that doing it across the
8 five boroughs is a priority, by improving safety is
9 something that, you know, since this administration
10 took office, we are starting, and we keep doing it.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And does DOT have any
12 plans to expand these improvements include additional
13 schools? And if so, how will they be selected?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: I think we are always
15 looking to do more. As the Commissioner mentioned,
16 we can always do more with more.

17 Once these contracts finish and wrap up, we are
18 going to be looking at how we can keep investing in
19 our Safe Routes to School Program. It is a
20 conversation that we're going to be having with OMB
21 and City Hall in the coming months, year or so.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Moving on to congestion
23 pricing. The Executive Plan includes "other
24 categorical funding" in fiscal 2024 of \$800,000 for a
25 traffic study, and \$1.3 million for a parking study.

2 These studies are part of the congestion pricing
3 environmental assessment, and will be funded by the
4 MTA. Can you walk us through the data that will be
5 gathered, and the analysis planned for each of these
6 studies, and when will the results be available?

7 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Well, first of all, we
8 have been ready for congestion pricing. And, so you
9 know, June 3rd is going to be the first day when
10 congestion pricing will be on effect. That
11 congestion prices led by the MTA with New York City
12 DOT being partners, participating in their study and
13 assessment, the plan that we put it together how
14 ready we are on the bus ways, and you know, at 34th
15 street, and how we are improving. You know, the
16 infrastructure that we need for this moment is
17 something that we had done in the past.

18 On the parking study, Margaret can take on that
19 one.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yes. So, as you
21 mentioned, we are doing a study of the effects of
22 congestion pricing on communities that border the
23 area as well as other communities a little further
24 afield. That the concern is that there'll be an
25 influx of people who come into those neighborhoods,

2 attempt to park, and then take transit into
3 Manhattan.

4 So as part of that study, it's very critical that
5 we have very good before data of what is occurring
6 right now, what is happening in those neighborhoods,
7 what is parking availability, what is congestion?

8 So, we are in the process of collecting that
9 information right now. It will be completed by the
10 end of this month or the beginning of June. And then
11 post-congestion pricing, once things have settled a
12 little bit, we will then complete the after-portion
13 of that study. And we'll have some additional
14 information to share with people about what we're
15 seeing.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Are the studies
17 targeting any particular locations?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yes, and I can get
19 those for you. I don't have them with me.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. Do you think
21 someone could get it before we're done here, or...?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Um, we may be able
23 to.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. What shifts
25 and traffic patterns is DOT anticipating once

2 congestion pricing is implemented? And has DOT
3 conducted a study into how congestion pricing may or
4 may not disproportionately affect neighborhoods that
5 are home to predominantly black and brown
6 communities?

7 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: First of all, Margaret
8 can add, but what I can say is that congestion
9 pricing, what we know, one will allow us to see how,
10 again, led by MTA, to see a reduction of congestion
11 in the central part of Manhattan. At the same time,
12 it will allow MTA to raise \$1.3 billion, where they
13 also can borrow additional \$13 billion, money that
14 will go back to our communities, especially working
15 class communities that rely on our buses and our
16 trains.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Okay, as part of
18 congestion pricing, and Eric may have some more
19 details for you, we are doing some work in other
20 communities that potentially could be negative--
21 negatively impacted--

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Which communities?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: --such as in the
24 Bronx. So, that-- that has been the focus to date.
25 And I think that, you know, as we talked about

2 earlier on, the Commissioner testified about our
3 connecting to the core. We're doing a lot of other
4 projects to ensure that there are a lot of options
5 for people all around the city. Do you...?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Yeah. I'll just
7 add-- like, one of the things we're very focused on
8 and really came out of the thorough analysis that was
9 done is the focus on air quality. That, you know,
10 there was an issue raised that if, particularly
11 trucks try to avoid the zone by going through the
12 Bronx, or going through parts of Brooklyn, that they
13 might exacerbate air quality and hazmat issues. And
14 that's why, as part of the money that's coming with
15 the program, we're going to be doing a lot of
16 retrofits, both of the what they call TRUs. These
17 are like the refrigeration units that--

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But where's that
19 money coming from? Because most of the congestion
20 pricing funding has been spent already on the current
21 Capital Plan.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Yes. So it's
23 coming-- It's coming through the MTA, either
24 directly from congestion pricing, or from other
25

