

**NYC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CITY  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
March 7, 2022**

Good morning Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation. With me today are Eric Beaton, Deputy Commissioner for Transportation Planning and Management, Julia Kite-Laidlaw, Director of Safety Policy, Azikiwe Rich, Director of Performance Management, and Rebecca Zack, Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Eric Adams on DOT's commitment to transportation equity.

First, I must say that it is an honor to be before this Committee where I served for all of my 12 years on the Council, and eight as Chair. And even more, I am so happy that my first hearing in this role is on equity—a topic that is so important to me and for which I have long been a strong advocate.

I want to express both my and Mayor Adams's strong belief in creating a more equitable city that guides all of our work. The positive benefits of our transportation investments must be available to all New Yorkers. As Commissioner, I am determined to focus our investments in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color—neighborhoods that have received less investment historically and have been left behind.

DOT's vision for racial equity is a transportation network that meets the needs of all New Yorkers—regardless of race, ability, or economic status—in a safe, efficient, and sustainable manner. Our vision of transportation equity means that demographics such as race, income, or language will no longer be able to be used to predict transportation outcomes. Our vision includes a transportation system that is more accessible for people with disabilities, who are also a majority people of color, and have a higher poverty rate than people without disabilities.

Every New Yorker should have multiple travel options that are safe, reliable, and affordable. Our transportation investments should improve access, safety, health, and quality of life. Additionally, New Yorkers should be informed and empowered to shape transportation in their neighborhoods. All people should be able to move freely and peacefully in New York City without fear of injury or death, regardless their background. And all New Yorkers should live in safe, healthy, and resilient communities that can thrive in the face of climate change and economic uncertainty.

DOT is continuously evaluating our agency's processes to bring equity in transportation to the forefront and we have identified a number of barriers to equity in our work. As we have long known, complaint-based processes empower some communities more than others and political influence can speed up or slow down projects.

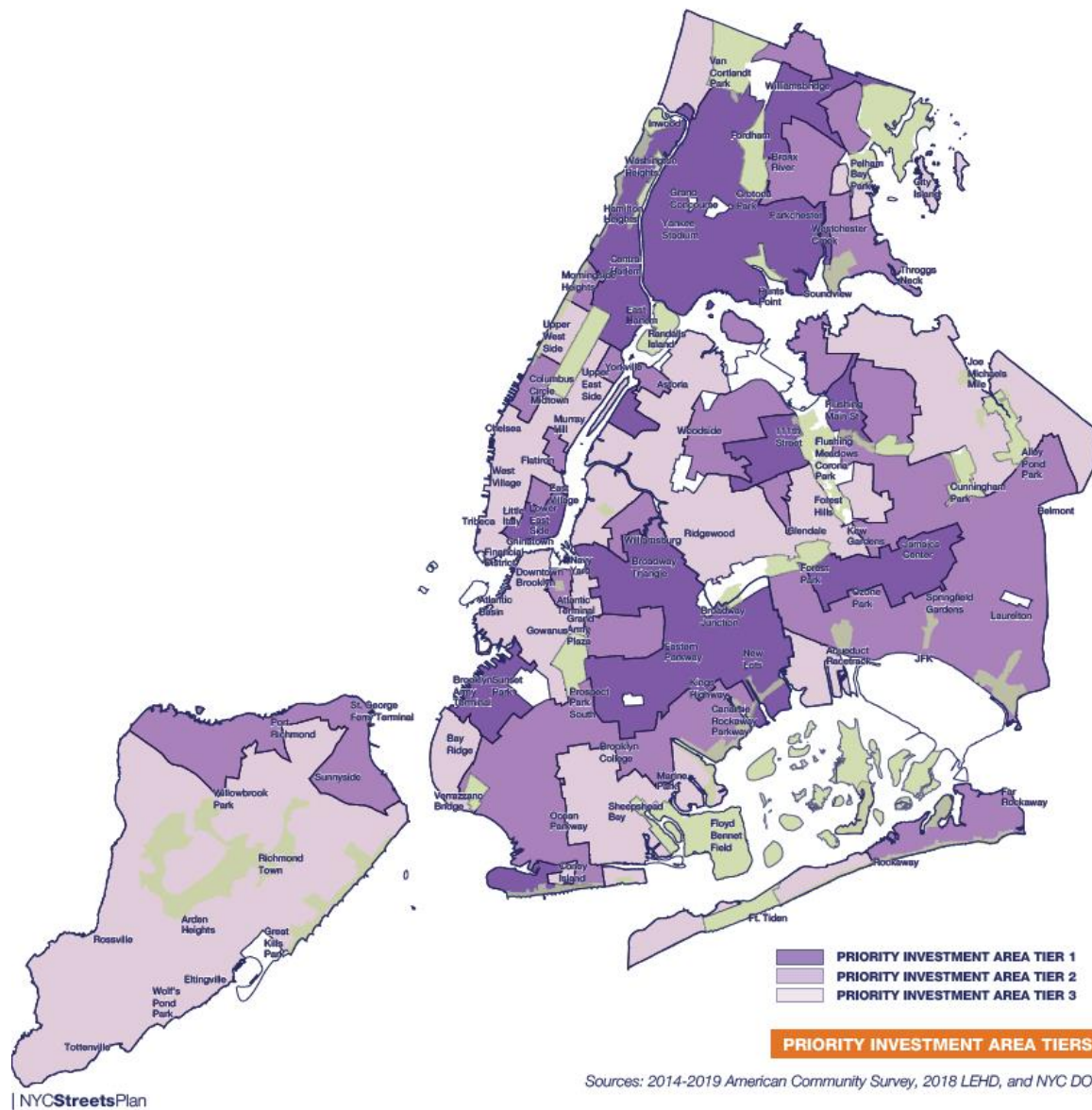
In the Vision Zero-era, DOT has prioritized safety work based on crash data. The Vision Zero Borough Pedestrian Safety Action Plans use fatality and injury data to identify locations that disproportionately account for pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries, and then the agency

focuses safety interventions in these areas. Following this data has been an essential part of the agency's Vision Zero strategy, informing Street Improvement Projects, traffic signs and signal installations, education and strategic communication campaigns, and more. Going forward, however, the agency will also factor in equity in determining where to make our street redesign investments.

As laid out in the *NYC Streets Plan* released in December 2021, DOT is now starting to add an explicit equity lens to our work. This includes focusing our investment in areas that need it most, engaging communities proactively about transportation in their neighborhoods, and making the city more accessible to all.

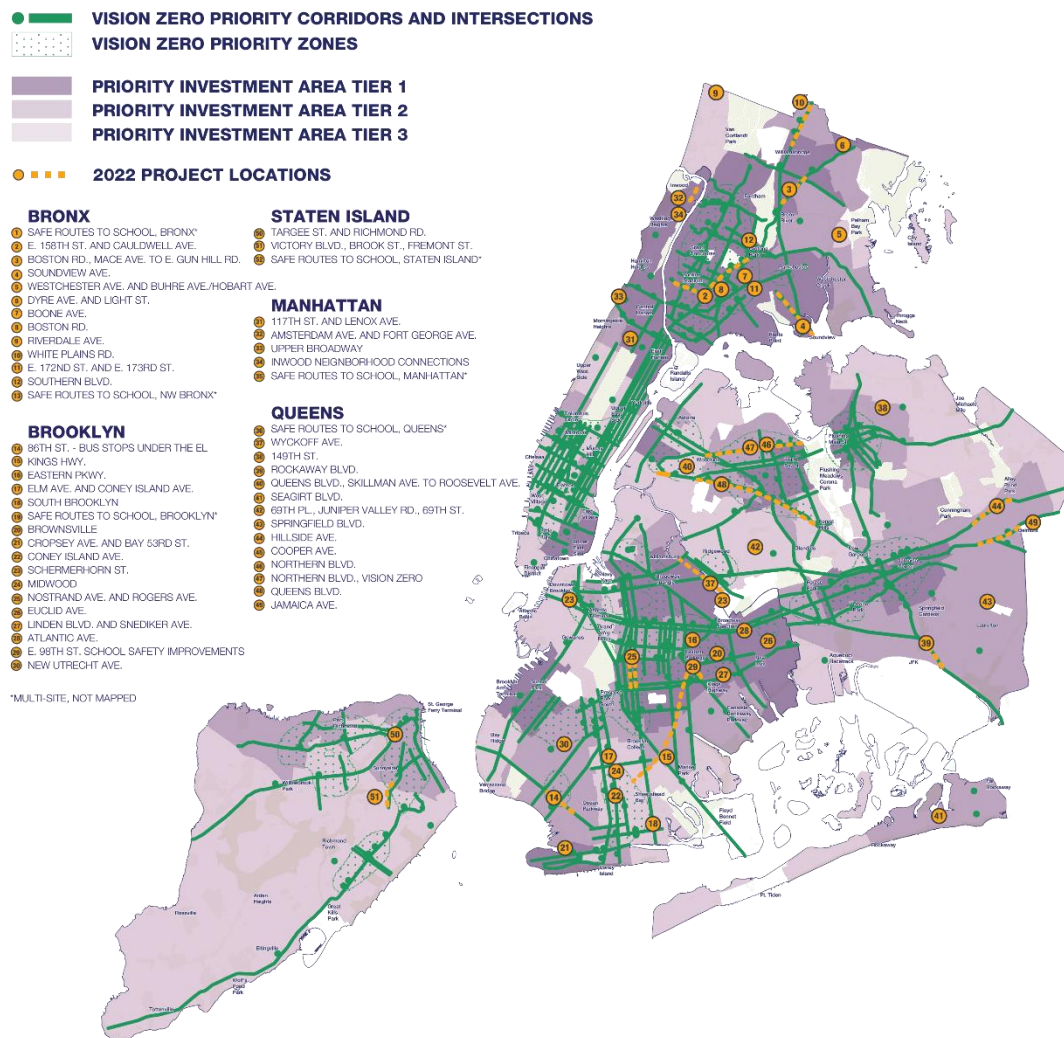
The plan lays out Priority Investment Areas (PIAs) that will help focus our investments to where they can have the greatest impact. PIAs are based on three inputs: race and income, density, and lack of prior investment. You can see a map of the PIAs included in my testimony.

*Map of Priority Investment Area Tiers included in the NYC Streets Plan, released December 2021*



DOT will continue to invest in communities across the entire city. But, going forward, street design investments as a whole will be prioritized in higher-need neighborhoods based on the PIA tiers—while still being guided by data such as crash histories and slow bus speeds. You can see an example of how we will overlay our Vision Zero Priority Corridors, Intersections, and Areas with the PIAs in the map included in my testimony.

## Example of Safety & Vision Zero Priorities Overlayed with Priority Investment Areas



The PIAs are one example of work the agency is undertaking to further equity, and there are other ongoing efforts.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic that disproportionately harmed communities of color and the racial justice uprising in the face of the violence against Black Americans, DOT created the Equity & Inclusion in Planning Working Group. This internal working group's purpose is to further expand on the agency's commitment to improving transportation outcomes for communities of color and ensuring that communities across the city have safe, reliable, and well-maintained street-level transportation infrastructure. The working group recommended developing the Priority Investment Areas, as well as other measures to consider equity in our work and strengthen community engagement.

And in 2019, DOT began a Structured Hiring Program, through which the agency creates an annual workforce profile to identify job titles where one or more demographic group is underrepresented. These titles are subject to structured hiring that includes various measures to

increase the size of the applicant pool as well as reduce bias in the interview and selection process by having larger and more diverse hiring panels, standard interview questions, and candidate scoring. Since the program's launch, DOT has seen a 10.5 percent decrease in the number of titles with demographic underrepresentation.

While we have much more work to do, I will now turn to some examples of how our work makes it easier and safer to travel around the city for all New Yorkers, regardless of factors including where they live, their race, or their ability, while improving health and sustainability by encouraging the shift to more sustainable transportation modes and cleaner vehicles. This is particularly important in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, such as the South Bronx where children have disproportionately suffered from asthma and been exposed to higher levels of air pollution.

Through the New York City Clean Trucks Program, the agency gives incentives to accelerate the deployment of cleaner trucks in Industrial Business Zones, which are located near Environmental Justice communities that have historically been subject to a disproportionate amount of diesel exhaust emissions. The program supports replacing older, dirtier diesel-powered trucks with advanced transportation technologies and alternative fuels trucks, including electric trucks—leading to cleaner air and health benefits in these communities.

Our Better Buses program speeds up buses and shortens commutes through dedicated bus lanes and busways and Transit Signal Priority, which reduces bus delay at signalized intersections. These changes are particularly important in areas of the city that do not have access to the subway. Some significant 2022 projects include University Avenue, Fordham Road, and Gun Hill Road in the Bronx, supporting the MTA's Bronx Bus Network Redesign, coming this June. Additionally, capital projects on the Bx6 South Bronx Crosstown and the B82 Southern Brooklyn corridors will deliver pedestrian safety and bus performance benefits.

Our bike lanes make roads safer for all road users—and make more people comfortable getting on a bike. We are focused on improving the cycling network coverage and connectivity across the entire city by building out the bike lane network. Some notable 2022 projects are bike lanes in Fordham, Tremont, and Soundview in the Bronx, which will provide critical bike infrastructure for both bike and scooter riders. And in Queens, we will close gaps in the protected bike lane network on Broadway between Northern Boulevard and 60<sup>th</sup> Street, and 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Broadway and 69<sup>th</sup> Street—a key corridor for working cyclists.

And we continue to expand bike share and introduce new modes of micromobility and other shared mobility services, to give New Yorkers more options and close the last-mile gap to access public transit in neighborhoods with less transit coverage. In 2022, Citi Bike's ongoing Phase 3 expansion will bring the system to Sunnyside, Woodside, Ridgewood, and Maspeth in Queens, and East Flatbush, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Ocean Hill, Crown Heights, and Prospect Lefferts Gardens in Brooklyn, with even more expansion to follow in 2023. Once Phase 3 expansion is complete, more than half of New York City's residents will live within the Citi Bike service area.

And to ensure that Citi Bike is affordable to low-income New Yorkers, the program offers NYCHA residents and SNAP recipients discounted memberships for just \$5 a month. In the Bronx, where we recently expanded into many low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, about 66 percent of all memberships are discounted memberships.

In the East Bronx, DOT is in the midst of an e-scooter share pilot through which we are closely evaluating the safety and utility of this shared mode. The three operators are all providing discount programs for low-income riders, and are also testing a range of accessible vehicles for people who use wheelchairs.

We understand that many areas of the city still lack access to bike share or e-scooter share. We are actively exploring strategies to expand these mobility options to more neighborhoods. We will also do more to get the word out about existing discount programs, so more eligible New Yorkers can have access to bike and e-scooter share service.

Our Carshare pilot program also prioritizes equity, and requires participating companies to deploy 20 percent of their carshare vehicles within Equity Zones such as Parkchester in the Bronx and Far Rockaway in Queens. As we transition to a permanent program, we look to retain this requirement as well as encourage participating companies to provide discount pricing for low-income users.

The agency is committed to making the city more accessible for all New Yorkers. DOT maintains and constructs pedestrian ramps citywide to provide for safe access on and off our streets and sidewalks. Our Accessible Pedestrian Signal program is the largest and fastest expanding in the nation and provides access to traffic signals for blind and visually impaired pedestrians. The agency continues to work with the MTA to make bus stops physically accessible for all users, growing from a longstanding program to upgrade bus stops under elevated subways, to now address all kinds of physically inaccessible bus stops. And as part of the Mayor's commitment to enhance safety at 1,000 intersections, we are developing a program to install 100 raised crosswalks annually. This will make it easier for people with disabilities, and all New Yorkers, to cross the street at those locations.

All New Yorkers should also have access to safe, welcoming and attractive public spaces close to where they live. DOT redesigns streets to create, expand, and improve public space, and the OneNYC Plaza Equity Program supports the needs of over 30 plazas in under-resourced neighborhoods, providing landscaping, maintenance, financial subsidies, and technical assistance to plaza partner organizations.

In the face of the pandemic, our agency, in partnership with the City Council, reimagined our streets to create the Open Streets program which created new outdoor space for New Yorkers to enjoy. Open Streets partners have access to funding, programming opportunities, technical support, and citywide coordination and enforcement. And DOT directly manages over 20 Open Streets, with these streets receiving maintenance as well as landscaping and barricade management. This model has allowed the agency to support new, vibrant public space in areas that would not have had it otherwise.

Also in response to the pandemic, DOT along with our sister agencies set up the Open Restaurants program in a matter of weeks to support the city's beloved restaurant industry, save 100,000 jobs, and bring us all much needed joy during this challenging time. And the program brought the benefits of outdoor dining to new areas of the city that were not eligible previously due to zoning restrictions for sidewalk seating. As we recently testified before the Council, we are now actively working to create an outdoor dining program that can live on well beyond the recovery from the pandemic. I would like to thank the Council for approving the removal of the geographic restrictions from the zoning last month, which will lead to a more equitable outdoor dining program that communities throughout the city will be able to enjoy for years to come.

In addition to transforming the use of our streets and expanding transportation options, we know that street maintenance is important to elected officials and your communities, and we are committed to keeping our street network in a state of good repair.

To identify possible correlations between socioeconomic factors and past investment, we have been developing ways to analyze the location and distribution of assets we manage, including the condition of our roadways. Our analysis showed that our process of distributing resurfacing lane miles to every community board by relying on the street conditions and number of lane miles in the board has led to an equitable program. There is relatively no correlation between higher average income or white population percentage and DOT's investment in streets.

And since 2016, the agency has used a scoring and ranking system that incorporates equity as an important metric to prioritize projects for our \$4 billion ten-year capital street reconstruction program. Thanks to this method, we have seen a significant increase in capital funding for street projects in low-income neighborhoods and areas with low levels of capital investment from our agency historically. We are committed to improving this process and investing further in these communities.

And we are proud to operate the Staten Island Ferry to provide free transportation from Staten Island to Manhattan to over 22 million people each year. Last month, I stood with Mayor Adams as we commissioned the new Sandy Ground Staten Island Ferry, named for New York's first free Black community, which was settled in 1828 and served as a stop on the historic Underground Railroad. The Sandy Ground is the first Staten Island Ferry boat named to honor the rich history of Black New Yorkers living on Staten Island.

And as Mayor Adams and Speaker Adams announced last month, the Fair Fares program will be expanded and made permanent. This critical program provides discounted MetroCards to low-income New Yorkers. The announcement that the City will baseline \$75 million in funding is the first time that the City has guaranteed annual funding for the program.

Finally, I would like to finish by further addressing safety, our number one priority. As discussed earlier, our safety interventions are data-driven and prioritized based on fatality and serious injury data to identify locations that disproportionately account for pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries. In addition, not every intervention is right for every location, and our traffic engineers do not apply a one-size-fits all approach. Rather, we direct the interventions that best address speeding to the places where data shows speeding is happening, turn calming in

locations where data shows there are turning conflicts, and signal treatments that protect pedestrians in the places with many pedestrians and turning vehicles.