2 related sources that's going into cleaning up the
3 trucking in those areas.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Has DOT considered
5 the adequacy and changing needs of parking
6 infrastructure as it relates to congestion pricing?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Right. So, we
8 feel it's very important to actually see what happens
9 on the ground before we begin to discuss any changes
10 in that regard.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How does DOT plan to
12 mitigate the potential effects of congestion pricing,
13 such as increased park-and-ride activity, as well as
14 increased traffic flow in certain neighborhoods just
15 outside of the congestion zone in northern Manhattan,
16 such as Harlem and Washington Heights?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Again, we'll be
18 watching very carefully to see what the effects are.
19 We want to have the data on that before we talk about
20 it further.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, I'm going to
22 try and race through these last few sections.
23 Starting with MWBE contracting: What percentage of
24 DOT vendors are MWBEs. Particularly what-- I want
25 to also know what outreach and education does DOT do

2 to alert MWBEs of RFPs and contracting opportunities,
3 and has DOT's contracting and with MWBE vendors
4 increased over the past 10 years? What are DOT's
5 MWBE goals? And what is your progress in meeting
6 those goals? And what more can the agency do to
7 ensure that MWBEs receive more opportunity in its
8 procurement and concession contracts?

9 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. When Michael
10 Garnder, the director of the MWBE, shared the
11 information about how following the direction of
12 Mayor Eric Adams to put \$25 billion into MWBEs by
13 2026, includes the numbers that DOT is producing. It
14 makes me to really be proud of the great job that
15 Carlos Bannister, who leads MWBE at DOT has done.

16 I have been-- I was for three years asking all
17 those questions: How are we doing? How are we
18 doing? Can we do better? And the agency never moved
19 more than 11% on the MWBE. It is two years and four
20 months, and the number moved from 11% to 24%. And I
21 know that before the end of June those numbers--

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Is that M--

23 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: --those numbers will be
24 close to 30%. That is the result of putting together
25 conversations about doing business with DOT, doing

2 the outreach. I don't think that another agency in
3 any other period of time in this city has improved
4 MWBE as we have done it, from 11% to 24%.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But Commissioner, if
6 you could clarify that number, is that number the--
7 combined number of M and W, or is that M? And if it
8 is, what is the W, like, comparatively? Because in
9 the Comptroller's report that we spoke about in a
10 previous hearing, we saw that DOT's numbers were
11 extremely low on the M side.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yeah. So, I'd like
13 to clarify. The Comptroller's report included
14 projects that have federal funding. Local Law 1,
15 which is the city's MWBE law, does not include those
16 projects. The federal funding projects have
17 different targets. They are called DBE targets, or
18 Disadvantaged Business Enterprises. So that's why we
19 put them separate. There-- It is not apples-to-
20 apples to put them together. From the Local Law 1,
21 City MWBE projects, that-- that's the 24% that the
22 Commissioner is mentioning, and that's the 30%, or
23 close to 30% that we expect to land at the end of the
24 year.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So-- But is the 24% M
3 and W?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: MWBE. So I can have
5 a breakdown--

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So what-- How can you
7 break down the M and the W?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yeah. I can break
9 down-- That's right, I can break it down. Give me
10 one second.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: So we have-- Of the
13 MW-- Of the total MWBE amount, 39%-- this is year
14 to date.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: 39% have gone to
17 black-owned businesses, 21% have gone to Hispanic-
18 owned businesses, 14% have-- have gone to white
19 women-- or women-owned businesses, and 26% have gone
20 to Asian businesses.

21 So it's actually been a pretty healthy spread of
22 the various groups that comprise MWBEs.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: And is the goal applied
24 against all DOT projects? Or is it only certain
25 projects?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: So, the-- They are
3 all the projects that have fall under Local Law 1,
4 which are all the projects that do not have federal
5 funding. That is the easiest way to think about it.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And what is the
7 percentage of the federally-funded projects versus
8 not?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: So the federal
10 projects tend to be large capital projects. Might--
11 The total-- I'll give you the denominator for the
12 Local Law 1, if that's helpful. It's about \$600
13 million in contract amounts. So we-- Of that \$600
14 million-- Yeah, about \$600 million, I would say.
15 That's the denominator.

16 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: And Chair, as you know,
17 that [inaudible].

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Mic please. Mic.

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: -- many infrastructure,
20 one other thing that I can tell you: The changes
21 that I have made at DOT is to be sure that any
22 committee that we establish in this agency to review
23 contracts, they have to be diverse. This is one
24 thing-- As you asked, what is it that I'm doing?
25 What it is that I will keep doing it? I also have

3 been sure that not only-- Let's say we had many other
4 contracts in the past, like the new contract for the
5 speed cameras. They will include a requirement for
6 the MWBE that was not included before. So, when we
7 work with the \$30 million for managing-- to help us
8 to manage the open street, we also included the
9 MWBEs. So, we are taking this, as we know, for me,
10 economic justice is a way of how we can move the
11 city. And we are taking all the necessary steps to
12 continue increasing the numbers of MWBE in our city.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for that.
14 Moving to DOT's green vision: Recently, I was able
15 to learn a lot regarding how other countries approach
16 urban planning, transportation, and green
17 infrastructure in large cities. There are many
18 European cities that do a much more effective job at
19 creating a framework that allows public transit,
20 pedestrians, motorists, and cyclists to coexist in a
21 safer, greener, and more efficient manner.

22 As we look toward the future, we need to make
23 sure the city is keeping up with the times, and not
24 getting left behind.

25 What is DOT's vision for a smarter, greener, and
more efficient approach to the city's infrastructure?

2 And I will just preface it by saying recently I was
3 able to travel with a delegation to Denmark, and
4 really seeing what a shared public space could look
5 like in terms of pedestrians, motorists, and cyclists
6 all the same. And so, um, I would love to know what
7 DOT's vision is that-- as it pertains to the city's
8 infrastructure. And how does DOT plan to improve the
9 architecture of city streets so that pedestrians,
10 cyclists and drivers are better able to travel side-
11 by-side in a peaceful manner?

12 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Again, we all can be
13 very proud of New York City today. We started with
14 one pedestrian plaza in Times Square under Bloomberg
15 and Janette, now have increased to around 90 plazas
16 in New York City. When you heard Mayor Adams, Deputy
17 Mayor Joshi, and us announcing in Queens, you know,
18 the largest plan to reimagining green space in
19 Queens. It is a historical proposal that we have in
20 front of all of us. When we are standing with The
21 Mayor, putting the proposal to open in the community
22 engagement, to reimagine how we can build eight miles
23 from Randalls-- From Van Cortlandt Park to Randalls
24 Island of Greenway, that's how we're doing it. When
25 we meet with any developers, you know, that they come

2 to the City with any project related to
3 transportation, the need for me is about "how are we
4 doing on Open Streets"? So I feel that, you know,
5 when we look at our city, definitely we are a role
6 model.

7 One other thing that I say, you know, I was in--
8 when I was in that conference, where major leaders
9 from the US Department of Transportation, the Mayor
10 of that Town, he only represented an area of only
11 165,000 people. So, when I compare ourselves to any
12 country, the first thing that I say: One, what is
13 the social class aspect? One, what is the density of
14 that city? Is that a city similar to us. We are a
15 city of 350 square miles, or 8.6 million people, and
16 62 million tourists. We continue building. There's
17 a lot of construction going on. 80% of New Yorkers,
18 they're placing orders through Amazon, UPS, and FedEx
19 once a week, four times a week. So, I feel that,
20 definitely the work that all of us have done
21 together, the bills that we have passed here on the
22 Council, the commitment of the administration to have
23 New York City in the center of this nation when it
24 comes to looking at Greenway as we do construction.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Does DOT have plans
3 to increase use and-- and just to point out, in the
4 question before, I still wasn't clear of the vision
5 of DOT going forward, understanding what the
6 Bloomberg administration has done, but wanting to
7 know what this shared space could look like. And
8 that's something we can work more closely with going
9 forward, and I'm open to that.

10 But does DOT have--

11 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, but [inaudible]--

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Your mic.

13 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: --in 2010, I believe,
14 the New York City DOT built for the first time what
15 is called the Street Design Manual. I believe it was
16 in 2018 or 16 when I was a Councilmember, the Council
17 passed a bill mandating DOT to upgrade the Street
18 Design Manual every four years. So, if you think
19 about what do we have on us, how do we work to
20 upgrade putting our vision together on our streets,
21 in our plans for the urban planning proposal?

22 One, we can look at the Street Design Manual.
23 The last one was 2020. Now we're working to finish
24 in 2024 definitely a document that we will share with
25 you.