Enforcement also plays a key role in our efforts to make the city safer for all New Yorkers. Dangerous and illegal driver behaviors, many of which cannot be controlled by road design, continue to be the primary cause of many serious crashes. In the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has been accompanied by a second pandemic of dangerous driving. We have seen an increase in hit-and-runs, driving while intoxicated, and unlicensed driving.

Automated enforcement is more efficient than traditional in-person enforcement and reduces interaction with law enforcement. And with a \$50 fine and no points on a license, DOT's automated enforcement programs have much lower penalties than tickets issued by NYPD.

Speed cameras save lives. Driving at a lower speed gives drivers and pedestrians more time to see each other and react—reducing the likelihood of a crash in the first place. And, if a crash does occur, its severity is reduced at lower speeds. Pedestrians struck by vehicles traveling at 25 miles per hour are half as likely to die as those struck at 30 miles per hour.

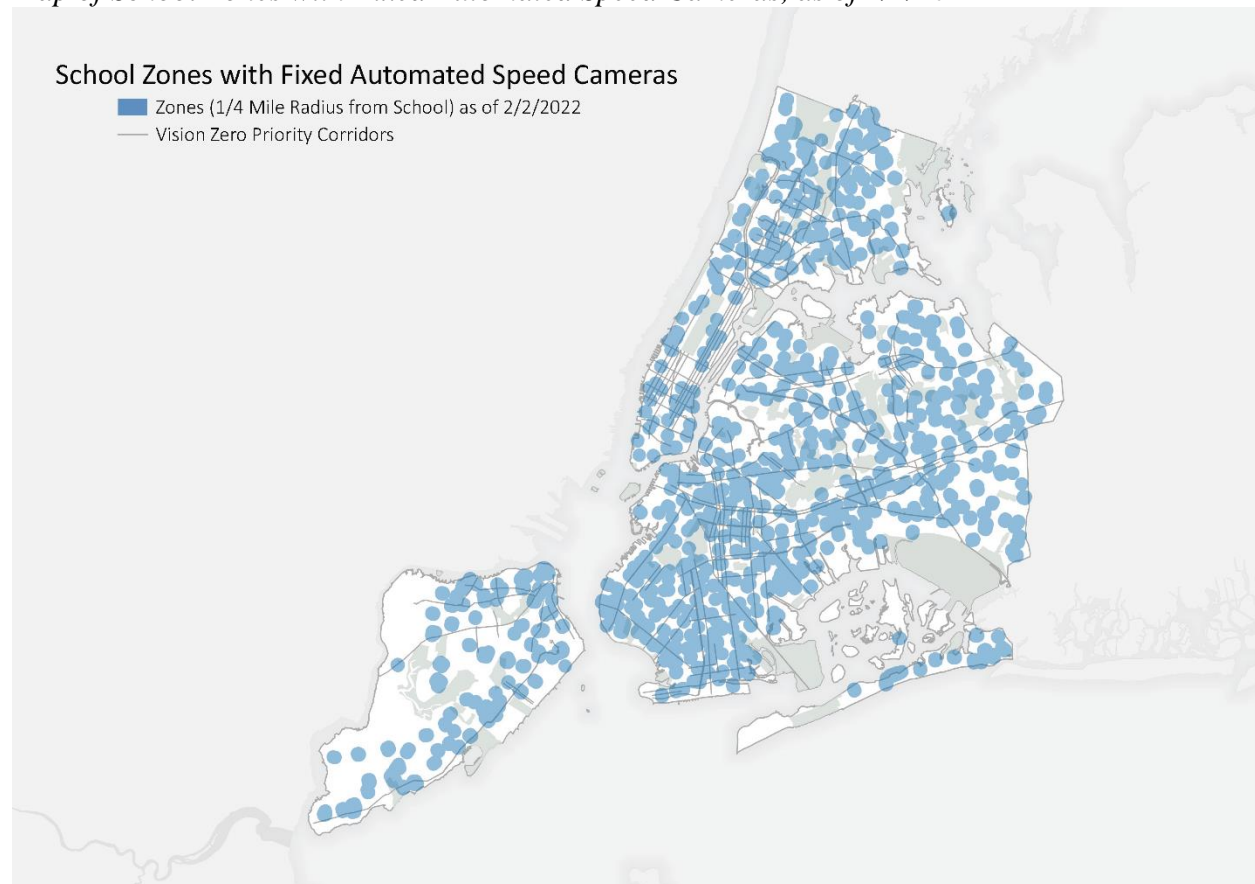
Since the start of the program in 2014, speeding violations are down an average of 72 percent at camera locations during the hours of operation. This includes significant drops on notable arterials that go through low-income communities of color, such as an 89 percent decrease on Grand Concourse, an 87 percent decrease on Rockaway Boulevard, an 85 percent decrease on Gun Hill Road, and an 84 percent decrease on Eastern Parkway. In addition, injuries are down 14 percent in school speed zones, with pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicle occupants all receiving safety gains.

And from the start of the program in 2014 through the end of 2020—seven years—the majority of violators had received no more than two notices of liability. Furthermore, most violators are not residents of the neighborhoods where the cameras are located. A DOT analysis found two-thirds of speeders lived more than three miles away from the camera that caught them. And over 40 percent of speed camera violators have vehicles registered outside the City of New York.

Regarding placement of speed cameras, we place cameras based on speed incidence and serious crash data. We do not take requests for locations or remove cameras based on complaints. As the map in my testimony shows, all neighborhoods are covered by the program's 750 active school speed zones. And there is no significant correlation between lower average income or non-white population percentage and DOT's placement of speed cameras.



### *Map of School Zones with Fixed Automated Speed Cameras, as of 2/2/2022*



We understand there may be concerns that speed cameras are not always accompanied by street design changes to help reduce the likelihood of speeding in the first place. We hear these concerns and are committed to making design changes where needed. For example, we are working with the community to redesign Seagirt Boulevard in the Rockaways as it has had high numbers of speed camera violations.

Our aim is to have the number of camera violations decrease over time—both as people learn the consequences of speeding and also as we continue to redesign streets. Safety is our number one priority—not raising revenue. We also do not have revenue sharing agreements with contractors. This means that our vendors have no monetary incentive to issue more violations.

Cameras change behavior and protect the most vulnerable road users, our pedestrians. New York City's program has been a model for Vision Zero cities across the country. Based on the program's proven success, I am joining the Mayor in calling on the State to give the City the authority to manage our automated enforcement programs.

In conclusion, I want to thank the Council for the opportunity to testify before you today on our agency's vision for transportation equity, as well as the many areas where we are hard at work to do better. There is so much to be done, and I thank the Council for your partnership as we work together to make this city safer, fairer, and more accessible for all New Yorkers for generations to come.

**Statement  
of  
Mark Henry, Chair, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) NYS Legislative  
Conference Board & President/Business Agent, ATU Local 1056  
and  
Jose DeJesus, President/Business Agent, ATU Local 1179  
to  
City Council Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
on  
Transportation Equity  
March 7, 2022**

Thank you Chairperson Selvena Brooks-Powers for this opportunity for Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) to testify on Transportation Equity. I am Jose DeJesus, President/Business Agent of ATU Local 1179. I testify also on behalf of my labor brother, Mark Henry, chair of the ATU NYS Legislative Conference Board and President/Business Agent of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1056 in Queens.

ATU members operate and maintain NYC Transit bus routes serving primarily Queens and Staten Island residents with some routes extending into The Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan. ATU Local 1056 represents drivers and mechanics who work for MTA New York City Transit's Queens Bus Division with depots in Flushing (Casey Stengel), Jamaica and Queens Village. ATU 1179 represents bus operators, mechanics and supervisors who work from the Far Rockaway and JFK Depots of the MTA Bus division (former Green Bus lines).

Our members primarily provide the best transit options in transit desert areas of Queens. We are also the transit option – during periodic subway service shutdowns to allow repairs; this demonstrates how buses matter both as a practical and flexible transit mode. Buses offer a cost-effective means to expand public transit options, including sensible bus rapid transit, where none or insufficient modes exist. This allows policymakers to deliver transit improvement early and most cost-effectively.

The focus of our testimony is Transit in Queens. As a mass transit professionals and user of public transit in this city, the members of ATU locals across this city and state offers unique and valuable insights. ATU locals have always emphasized that smartly investing in public transit keys growth in the economy, restores neighborhoods, mobility and assist in job creation.

The buses our members operate are your “Green Alternative” that properly resourced can induce those who rely on less efficient transportation modes to use public transit; the buses we operate can also be used to address service shortfalls and most importantly transit inequities which often go hand in hand.

We know firsthand how many people rely on our services to get to and from work and school, and to and from doctors’ appointments, the grocery store, and other essential services.

ATU recognizes, as do most experts that, without a fully functioning transit system that is safe, we cannot expect New York City’s – and thus our state and national – economy to fully recover and achieve growth beyond.

Transportation remains the great equalizer in our society, a real difference maker, especially for already underserved communities. Strengthening our bus networks, especially in transit deserts offer the most cost-effective and clearly the fastest ways to introduce equity in transportation and improve existing, and introduce much needed more, service.

This makes the subject of this committee at the outset of this new administration and council an excellent opportunity to not only identify inequities but look at and promote sound solutions.