2 Second, we have our strategic plan, laid out by
3 Julie Bero, who also is in charge of poli-- The
4 Deputy Commissioner for Policy, who also-- Also, we
5 work with a whole team to have our plan upgraded. We
6 have a strategic plan, as we are speaking today, on
7 how we-- what is the vision for our streets, for
8 reimagining, for making it safer for pedestrians, for
9 cyclists, and those are documents that we are
10 upgrading every four years.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And one more time, I
12 would love to unpack again, what this Administration
13 is doing to move the needle forward in terms of these
14 truly shared space. There's a lot of things that
15 have changed even in the last four years, right?, in
16 terms of our transportation infrastructure component.
17 Does DOT have plans to increase use of alternative
18 fuels or clean energy?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: So we have various
20 initiatives to support electric vehicles. I don't--
21 I think you're talking about the city at large, and
22 we are talking about the city fleet. But in either
23 case, we are advancing initiatives on both.

24 Eric Beaton can elaborate, but over the last few
25 years, we've put over 100 electric vehicle chargers

2 on the street for public use. We also have some that
3 are separate for city vehicle usage. We've talked a
4 little bit today about other programs. Councilmember
5 Brewer brought up the program where we have E-bike
6 battery charging that we're testing in some pilot
7 locations on the street.

8 The Department of Citywide Administrative
9 Services has a number of efforts. The city fleet is
10 really converting to electric vehicles. Any vehicle
11 that is being manufactured out there is something
12 that we will buy and utilize.

13 So not every type of vehicle that we have in our
14 fleet can be bought electric, of course, at this
15 point. But whatever can, we're committed to
16 purchasing those vehicles and integrating them into
17 our fleet. Eric, I don't know if you have anything
18 else you want to add?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: Yeah. Just to add,
20 we are working hard on expanding private vehicle
21 electrification. We know that a lot of people are
22 going to continue to rely on cars, and we want those
23 cars to be electric wherever they can.

24 Unlike most places in the country, half of our
25 vehicles are stored on the street overnight, so they

1 don't necessarily have a place to charge in their own
2 garage. And that's why we need to provide both on-
3 street overnight charging in places people can charge
4 over longer periods of time, as well as fast
5 charging, where, if someone's low, and they need a
6 charge, that there's places where they can go and do
7 that very quickly. And so, we have a strategy to do
8 that all over the city, in all five boroughs, focused
9 especially on those places where a lot of people park
10 on the street. So, not necessarily the densest core
11 of Manhattan where there's a lot of garages and not
12 necessarily deep in some of the boroughs where people
13 have driveways and private garages, but those in-
14 between areas where a lot of people are parking on
15 the street every day. And so, we have a lot of that
16 out there, as Margaret said, and we expect to have
17 more coming shortly.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, I--

20 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I JUST want to
21 thank Chair Brannan as well for his leadership on a
22 bill that we worked ON together for years to pass,
23 including electric vehicle readiness in parking lots.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for that.

25 So, this is going to be like a speed-dating

2 situation, because I just want to run through a few
3 points for my district. And then I'm done.

4 Bayswater Park Pedestrian Access. In the
5 Executive Capital Plan, \$22.2 million in capital for
6 the Bayswater Park Pedestrian Access Project is in
7 fiscals 2029 and 2030. I just want to know a couple
8 of things about that. Why is this project so far out
9 in the Capital Plan? What is the scope of this
10 project currently? Is DOT considering moving the
11 timeline projects up, considering the State Budget?
12 What stage of the project-- What stage of the process
13 is the project in currently? And I'm asking these
14 questions specifically, because I know DOT briefed me
15 on this a little over a year ago now, and they were
16 preparing to go into design. And so now with this
17 being pushed out, my understanding was that by now it
18 should have reached the design phase. And if that's
19 the case, what does that do to the project by pushing
20 it that far out?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: Yeah, listen, capital
22 projects, unfortunately, do take a while due to the
23 different procurement stages. The design is expected
24 to start at the end of this calendar year. We do
25 have the funding. We've used actually federal

1 funding for this project, which on the-- on the-- the
2 good news, it allows us to display city capital
3 dollars. The only slight downside is that there
4 other federal approvals that do slow down-- slow down
5 capital projects. It is still a very good thing to
6 do overall, to include federal-- or federalized
7 projects whenever we can. So, to answer your speed
8 dating question, the design is expected to start at
9 the end of this calendar year.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, what does that do
12 since you're pushing out this project to the outer
13 years if we're going to be in design? Because to
14 have a contractor put in a particular design and a
15 price tag on that, and then, you know, several years
16 out--

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OCHOA: We usually account
18 for that, for the funding, if we think that the fund-
19 - we currently have about \$27-- \$26 million of
20 funding, including about \$3 million of federal
21 funding. So, we usually account for-- Our estimate
22 is generally assuming that the-- that the typical
23 capital project timeline is about five years.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. Also, I've
25 spoken with Borough Commissioner Garcia about-- In

2 front of my District Office in Far Rockaway, there is
3 a bus stop there, that the sign is about-- a little
4 over half of block into that block. It traditionally
5 had not been a bus stop. So, people don't
6 necessarily know that it is a bus stop. And this was
7 a part of some of what was discussed in terms of the
8 death of Detective Diller also, in terms of the
9 placement of the vehicle, whether if it was an
10 illegal spot or not. We have asked a number of times
11 for DOT to paint the curb, to paint that sidewalk,
12 the edge of the sidewalk yellow, so people understand
13 that it's a bus stop, or to erect another sign, so
14 that people understand from point A to point B, it's
15 actually a bus stop. Because unless you're familiar
16 with that street, if you come and turn on--

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEATON: We're-- We're taking
18 a look to see if we can do better signing.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Well, you guys have
20 taken a look and told us no twice. So, I'm asking
21 now on the record, because it caused a lot of chaos
22 in that space. And also, cars are parked there, and
23 so the bus can't get there, and people are getting
24 left out in the middle of the street because of that.

2 But again, if you're not familiar with that
3 street, and you think it's just parking, or if you
4 haven't been there in a while, and you think it's
5 still parking, but now it's a bus stop, you don't
6 know, because literally, [gesturing] the sign is
7 right here, this is the corner, and you have all of
8 this space here. And so, it's not clear to people
9 that that is an actual bus stop. And so we need to
10 make sure that people understand that because it's
11 also unfair that they parked their car, not knowing,
12 and get a ticket for it as well, when we're not doing
13 our due diligence.

14 The community has come in a number of times about
15 this. My office has continued to push DOT to revisit
16 this, and we keep being told no.

17 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: [inaudible] about you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay. And then my very
19 last question: When a street doesn't flood, and then
20 it's repaved by DOT, we've found instances where it
21 now floods. I'm not sure if it's solely DEP or DOT,
22 because you know, we had the DEP Commissioner come
23 out recently to my district. There was something she
24 pointed out that's really DOT. We wanted both
25 agencies to come out at the same time, and that was

1 denied. And so, for example, in Arverne, there's a
2 four-way intersection at Beach, 67th Street, and
3 Alameda, and it's paved in a way that is now a bowl,
4 and it floods. And, you know, one of the
5 constituents said they overheard, like, a contractor
6 say-- like, they overheard them saying that it's not
7 pitched well. And so, knowing that it's not pitched
8 well, it has not been repaired but it's, you know,
9 created a lot of flooding issues, and going into some
10 of the homes as well, and so would love for DEP and
11 DOT to get together there and have a course of action
12 to address that. Can we get a commitment from DOT to
13 work with DEP on this?
14

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: Yes. Absolutely.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. And thank you
17 Chair Brannan for your patience.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: And Chair, I do
19 have the locations of the parking study--

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Oh, thank you.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORGIONE: --if I can quickly
22 read them off. So, the locations that we're looking
23 at are in the Upper East Side, Upper West Side,
24 Northern Manhattan, South and Central Bronx, Downtown
25 Brooklyn, and Western Queens.

2 And again, these are locations where people might
3 decide to try to park, and then take the train in for
4 the rest of the journey.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: It'll probably be
6 great if-- and I know, you know, parking is not a
7 thing anymore for some folks.

8 But, when I travel, and I look at what the
9 infrastructure looks like, and where some of the
10 relief valves are, it is because they have space
11 where motorists can get out of their cars, access
12 public transportation. And so, it'll be great to see
13 when that report is finished what that plan can be.
14 We'll be proactive and maybe do a pilot program and
15 see how it can be like a relief valve with it all.

16 With that I am done with my questions. Thank you
17 Chair Brannan.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Commissioner Rodriguez,
19 thank you. Thank you and your team. Of course, I
20 have to shout out the Brooklyn Team, Commissioner
21 Bray and Leroy that's here, for being super
22 responsive, and Danielle Zuckerman as well, and your
23 team is amazing. So we have a very close
24 relationship. Looking forward to working with you
25

2 going forward, and fighting with you to get some of
3 this money restored in the budget.