After the chaos and devastation of Superstorm Sandy, New Yorkers experienced how ATU Locals 1056 and 1179 memberships and sister transit unions stepped up and helped New Yorkers get about on public buses while the MTA worked to resume subway service system-wide. Fast forward to today, our bus operators and maintainers stood on the frontlines of the fight against COVID-19; some – to many --losing their lives; and we stepped up despite our members working under an expired contract that the MTA REFUSED to update when similar transit public servants already work under a new contract, forcing ATU to win our contract through an Arbitration process.

COVID-19 had a significant impact on the MTA and its operations. The safety of the employees of the transit agency must be recognized as a priority and preparedness programs must be readily activated to maintain essential service, avoid layoffs, and to purchase PPE to keep our members safe.

Given the significant financial support that the MTA received through emergency and stimulus funding, we believe that it is imperative that the MTA use this funding wisely and address several critical issues that are facing the public transportation workforce. Even with the upcoming congestion pricing program these funding mechanisms must resource the current transit system in a manner that introduces real equity in the delivery of public transit.

The focus of transit improvements must not only be on subways or railroads; it must significantly MUST include Bus Service to better serve these communities. Where speed of service is concerned, Queens suffers greatly from its inferior bus network. Queens residents need a commitment to expand bus service and remove the impediments that slow the movement of buses. This includes enforcement of traffic restrictions that apply to vehicles and pedestrians. This especially includes “SMART” traffic planning.

ATU strongly supports sensible bus service changes, expansions, and enhancement with collective thought and input. This includes better use of MTA bus lines to serve intra-borough and inter-borough public transit needs rather than just using most bus routes to funnel riders to subways and rail. Protective bus lanes become an essential part of this planning. All this needs to result through a real collaboration and discussion with the communities we serve.

In Queens, we also need a clear understanding on the need to assign a priority to enhancing bus service. ATU offers our recommendations to address this important imperative.

We ask that the ATU locals city wide be part of the discussion to improve service and introduce equity. We share our major recommendation that must take priority;

\*Implement free transfers between commuter rail and public bus transit – as currently exist between buses and subways and local and express buses – which pays for itself. And really ought to be part of the plan expanding the City Ticket.

\*Expand (all) local bus service to operate 24 hours/7days.

\*Introduce express bus service in Southeast Queens at the level that exists in Northeast Queens.

\*Include enforcement against illegal Commuter Van operations as part of the existing plan that advocates increased enforcement presence on bus routes where needed, including identifying times and areas of more frequent operator assault and streamlining communications between (the MTA's) Department of Buses and law enforcement.

\*Any Infrastructure and or housing or business Development must factor transit in the plans at the ground level of design, it can no longer be an afterthought. (I.e. Greater Jamaica and Greater Flushing in Queens).

\*Expand Bus Lanes: Any sound plan must improve rush hour movement by using existing parking or traffic lanes; this includes use of lanes with no-parking and no-standing restrictions during morning and afternoon/evening rush hours and ensuring enforcement including use of bus cameras. An easy way uses lanes where street cleaning or traffic consideration already bar parking or standing at these times.

\*Emphasize enforcement with respect to illegal operations of commuter vans.

\*Ensure progress on major projects and improvements in the MTA Capital Plan essential to ensuring that the transit riding public has reliable public transportation. In Queens, two projects that need attention include the (NEW) Jamaica Depot and Casey Stengel Depot (Flooding). The Jamaica Depot is supposed to be in the Capital Plan, but we have not yet seen any movement on this project yet. The Far Rockaway Depot sits in a Flood zone where its buses serve an underserved part of Queens. These depots' buses service underserved, including transit starved, Queens neighborhoods. Lack of equipment remains an ongoing issue. And...

\*Re-think the pending allegedly cost neutral, Queens Bus Redesign. Bus redesign ought to enhance not diminish overall service. It must promote accessibility and mobility needs in transit desserts. Bike lanes offer no answer especially when the weather is a factor and must not take priority over bus lanes – Queens Boulevard serves as a major example here. Any redesign plan also must include the need for a Flushing bus terminal.

A bit more on Redesign; it should specifically target some of routes that fail to extend or intersect with subway or rail and must address connectivity with North and South Queens including the Rockaways. The plan, as it stands now, means significant changes in bus service, how we get to the subway, work, school, medical appointment and leisure activities. This committee and the Council must watch for changes in bus stop frequency which impacts seniors and others.

Transit in this city operated by MTA focuses primarily on economics, income level and not the needs of the population; it's the Tale of Two Different New Yorks. The reality is that one's income level can dictate where one lives or how far one must commute to get to work, school or other necessities. We need to change that mindset and ensure that bus redesign serves the riding public.

Indeed this so-called redesign attempts to mask a money-saving pitch that in no way represents a service enhancing remapping. The routes mean longer commutes and/or two and three step transfers to connect to other bus lines, rail or subways

It ignores the transit needs of many parts of the borough, especially transit deserts with its emphasis on greater access to revitalized or gentrified neighborhoods. Most commutes within the Borough will be challenging for the average Queens rider.

It remains very important that the riding public, those who they depend on and the communities and interest served by transit all make their voices heard on bus redesign.

With the help of the committee, the Council, our state and federal elected, advocates and your constituents, we propose to change that! The council must not be swayed and just litigate transportation alternatives. We need sound common sense approach to transportation needs in this city, a proper balance must be established.

As we seek to protect and upgrade our environment, and discuss a Green New Deal, it remains important to recognize how public bus transit enhances our environment and reduces our carbon footprint while supporting our economy and investment.

Our legislators can prove helpful by joining ATU and advocating for service priorities outlined today and in many prior testimonies at city and state legislative hearings. ATU urges our policymakers and, frankly all of us, to coalesce around these sound policies that make a difference in our communities. Thank you!

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**New York City Council Hearing Testimony on Transportation Equity  
Danny Harris, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives  
Testimony before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
March 7, 2022**

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Good afternoon Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee. Congratulations on your first hearing of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. We look forward to partnering together in the coming years.

I am Danny Harris, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives. For nearly 50 years, TA has led a grassroots movement for more equitable, accessible, and safe ways to get around our city.

At present, New York City's streets are failing us all. Buses are stuck in traffic. Children breathe polluted air. Seniors are struck and killed while crossing the street. And when our streets fail, the harm is not equally distributed. In this city, if you are Black or brown, a child, from an immigrant or low-income community, disabled, elderly, or any combination of the above, you bear the brunt of this harm.

Transportation Alternatives believes that there are two key ways that the City Council can help correct these historic inequities. One: Fully fund the New York City Streets Plan, passed by the previous City Council, to ensure that all neighborhoods receive significant investments in safer, healthier, and more accessible streets. And two: Support the [NYC 25x25](#) vision, endorsed by over 200 local organizations, to put people first on our streets by repurposing 25 percent of the space currently devoted to private vehicles and putting it to better, fairer use.

We need change: right now, our congestion is the worst in the nation. Emergency responders and people who need to commute by bus or car are all stuck in gridlock. Summer sun bakes asphalt and creates urban heat islands. Seasonal storms flood basement apartments. Hundreds of New Yorkers are killed each year on our streets, horrible and intangible losses which ripple throughout families and communities forever.

It doesn't have to be this way.

NYC 25x25 envisions a more equitable city, using just a fraction of our streets. Opening the street in front of every public school would give our kids safer trips to school, more space to play, and cleaner air to breathe. Daylighting every intersection by removing one parking spot closest to each corner would make it much safer to cross the street. On existing road space, we can build 1,000 lane miles of protected bus lanes, providing faster commutes to every neighborhood. With more efficient and reliable transportation options, New Yorkers would shift away from needing to make so many trips by car.



This shift isn't just good for bus riders. For workers who do need to drive, traffic — and all of the costs and stress it brings — would recede.

To build fairer streets and a fairer transportation system in New York City, we don't have to look far. Many of these solutions are already here.

On Manhattan's 14th Street, adding a busway has reduced bus travel times [by 47 percent](#), an invaluable gain for bus riders who are disproportionately low-income, single parents, women, foreign-born, and disabled. And with [more bus commuters working in healthcare](#) than any other industry, improving bus speeds is an integral way to support New York City's invaluable healthcare workforce.

On Manhattan's Ninth Avenue, adding a protected bike lane reduced injury-risk to people on bicycles [by 65 percent](#). Even though [three-quarters](#) of the city's cyclists live outside of Manhattan, these four boroughs have less than half of the city's protected bike lanes. The consequences of our inequitable bike infrastructure are deadly: [92 percent](#) of people killed while riding bicycles died on streets where the median income is below the city average. To maintain and grow New York City's ridership, we must create a network of protected bike lanes that connect every neighborhood, and provide public funding to Citi Bike so it can expand more quickly into transit-starved neighborhoods that still do not have bike share.

It's time to ensure that opportunity and investment are extended to all corners of our city. We look forward to working with Chair Brooks-Powers, Speaker Adams, and the new City Council to ensure that the NYC Streets Plan is funded and that concrete steps are taken to bring the benefits of NYC 25x25 to all.

No New Yorker should fear death or injury on our streets. No New Yorker should be left behind by our inequitable transportation system. No child should struggle to breathe because endless roads and highways wind through our neighborhoods. With your leadership, an equitable city is possible.

Thank you.

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**AARP Testimony - Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure Oversight Hearing**

**March 7th, 2022 | Subject:** Oversight - Transportation Equity

Good morning Chair Brooks-Powers and Members of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Kevin Jones and I am the Associate State Director for Advocacy at AARP New York, representing 750,000 members of the 50+ community in New York City. Thank you for providing AARP with the opportunity to testify at today's oversight hearing to discuss issues of accessibility and equity across New York City's transportation network.