4 Thank you very much.

5 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Chairs.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: All right. We will take a
7 10 minute break and then we'll we've got the public.

8 [12.5 MINUTES SILENCE]

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon if everyone can
10 just please find it see we are getting ready to begin

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, we're now going to
12 start the public portion of the Transportation and
13 Infrastructure FY 25 Executive Budget hearing. Our
14 first panel here in person is Brian Fritsch, Rosa
15 Chang, and Christopher Leon Johnson.

16 MR. FRITSCH: Good afternoon. I'm Brian Fritsch,
17 Associate Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory
18 Committee to the MTA, or PCAC. PCAC was created by
19 the State Legislature in 1981 to be the official
20 voice of riders on subways, buses, the Long Island
21 Railroad, Metro North, and the Staten Island railway.

22 Transit riders have much to be thankful for
23 following this year's New York State Budget. We're
24 looking forward to increased investment in the MTA
25 progress towards major capital projects like the

2 Interborough Express and the Second Avenue subway,
3 and common sense laws like Sammy's Law that finally
4 gives New York City control over its own speed limit.

5 Now we're looking forward to even more proposals
6 in the city budget that can help improve mobility
7 around the five boroughs. We're particularly
8 thankful for the City Council's support for extending
9 the eligibility criteria to fair fares to 200% of the
10 federal poverty level, and hope it gets over the
11 finish line this year.

12 Access to half-price fares is a game changer for
13 low-income New Yorkers. But at its current
14 eligibility threshold, far too few actually qualify.
15 Raising the eligibility cap to 200% would help ensure
16 that the working poor, including many New Yorkers
17 living paycheck to paycheck or making minimum wage,
18 can finally qualify for this critical program.

19 PCAC also hopes to see fair fares extended to the
20 Long Island Railroad and Metro North within New York
21 City so that low-income riders can afford faster
22 trips on the commuter railroads.

23 Particularly as we prepare for congestion pricing
24 to begin, riders need DOT and Mayor Adams to invest
25 in meaningful expansion of the bus lane network, and

2 we thank Chair Brooks-Powers for paying particular
3 attention to that this morning in her first round of
4 questions.

5 We're thrilled about recent expansion of the
6 automated camera enforcement that will help keep cars
7 and trucks out of dedicated bus lanes, and hope to
8 see the city reach the Streets Plan's legal
9 requirement of 150 miles of new bus lanes by the end
10 of next year.

11 Unfortunately, there's a long way to go after
12 previous targets have been missed. We're happy to
13 see any progress, but riders around the city that
14 more can be done to keep their buses out of traffic
15 and improve on the woeful eight miles per hour that
16 they currently travel, which is the worst performance
17 in the nation. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you, Brian.

19 MS. CHANG: Thank you for the opportunity to
20 speak with you today. My name is Rosa Chang, and I'm
21 the co-founder of Gotham Park, a grassroots 501(c)(3)
22 that was created in 2021, to open, operate and
23 maintain a new community led public space in a
24 neighborhood that has been historically under
25 invested and overlooked right outside of City Hall.

2 Divided by the Brooklyn Bridge FDR Drive and the
3 civic center security zone, our residents and
4 businesses are triple burdened by civic
5 infrastructure. We are an environmental justice
6 neighborhood with racial, health, and structural
7 inequity in a historically disadvantaged community.

8 I'm testifying at a DOT hearing because so much
9 of our public spaces fall under DOT ownership. DOT
10 is a de facto parks agency in our incredibly dense
11 communities, where transportation infrastructure land
12 is the only land that's still available.

13 Community are the grassroots of this grassroots
14 endeavor, and with over 47,000 people living within a
15 half mile radius of the park, we are incredibly
16 diverse. 20% of our families live below the federal
17 poverty level, 20% are seniors, 64% are bipoc, and we
18 have 8000 students literally across the street.

19 We opened miraculously the first of nine acres of
20 planted and play space just last year, and we are
21 opening another two acres this year. We worked our
22 butts off to be able to program the space, and we
23 continue to work our butts off to be able to take
24 care of it. We program it, we plant it, we pick up
25 the litter, and we work with our neighbors to

2 collaborate on resiliency and education projects
3 health initiatives programming and the expansion of
4 space for our community.