As many of you know, older adults are one of New York City's fastest growing demographics and will continue to make up a larger portion of the City's entire population in the years ahead. As more adults decide to age in place here, New York City's transportation network as a whole will need to respond to the transit needs of our older adult population.

Whether they are running errands, traveling to important doctors appointments, or commuting to their jobs, we know that reliable transportation remains a crucial component to ensuring the wellbeing of older adults across New York City, yet the vast majority of the MTA's transit infrastructure remains far too inaccessible and will be woefully inadequate to support the accessibility needs of the City's rapidly aging population.

A [study](#) from the New York City Comptroller found that only 24% of the City's 472 subway stations were ADA accessible, and the majority of neighborhoods that lacked access to an ADA station were predominantly communities of color in the outer boroughs of New York City. Thousands of older New Yorkers, especially many living in the outer boroughs, live in areas of the City that are designated as "[transit deserts](#)" as their neighborhoods lack access to a subway or rail station within a 10 minute walk from their home.

Lack of access to public transportation has real consequences for older New Yorkers. Without sufficient access to reliable transit, our members and older adults across New York City, especially those experiencing mobility issues, risk losing access to important medical or social services and can experience increased social isolation as a result.





The MTA's leadership and our elected leaders at the City and State level have made considerable efforts over the past few years to prioritize ADA accessibility projects and expand access to New York City's transit network. We commend the MTA and the City Council for continuing to prioritize ADA station accessibility projects as part of the 2020-2024 Capital Plan and for approving the proposed "Elevate Transit: Zoning for Accessibility" last year that will create new incentives for private developers to allocate more funding for accessibility projects in nearby subway stations.

We also applaud the Mayor and the City Council for making the "Fair Fares" program a [permanent](#) part of the City's budget, as well as thank the MTA for [postponing](#) the planned fare increase through the end of 2022. We believe that both of these decisions will provide financial relief for low- to middle-income older New Yorkers recovering from the economic devastation caused by COVID-19.

While we were also relieved to see the MTA receive enough [stimulus funding](#) from the federal government in 2021 to balance their budget through the first half of 2024, we remain concerned about the long-term financial health of the MTA in light of the [sustained impact](#) that COVID-19 has had on the agency's ridership levels and fare revenues.

As the MTA and New York City plans for their long term financial recovery from the COVID-19 we encourage the MTA's leadership and our elected leaders at the City and State to commit to several actions that will help to preserve access to public transit and improve the accessibility of New York City's transit network for older New Yorkers in the years ahead.

1. Prevent any transit-related service cuts or delays to the MTA's ADA station accessibility projects as a means to balance the MTA's budget beyond 2024.
2. Encourage more developers to participate in the MTA and City's "Zoning for Accessibility" plan, as well as support Governor Hochul's proposal to spur transit-oriented development through State assistance to expand access to public transit options statewide.
3. Expand funding allocated in New York City's budget for the "Fair Fares" program while also reducing the cost of the MTA's commuter rails for New York City residents, such as expanding upon the existing MTA's Atlantic Ticket and City Ticket programs, in order to preserve access to a broader range of transit options for older adults with low incomes.



4. Improve the MTA's overall bus services by expanding the number of designated bus lanes across New York City while also growing the number of routes that service neighborhoods designated as "transit deserts."
5. Utilize the funding that the MTA, City, and State will receive from the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act to expand the MTA's subway and bus routes to reach more individuals in transit deserts, while also creating opportunities for members of the public to weigh in on how the federal infrastructure funding is spent on transit projects.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any of your questions.

## Testimony to Hearing of Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, March 7 2022

This is Nicholas Zvegintzov, Transportation Chair of Staten Island Community Board 1 (CB1) located on the north third of Staten Island.

Thank you for holding this Hearing.

The North Shore of Staten Island - Mariners Harbor, Port Richmond, New Brighton - lacks equity in transportation, and is long overdue for improvement.

It is a relatively dense urban environment with a majority working and immigrant population with low automobile ownership. It was first developed in the late 1800's and served by streetcars, ferries, and a rail line. By the middle of the 1900's the ferries and the rail line were cut off, leaving buses serving the former streetcar lines along crooked congested streets. Meanwhile industry and commerce shifted from the waterfront to industrial and professional parks on both Staten Island and in Brooklyn and New Jersey, the nearest off-island locations. Since that time there has been no improvement in transportation except additional limited-stop bus runs on the same streetcar routes, supplemented by 'dollar vans' and even by walking across the New Jersey bridges.

CB1 believes that the North Shore requires transportation improvements, including but not limited to:

- Revival of the still extant approximately 5-mile grade-separated right-of-way of the former railroad from Mariner's Harbor to St. George.
- Service from Staten Island over the Goethals Bridge and the Bayonne Bridge.
- These routes to be regular, coordinated, connecting, and serving industrial, warehouse, retail, and professional service areas.

This will restore to the North Shore equitable access to work and services.

My name is Christine Berthet . I am the co-founder of CHEKPEDS, which advocates for pedestrian safety and rights in New York city.

We applaud your focus on equitable transportation in New York City .

### **How to make streets safer for underserved communities ?**

In terms of traffic safety, the numbers give us a stark reminder of the inequalities Black- Latina- Asian (BLA) populations suffer everyday<sup>1</sup>. If you are raising a family in a community where more than 75% of the population is black or brown, the risk that your children will be injured in a car crash is twice as high as in other communities. In the last four years, traffic crash injuries in communities of color have increased at a rate seven-fold faster than whiter communities.

There are two key questions :

- How is the City prioritizing Vision Zero projects ? We need a clear prioritization of the work based on worse case numbers citywide and accountability to the council. The online software Crashmapper.org , we developed will help you identify the most dangerous intersections in your council District.
- Why is the City penny pinching on saving peoples' lives ? Why are the engineer still prioritizing vehicular flow over pedestrian safety? We want to ensure that DOT installs the SAFEST features at each treated intersection to protect vulnerable users.

**One cannot deliver equity on the streets without focusing on the pedestrians , 66% of whom are non-white.**

- On the last leg of the trip, are bus riders given decent sidewalks, shelters and crosswalks in proximity to the bus stops?
- During snow storms, neither bus stops nor corners or ramps are cleared in time to allow the working population get to work safely
- The City repairs sidewalks in front of one to three-family houses but does not repair sidewalks in front of rental buildings.
- Potholes in the middle of the roadway are fixed within two days of complaint, those along a sidewalk or a ramp take weeks and sidewalk repairs take months.
- Resurfacing is of very poor quality causing recurring pooling water along the sidewalk and corners which prevent safe crossing or constitutes a health issue.
- Building basic street safety features, like a sidewalk extension, requires deep-pocketed partners - to be rolled out. Why .

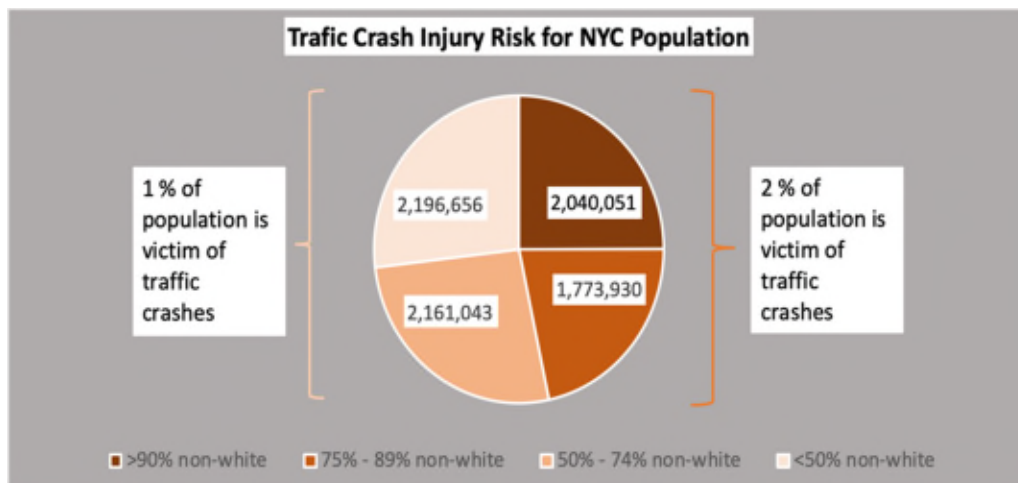
We must have the same level of service for pedestrians , cyclists and drivers . This is a basic requirement. WE must also scrutinize the balance between space, time , and expenditures allocation between pedestrians and cars.

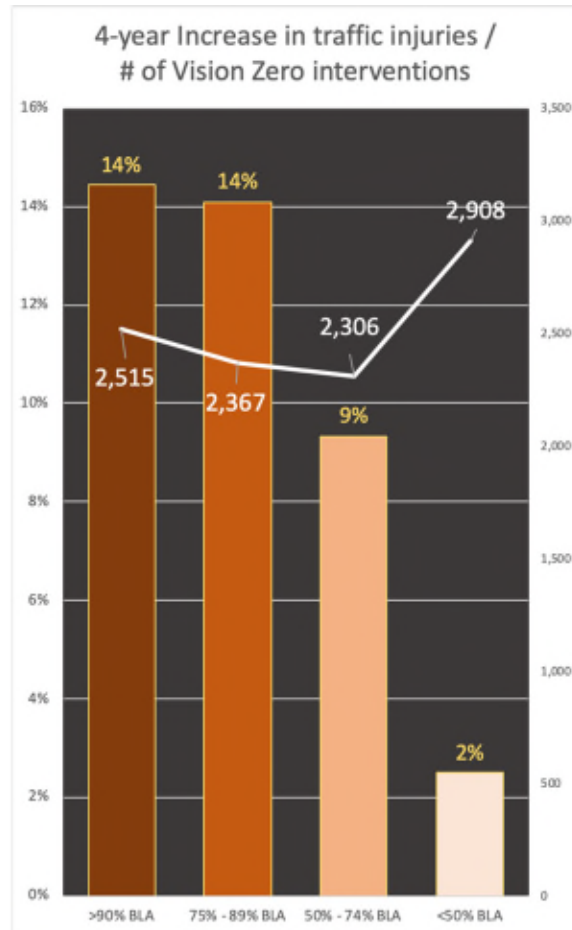
The City 's institutional choices have profound effects on the \$ 3.8 million or New Yorkers who live in neighborhoods with more than 75% of black brown population.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of City Planning, Communities Profiles , and NYC Open Data Collision Data / Crashmapper.