5 We hosted a community block party just this
6 Saturday with over 3,000 people attending, and we
7 have been open for less than a year.

8 We are asking for your financial support to
9 uplift community-led public space initiatives like
10 ours in a diverse neighborhood that has long done
11 without. Three acres in three years is an incredible
12 accomplishment in city agency bureaucracy terms (I
13 think we can agree on that), and we are fierce
14 community advocates and we have built momentum.

15 Gotham Park is rare. It isn't every day that a
16 new major public park can be created in New York
17 City, or about community and elected support for
18 Project align.

19 In a city where major projects take decades to be
20 greenlit three acres in three years.

21 So please support community-originated,
22 supported, and led initiatives like ours. Please
23 help us survive and thrive. Show your support with
24 funding. We advocated so hard for this space, and we
25 are making it work with the DOT and all of you.

2 Please fund pathways to help us and grassroots
3 projects like ours, until we are able to stand on our
4 own and bring up the next generation of legacy public
5 space projects.

6 Thank you for the opportunity to share Gotham
7 park with you today.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Where is it? Exactly?

9 MS. CHANG: Literally under the Brooklyn Bridge
10 across Center Street. I would be happy to take you
11 on a tour.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: It's messed up you didn't
13 invite me to the block party.

14 MS. CHANG: Well, I think we might have, but you
15 might have not seen it.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Where-- It's by like where
17 Brooklyn banks used to be? Over there?

18 MS. CHANG: Yes. It is the Brooklyn Banks. We
19 opened the ninth stair. We're opening the big banks
20 this year, and the small banks are going to be just
21 after it.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Got it. I used to
23 skateboard there when I was a kid.

24 MS. CHANGE: Are you-- Well, then you should be
25 coming on a site tour, shouldn't you?

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: I'll skateboard there.
3 Alright, that's very cool.

4 MR. CHANGE: Okay. I'm holding you to it.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Yeah. Right on. Thank
6 you. Go ahead.

7 MR. JOHNSON: Yeah. Hey, my name is Christopher
8 Leon Johnson. Thank you, Justin Brannan (I'm not
9 calling you Fester this time) for staying here,
10 unlike the your partner Sylvia Brooks-Powers, who is
11 a crappy driver, and that should resign as the Chair
12 for the Transportation Infrastructure Committee. Now
13 I'm calling for the defunding-- Since this is the
14 Executive Budget hearing. I'm calling for defunding
15 of Transportation Alternatives. I am calling for a
16 cap for Third Sector New England that is working
17 under the Worker Justice Project, Los Deliveristas
18 Unidos, to \$250,000. They shouldn't be going over
19 \$250,000 without a proper investigation, because the
20 executive director of that nonprofit is shady.

21 The issue here is this Transportation Committee
22 is really influenced by the DOT. It is really
23 influenced by the Transportation Alternatives.
24 Transportation Alternatives own the DOT. You might
25 as well call this Committee the Department of

2 Transportation Alternatives and Open Plans
3 Infrastructure Committee. This is a joke committee.

4 I know, thank you, Brannan, for being here. But
5 Brooks-Powers? She's a joke of a Chair. She is
6 captive to TransAlt. She's captive to Open Plans.
7 She is captive to all these-- these transportation
8 related nonprofits. Her past legislative director,
9 Jack, was a simp to Elizabeth Adams.

10 We need an investigation into Transportation
11 Alternatives. We need an investigation into Selvena
12 Brooks-Powers, and her lobbying with Department of
13 Transportation Alternatives. She does not listen to
14 the people. She does not care about her driving
15 record. She needs to resign as Chair for the
16 Transportation Committee.

17 It's a lot of things that's going on here. The
18 DOT is really owned by Transportation Alternatives,
19 and Danny Harris, and Elizabeth Adams, and that
20 crook, Kathy Park Price, who was protecting that 7-
21 time stalker, Kevin Lucero, who is nothing but the
22 little simp to Lincoln Restler, aka Linky.

23 So that's all I've got to say. Defund TransAlt,
24 defund Open Plans, defund the Worker Justice Project
25 under Third Sector New England. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you. Thank you all.

3 Okay, now we have on Zoom Glenn Balofsky.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Start starting time.

5 Glen, if you're there, begin please.

6 MR. BALOFSKY: There we go. Can you hear me now?

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Hey, Glenn.

8 MR. BALOFSKY: Hey, how are you?

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Good. Go ahead.

10 MR. BALOFSKY: Good. Thank you so much. I want

11 to appreciate you this morning, Chairman Brannan.

12 Nice to see you. I want to thank you and all the

13 electeds who spent time, DOT, and of course, all your

14 important staff, central and district staff, and all

15 of our friends for so many years. You're greatly

16 appreciated, Justin.

17 There's two things I want to talk about today on

18 the record. One, is we're also busy on making sure

19 the essential things are done. Now, I'd like to ask

20 you to focus on something that's not essential, but

21 will bring in a tremendous amount of revenue is

22 monetizing the parking signs into LED displays. It

23 seems like there's hundreds of millions of dollars in

24 advertising dollars that will also turn this valuable

25 asset, until right now an asset that we're not using

1
2 efficiently, hundreds of millions in advertising, and
3 allowing those signs to be in multiple languages and
4 creating accessibility, because it could also then
5 be, as you know, through an API fed right to an app,
6 just like DOT does with so many other apps. So,
7 people don't have to get out of their cars, creating,
8 fostering safety, and helping the disability
9 community, seniors, those who have walking and health
10 problems, from having to get out and walk a half a
11 block or a mile to a sign.

12 So, monetize the revenue. Let's use it for
13 important things and make life better. This is New
14 York City, the best in technology, and we're using
15 metal signs from 1950. It's time that we upgrade.

16 The second thing is, as you know, I've been
17 pressing for virtual hearings. And if the Chair
18 agrees or concurs, it'd be wonderful to have an
19 oversight hearing on why PVV DOF has promised the
20 Speaker promised the Chair, all chairs, that they're
21 going to have virtual hearings, meaning you could
22 argue just like this--

23 [BELL RINGS]

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you, your time has
25 expired.

2 MR. BALOFSKY: --with a hearing examiner, bills
3 stalling years and years past COVID.

4 So I appreciate the chairs help and thank you so
5 much.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Thank you, Glenn. Now we
7 have Raul Rivera. Starting time.

8 MR. RIVERA: Oh, good afternoon. Can you hear
9 me?

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Yes. Go ahead.

11 MR. RIVERA: So good afternoon. My name is Raul
12 Rivera. I'm a TLC driver and a TLC driver advocate.
13 There's very little you can say, you know, I mean,
14 there's not much you can say with two minutes. But
15 we do want to say that we do not trust the DOT. The
16 DOT doesn't do their job. The DOT is basically run
17 by the nonprofit Transportation Alternatives. And
18 then Transportation Alternatives, they take money
19 from Uber, from Uber and Lyft. They get donations
20 from Uber and Lyft and the rideshare companies.
21 They're gaslighting New Yorkers with traffic
22 violence.

23 You know, if, if you're a person and you run into
24 the middle of the street, and you get killed by a
25 vehicle, that's not traffic violence. They're

2 changing the language in the City Council. We have a
3 Senator in Brooklyn, Gounardes, who tried to put
4 devices in vehicles to control people's speed limit.

5 This is a-- This is a socialist New York. This
6 is a socialist New York. People are jockeying to try
7 to get money for-- for their districts. What about--
8 What about ThriveNYC? Is anybody calling for an
9 investigation? Anybody following up on that?

10 Anybody wants some real answers to that? Because
11 that's money right there. ThriveNYC: That's--
12 That's what? \$1.5 billion. You know, and
13 Transportation Alternatives, Open Plan, StreetsPAC,
14 they're [INAUDIBLE] streets. The DOT is renting out
15 street space, public-- public streets that belongs to
16 the New Yorker [inaudible] to the rideshare
17 companies. So, you can't have a vehicle. You can't
18 have parking. But throughout the city, they're
19 giving [inaudible] to Getaround and [INAUDIBLE] and
20 Zipcar. And this is despicable. This is despicable.
21 We demand-- We demand an investigation into the DOT.
22 We want the Councilmembers to start donating money to
23 transportation--

24 [BELL RINGS]

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE Jointly with the
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 197

2 MR. RIVERA: We've got nine councilmembers
3 [INAUDIBLE] \$77,000 to these nonprofits if we file a
4 complaint with the court. We thank you for the time.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNON: Okay, thank you. Okay with
6 that the Committee on Finance, jointly with the
7 Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure--
8 What is this day three? Day three of the Executive
9 Budget hearings is adjourned. Thank you.

10 [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 06/06/2024