We urge you to review DOT and Sanitation policies, and legislate to adjust agencies' priorities to achieve equitable transportation in New York City .





**Thomas DeVito - Public Policy Manager, Lyft**  
**to the New York City Council, Committee on Transportation**  
**March 7, 2022**

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I want to thank Chairperson Brooks-Powers of the New York City Council's Transportation Committee for hosting this hearing today.

My name is Thomas DeVito, Public Policy Manager for Lyft's Transit, Bike, and Scooter team. With 11 systems and over 60,000 devices, Lyft is the nation's largest bikeshare operator - including operating the Citi Bike system here in New York City.

When Citi Bike launched in 2013, the system had just 332 stations and 6,000 bikes, across two boroughs. In 2018, when Lyft acquired Citi Bike, it came with a \$100 million privately funded investment into the system, with the goal of doubling Citi Bike's geographic footprint (from thirty five square miles, to seventy square miles) and tripling the number of bikes (ultimately, there will be more than 40,000 bikes in the system).

Today, Citi Bike has more than 1,600 stations, and more than 25,000 bikes, across Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx - with more expansion to come in 2022, 2023 and 2024. In a short time period, Citi Bike has become the largest bikeshare system in the world, outside of China, and is likely the fastest growing transportation network in the history of New York City. In 2021, we moved over 1.3 million New Yorkers taking 28 million rides - and were we a transit agency, we would have been considered the 25th largest transit provider in the USA by sheer volume of trips facilitated. By the end of the current phase of expansion, 58% of New York City residents will live within the Citi Bike service area.

Citi Bike's goal is to be as widely available as possible, and for ridership to reflect the makeup of the city itself. In 2021, 52% of Citi Bike riders identified as ethnic or racial minorities, 42% identified as female, and 21% identified as LGBTQ.

Citi Bike centers equity in all the work that we do, and we are proud of the close partnerships we have with the New York City Department of Transportation, Healthfirst, and community based organizations all over the city focusing on public health, active transportation, and justice in all its forms.

Our **Reduced Fare Bike Share (RFBS)** program provides five dollars a month membership (along with a discounted rate of 5 cents per minute for ebike use) and is one of the most successful in the country. Anybody who lives in NYCHA housing, or receives SNAP benefits, is eligible. The program itself has expanded dramatically in recent years, experiencing 75% growth in 2021 alone - up to over 14,000 members.

The concrete benefits that the RFBS program brings to thousands of lower income New Yorkers is reflected in ridership behavior: RFBS members ride, on average, 55% more frequently than standard members; they also use ebikes for around 40% of their trips. 40% of riders with an income below \$50K per year use Citi Bike to connect to transit on a weekly basis, compared with 31% who earn over \$50k per year.

In their 2016 [\*Focus on Poverty\*](#) report, the Furman Center estimates that 20% of New York City neighborhoods have average incomes below the federal poverty line, and that 30% of NYC residents live below the federal poverty line. With this context, it is worth noting that 36% of Citi Bike stations are currently located in neighborhoods with average incomes below the federal poverty line. Citi Bike is making the city itself more navigable to those who need it most, and people are taking to it in record numbers.

Beyond the RFBS program, we manage a host of other equity programs. Our **Community Grants Program** supports a dozen plus deeply-rooted community organizations every year, with the goal of connecting their membership with healthy, active transportation. Our **Citi Bike Jobs Training Program** imparts valuable professional bike maintenance skills to aspiring mechanics every year. Our **Credit Union Program** helps provide access to the system for the unbanked, and our **Prescribe-a-Bike Program** empowers medical professionals to give Citi Bike memberships to patients who would benefit from riding more frequently. We also regularly consult our **Equity Advisory Board**, a panel consisting of leaders from over twenty civic and community organizations from around New York City who focus on issues ranging from food security, to childhood education, and public health. Lastly, in 2021, in partnership with *Achilles International*, we launched a **Recreational Adaptive Bike Pilot** for riders with disabilities, which we plan on scaling out further in 2022.

We will continue to prioritize the development of all this equity programming in the future, even as we develop new programs. We know that this work is never complete, and there is always more to do.

Beyond our robust set of equity programming, we also believe that, alongside NYCDOT, we have developed the gold standard for community outreach. During every phase of Citi Bike expansion, Citi Bike and NYCDOT work closely together to do the following:

- Neighborhood planning sessions
- NYC DOT Street Ambassador pop-up station input
- Digital participation/suggest a station mapping via the [nycdotprojects.info](https://nycdotprojects.info) site
- Meetings with community boards
- Meetings with neighborhood organizations

We look forward to working with this committee and are always available to answer any questions you may have. We appreciate any feedback you might have.





## **Testimony on Oversight Hearings on Transportation Equity**

**Testimony by *David R. Jones, Esq., President and CEO,***

***Community Service Society of New York and MTA Board Member***

**Before the NY City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**March 7, 2022**

Thank you for providing the opportunity to testify today on transportation equity. I am David Jones, the President and CEO of Community Service Society of New York (CSS) and a board member with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). For 175 years, we have deployed comprehensive direct services, rigorous research and policy analysis, and grassroots advocacy to champion a more equitable city and state. June 11, 2018 is a special date in our long history. It was the day when then-Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Corey Johnson came together to agree to fund Fair Fares, a program that provides 50 percent discount on eligible subway and bus fares for all New Yorkers below the federal poverty level. It was the culmination of a hard-fought campaign by CSS, Riders Alliance, and key advocates across this city who illuminated the immense transit burden that so many New Yorkers face, and continue to face today, especially against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and a debilitating economic recession. My testimony today will focus on how the Fair Fares program, when implemented effectively, can be the key instrument to achieving transit equity, and more broadly must be a part of an equitable recovery for New York City.

As the city emerges from the economic fall-out of the pandemic, , we know the need for transit affordability today is even more acute than in January 2019 when Fair Fares was first rolled out. We know this because data from our Unheard Third Survey – the longest running public poll of low-income households in the nation – shows that transit affordability remains a formidable challenge for low-income New Yorkers: 1-in-4 said that they often struggled to pay subway or bus fares. The hardship was even more acute among Latinx New Yorkers and among residents of the Bronx – where the poverty rate is highest across the city. But even among New Yorkers who are moderately well off, with incomes between 200 to 400 percent of FPL, 17 percent still reported that they also struggle to afford transit.

This struggle to afford transit impacts the livelihoods of New Yorkers on a daily basis. For example, Maria, now a recipient of the program, had to choose between paying for a Metrocard and putting food on the table for her family. This is an unfair choice. From having to forego job opportunities, food and sustenance, to missing medical appointments, the costs to New Yorkers go way beyond the charge at the turnstile.

This is why Fair Fares can be the game changer New Yorkers so desperately need. At this time, 270,000 of city's eligible individuals have enrolled in the program, which represents only

35 percent of the over 700,000 eligible individuals who are not yet enrolled. Our Unheard Third survey shows that 62 percent of eligible respondents said that they had not applied for the program. Of them, 14 percent said that they did not even know how to apply.

Awareness about Fair Fares is especially low among residents of Queens, with only a quarter of the eligible population reporting that they had applied or were already enrolled in Fair Fares. Brooklyn had the highest share—39 percent—of all eligible respondents either already enrolled or in the process of enrolling. Awareness was also high among Black New Yorkers: almost 40 percent of eligible Black New Yorkers said that they had either applied or were already enrolled. Enrollment rates were slightly lower among Latina/o/x New Yorkers—only 31 percent of whom had applied or were already enrolled.

Given this backdrop, we present the following 5 recommendations to strengthen the Fair Fares program:

**1. Developing an aggressive outreach and awareness campaign:** Since March 2021 when vaccines became available and the city started gradually opening up, Fair Fares enrollment has picked up but the pace of increase has been only around 1.5 percent a month. This is in stark contrast to the regular subway and bus ridership numbers, which have increased at the rate of nearly 10 percent per month over the same time. This points to the need for an awareness campaign to reach those who might be eligible for the program but have no idea of its existence, as our survey results clearly reveal. It is unclear how much the City is doing, or has done, on Fair Fares outreach – what does the campaign look like, how much funding is being invested in Fair Fares outreach, and how are community partners involved? Like any new program, it will only benefit New Yorkers when they *know* about it and participate. In addition to placing ads on subways and buses, we need a more targeted approach to reaching New Yorkers in need – where they are – who are eligible. Engagement with local community leaders and organizations, ads in ethnic newspapers, schools, houses of worship, local shops and businesses, and local train and bus stops would make a tremendous difference. Additionally, the City should be pro-active in reaching CUNY students and NYCHA residents in particular, as many of them are eligible for Fair Fares and would benefit significantly from the program. For example, nearly half of NYCHA households in our 2020 Unheard Third Survey reported temporary or permanent job or income losses related to the pandemic. Furthermore, a recent Center for an Urban Future report found that the most common non-tuition financial barrier for CUNY community college students is the cost of a MetroCard.

**2. Streamline the process of enrollment and renewal:** At this time, enrollment in Fair Fares can take up to 4-6 weeks and replacement of lost or stolen cards can take up to 2 weeks. We recommend streamlining the process of signing up for the program, especially screening for it whenever individuals apply for any state, city, or federal programs and services, like a “one stop shop”. Also, we know a large fraction of the eligible population still struggles with internet access, especially amid the pandemic. The digital divide – both lack of access to quality internet and access to digital devices –are huge impediments to completing the enrollment process online. The paperwork should be integrated into more analog interactions, either in-person or through mailings, and with providers, making it easier for New Yorkers to sign up.

**3. Improved data transparency and sharing:** We need more administrative data on Fair Fares in order to assess the program. Besides the enrollment figures, which are updated weekly, we do not have any other critical data on the Fair Fares program. For example, we don't know how many people actually use the program across boroughs, their races and ethnicities, the gender identities, and other critical demographic data about them. A search on the City's Open Data portal for Fair Fares turns up zero results. The impressions on awareness and enrollment that I shared above are all from our annual survey, which, however rigorous and representative, cannot be a match for the City's own administrative data. Thus, the City must provide, at minimum, data on enrollment on a regular basis, both as a historical series, as well as disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and borough of residence. Such data would help guide the City's outreach efforts, understand the needs across the city, help estimate adequate funding levels, and also help community advocates and NGOs target their efforts in an effective and efficient way.

**4. Restore Fair Fares funding back to pre-pandemic levels:** When it was launched, Fair Fares was allocated \$106 million. During the last two years, funding was slashed to \$41 million in FY 2020 and then raised to \$53 million for FY 2021. We commend the Mayor and the City Council for baselining the program at \$75 million going forward. This is a critical step in the right direction and our projections show that the funding would be adequate if enrollment continues at the very close pace of less than 2 percent per month and transit usage continues to be below pre-pandemic levels. However, as transit usage increases, and with better outreach, we expect enrollment to grow significantly, so the City should be prepared to increase funding for the program to avoid a situation where the funds run out, likely in the near term.

**5. Expand eligibility to all New Yorkers with incomes below 200 percent of FPL:** We know that New York is among the most expensive cities to live in across the globe. And the federal poverty level, as it exists, does not take into account the huge cost of living expenses – from housing to food and beyond – that New Yorkers have to pay for living in this great city. The federal poverty level is widely recognized as incapable of capturing the cost-of-living in New York City, by advocates and policy analysts alike. New York even has its own poverty measure because of this staggering discrepancy. A recent study comparing 12 different transit agency-administered reduced fare programs in the United States found that the Fair Fares program had the strictest income eligibility requirement and that most had income eligibility thresholds up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Thus, to ensure that the Fair Fares program reaches even more hard-hit New Yorkers, the city must seriously consider expanding eligibility to all low-income New Yorkers, which includes those with incomes less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level. While the City's own poverty measure, the NYCgov poverty rate, would be a much better metric, it would be administratively difficult to implement a program using it since the entire safety net architecture is built on federal poverty measure. By expanding the program to those at or under 200 percent of the poverty line, an estimate 1.2 million New Yorkers would benefit, all of whom would be at or near poverty. This is what part of a true equitable recovery should look like.

In conclusion, transit affordability is one of the lower hanging fruits on the path to an inclusive recovery. Fair fares is an incredibly small fraction of the city's budget, but will improve hundreds of thousands of lives, if not over a million lives should the program be expanded to reflect true poverty in NYC. If the City administration, the Council, and all of us here are serious about an equitable recovery, we have to ensure that the Fair Fares program reaches as many New Yorkers in need as possible. We hope you will seriously consider our recommendations and we stand ready to assist in any way we can.

Thank you.



## **Downstate New York ADAPT**

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Image description:  
"Downstate NY ADAPT" text over & under  
image of PWD in wheelchair with arms  
raised, breaking handcuffs' chain overhead,  
under arching text "Free Our People"

**To:** New York City Council's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

**From:** Downstate New York ADAPT

**Subject:** Written Comments in Response to the New York City Council's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's Oversight Hearing on Transportation Equity That Was Held on Monday, March 7, 2022

**Date:** March 10, 2022

Downstate New York ADAPT is a grassroots, non-hierarchical community of people with all types of disabilities advocating for the civil rights of people with disabilities, including, but not limited to, the right to live and fully participate in the larger community. Downstate New York ADAPT submits these comments in response to the New York City Council's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's Oversight Hearing on Transportation Equity that was held at 11 a.m. on Monday, March 7, 2022.

In these comments, Downstate New York ADAPT addresses the following eight issues concerning traveling around New York City. These comments just highlight some of the numerous issues people with disabilities face daily traveling around New York City. At times, these eight issues intersect one another, and all these issues make traveling around difficult and, at times, dangerous for people with disabilities. The eight issues are 1-curb ramps, 2-the condition of the sidewalks and the roadways, 3-pedestrian bridges, 4-physical obstacles encountered on the sidewalks and in the roadways, 5-traffic signals, and 6-the lack of enforcement of traffic regulations relating to safety, 7-the need to regulate e-scooters, and 8-the need to establish regulations that promote safety with new forms of transportation.

### **1- Curb Ramps:**

The main issues with curb ramps are a) there are sidewalks missing one or more curb ramps; b) the curb ramps when they are installed many times are not correctly installed, c) there are many curb ramps that are in disrepair, including, but not limited to, having potholes in them, missing detectable warning materials or the asphalt sinks and the curb ramp develops a steep lip where it once was level with the road, and d-there needs to be a well-planned maintenance program for curb ramps.

Turning to the installation of curb ramps, there are times when the curb ramps are placed not where the crosswalk is located which is very dangerous because this forces people with disabilities into the traffic instead of the safer crosswalk. Another problem is that there are curb ramps installed in a position that it causes water to pool at the bottom of the curb ramps which then causes the ground there to be slippery, hides defects in the ground such as potholes and uneven ground, and gets the walkers, canes and crutches wet which can cause them to slip.

Moreover, when the wheels of a manual wheelchair get wet it makes it difficult for a person to get a good grip on the wheels to propel the wheelchair. Moreover, when water pools at the bottom of curb ramps this hastens the deterioration of the roadway and creates a trough in the roadway bed which in turn, creates a tripping hazard.

Further, some curb ramps when installed are made dangerously steep or they have high lips to them that make it dangerous to use them. In fact, on more than one occasion members have fallen out of wheelchairs because the front wheels of their wheelchair have hit the lip on a curb ramp that was too high, and they were thrown from the wheelchair. Other members using canes and walkers also have tripped and fallen when the location where the curb ramp meets the roadway was not even.

## **2- The Condition of the Sidewalks and the Roadways:**

A second issue is the condition of the sidewalks and roadways themselves. It can be very hazardous for a person with a disability to travel on many sidewalks and roadways because of the numerous cracks, holes, and uneven terrain. Further, some sidewalks have slabs of tiles instead of smooth concrete and make it difficult and at times, treacherous for people with disabilities to walk on such sidewalks. Another problem people with disabilities encounter are uneven sidewalks due to sidewalk slabs of slate or concrete being uneven or worse, totally upended and loosened by tree roots so much that they slip when you walk or wheel on them. So too, the sidewalk condition of the ground being at a downward or upward slant by trees can make traveling hazardous for people with disabilities. One recommendation provided by Downstate New York ADAPT members was to put a small fence around all tree wells located on the City sidewalks and not just some of them so that people with low vision or who are blind can detect that the terrain there is uneven. This can help other people who use wheelchairs to avoid the area too.

### **3- Pedestrian Bridges:**

A third issue is the need to have accessible safe pedestrian bridges that have proper noise abatement. Presently, there are pedestrian bridges in New York City that are not accessible to pedestrians with certain disabilities. When pedestrian bridges are not accessible it can force New Yorkers and visitors with disabilities into having to use alternate routes that can put their safety in jeopardy or require them to pay more to get to a location that had the pedestrian bridge been accessible they could have reached without any expenditure of money.

An example of an inaccessible pedestrian bridge is the pedestrian bridge that presently is over the FDR at the end of East 25th Street. This particular pedestrian bridge does not have an accessible ramp to access it. Moreover, this pedestrian bridge has no safety railings, and has stairs that are very steep and difficult to navigate. Further, there is no noise abatement provided for pedestrians needing to use this pedestrian bridge to cross over the FDR. This issue needs to be addressed.

### **4- Obstacles Encountered On The Sidewalks and In The Roadways:**

A fourth issue is obstacles on the sidewalks including doors leading down to store cellars being open and no warning around them. Scaffolding being installed and no way for a person with a visual disability to be able to detect them. Many members have had their clothes torn by parts of scaffolding protruding and worse being cut themselves by such scaffolding. Another recommendation made to Downstate New York ADAPT was for the City to have a scaffolding information website, that is, of course, accessible. Before any new scaffolding is installed this website should state when the scaffolding will be installed, where it will be installed and how long it is planned to be there. When the scaffolding is going to be removed the website should contain this information and when it is finally removed the website should



be updated with that information in real time. Such a real time website would be helpful to all New Yorkers, not just New Yorkers with disabilities. Some wheelchair users like to use sidewalks with scaffolding because those sidewalks are less likely to have snow on them because of the scaffolding. However, other times scaffolding is a detriment such as when a person using a wheelchair has to board or disembark from a vehicle. Thus, having this information all in one website that you could look up by street addresses would assist all New Yorkers.

Another is the placing of obstacles in front of and on all or some part of a roadway, sidewalk and curb ramp, such as police barricades, newspaper vending machines, trash receptacles, light poles etc. as well as people blocking the travel path on a roadway, sidewalk or curb ramp. Some people think the curb ramp is the perfect spot to talk on their cell phone or face to face with their friends or the perfect place to take photos. We need a simple public service announcement and ad campaign on curb ramp etiquette.

Further, it would be great if the same website that contained scaffolding data also had real time current information on when, where and how long the slabs that cover work in the roadway are located and how long they will be there and, when they are removed, this is stated too. It is difficult, and at times, treacherous for people with disabilities to walk and ride over these slabs covering work in the roadways.

In the winter months, another obstacle New Yorkers with disabilities and visitors with disabilities face is the intentional placing as well as pooling of snow at the bottom of and on curb ramps which make it absolutely impossible to cross the street. This is a systemic problem. There needs to be better dissemination of information to property owners of their obligation to clean snow not just in front of their property, but also curb ramps adjoining their property. Similarly, the Sanitation Department personnel need to be trained not to move snow in front of or on to curb ramps.

## **5- Traffic signals:**

There needs to be accessible pedestrian signals installed at all intersections in the City. Presently, the administrative process in New York City for getting an intersection approved for accessible pedestrian signals is mind-boggling. We have been informed by our members that it takes many years for an approval to work its way through the City's byzantine bureaucratic maze. Additionally, after the accessible pedestrian signal is installed, it typically can take several more visits by various technical vendors to get the device working properly (correct timing, appropriate volume, correct alignment with traffic, position of the accessible pedestrian signal relative to the crosswalk, etc.). Moreover, we have heard that the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) does not even return phone calls or e-mails when New Yorkers with disabilities attempt to determine the status of service requests on not only existing accessible pedestrian signals, but also curb ramps and other issues concerning the sidewalks and roadways. Further, we have heard that the 311 operators do not know what an accessible pedestrian signal device is, so when a complaint is filed, the 311 operator rarely is able to correctly document the reported issue. Thus, a more responsive and better-informed complaint system needs to be implemented concerning addressing and communicating with New Yorkers on all accessibility issues relating to the sidewalks and roadways. Finally, in view of the recent decision by the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York we look forward to working with the New York City Department of Transportation in making traffic signals accessible throughout New York City.

Further, we need more accessible pedestrian traffic signals. It must be made clear that a red light applies to all vehicles and pedestrians, not just to cars, trucks and buses, but also to bicyclists, tricyclists, scooters, and skateboarders too. Many times, we have heard members complain that bicyclists, tricyclists, scooters, and skateboarders just zoom through intersections without slowing down and are more likely to run

through red traffic signals expecting pedestrians in the crosswalk to slow down or stop dead in the road so they can go on their merry way while we have to worry about making it to the other side of the street before the accessible pedestrian traffic signals, which initially were in our favor, turn against us. This is particularly dangerous for people with disabilities that need the entire allotted time to cross the street safely. We have heard complaints about bicycles, scooters and skateboards often traveling in the wrong direction and people seeing more cyclists and scooters on sidewalks despite the fact that this is not permitted.

Everyone operating a vehicle should have to take training on how to safely operate their vehicle in New York City and should have to display a license when operating such a vehicle, whether it be a car, truck, bus, motorcycle, bicycle, unicycle, scooter or skateboard. Having to take a course on traffic rules and the reasons they exist before issuing licenses would lead to greater education of the public. Further, requiring these vehicle operators to display a license would make these operators of all types of vehicles more accountable, especially where there were traffic cameras that would issue tickets to those who choose to violate the traffic rules.

## **6- Traffic Regulation Enforcement:**

We need better and greater enforcement of the traffic regulations as well as public service announcements that explain to New Yorkers that traffic regulations do not only apply to drivers of cars, taxis, buses and trucks, but to all New Yorkers.

## **7- E-Scooters Need To Be Regulated:**

E-scooters should not be permitted on any sidewalks whether it is for riding or parking. It is too dangerous for pedestrians, especially for pedestrians with disabilities and small children to have e-scooters on sidewalks. Technology should prevent e-scooters from going on sidewalks and should regulate the speeds of rental e-scooters and privately owned scooters. It will not work to depend on rules that people will only follow sometimes.

Further, it is essential that e-scooters make sufficient noise so everyone, especially people who have low vision or who are blind can know that these vehicles are coming near them. E-scooters should ride in bicycle lanes. Parking for e-scooters should be in the street, not on the sidewalk. Parking for e-scooters should not be provided near crosswalks because there will be too much interaction with pedestrians.

## **8- New Forms of Transportation Need to be Subject to Regulations That Promote Safety:**

Any kind of electric vehicles and all kinds of driverless vehicles need to be subject to regulations that promote everyone's safety. As previously stated, this is particularly important as we move towards using more electric vehicles that do not make any perceptible noise. Significantly, presently, these vehicles do not provide any forewarning of their approach. Thus, pedestrians, including pedestrians with disabilities, are not provided with enough time to try to avoid these vehicles when the driver of such a vehicle fails to safely and properly operate the vehicle. This can result in serious consequences for all pedestrians and especially for a pedestrian with a disability who may not see the vehicle, as well as for a pedestrian with a disability who may not be able to move quickly, to avoid being hit by such a vehicle.

In order to promote a safer and more welcoming environment, we recommend that this Committee create an advisory board consisting of New Yorker with many different disabilities that could assist this Committee and other City Council Committees in their work so we, New Yorkers with disabilities, do not continually have to bring lawsuits against New York City. Finally, we ask that this Committee continue to reach out to New Yorkers with disabilities to make New York City a truly great and safe City for all New Yorkers and visitors to our wonderful City.

Thank you for giving Downstate New York ADAPT the opportunity to submit these comments.

Very truly yours,

Transportation Equity Working Group  
Downstate New York ADAPT  
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**Testimony of Carlos Castell Croke  
Associate for NYC Programs  
New York League of Conservation Voters**

**City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management  
Hearing on Transportation Equity  
March 7th, 2022**

Good afternoon, my name is Carlos Castell Croke and I am the Associate for New York City Programs at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV represents over 30,000 members in New York City and we are committed to advancing a sustainability agenda that will make our people, our neighborhoods, and our economy healthier and more resilient. I would like to thank Chair Brooks-Powers for the opportunity to testify today.

In a densely populated city like New York, access to affordable, clean transportation is more than an economic driver and hard sought after resource, it is a fundamental right. We know that transportation is the leading source of emissions in the State and in the Nation, mainly due to personal automobiles and heavy duty vehicles burning fossil fuels. Furthermore, our frequent acceptance and perpetuation of car culture constantly undermines the safety of pedestrians and effectiveness of alternative forms of transportation.

We are so glad that this hearing in particular is being held because while we see transportation intrinsically as a climate issue, it is also clearly an equity issue. Cars are a major source of air pollution, causing respiratory and public health issues. This is the case near New York City's major highways which often run through low-income communities and communities of color. These communities are also often underserved by alternative transportation options and infrastructure designed to protect pedestrians and families from cars. In order to equitably improve our transportation system and fight climate change the Council and the City must prioritize the following initiatives.

The City must continue its comprehensive approach to reimagining street space by implementing the NYC Streets Plan and the 25×25 Plan. Traffic enforcement initiatives, such as speed cameras and bus lane enforcement, are an integral part of both of these plans. These programs and technologies reinforce the use of public and micro-mobility options, protect our residents from reckless drivers, and put money back into our underfunded transit system. The plans also highlight the importance of micro-mobility infrastructure. To achieve progress, we need to pass legislation, such as Intro 2465 from the previous session, to make it easier to build bike lanes.

Lack of safe biking infrastructure is a major barrier to accessing clean transportation alternatives and as we expand bike, e-bike and e-scooter shares we must also build out safe corridors to use them on. These issues are even more prevalent in transportation deserts where cars rule. These underserved communities need safe and reliable alternatives to cars, and should not be forced to endure the constant pollution and traffic accidents that occur in their neighborhoods.

These plans will not only require strong political will to implement, but they will also need funding. This is why congestion pricing must be implemented as soon as possible. With the revenue it generates, we can reinvest in our public transit system while also cutting back on harmful emissions and gridlock in the heart of Manhattan.

All of these pathways forward will improve our City by helping to reduce emissions, increase affordability, and improve safety. We hope the Council will work to fight for these crucial initiatives and plans so we can have a truly traversable and equitable City.

Thank you.



# PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS  
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Testimony to the NYC Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
Transportation Equity  
Lisa Daglian, Executive Director, PCAC  
March 7, 2022

Greetings, I'm Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. Created by the State legislature, PCAC is the MTA's official rider advocacy organization, representing riders on New York City's subways, buses, and Staten Island Railway and the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad. Thank you for holding this hearing today and allowing us to weigh in on the important issue of transportation equity – something that is a top priority for us.

In many ways, mass transit in this city is about equity; but in too many we have not yet gotten where we need to be. The good news is we're beginning to see the kinds of investment and focus on reaching underserved communities that we need to see to really achieve the kinds of goals we all hope to meet.

Riders need to feel and to be safe on transit. Not everyone can afford to choose another option. We support the rollout of the Subway Safety Plan that includes a holistic approach to addressing the issues that riders and transit workers experience underground. We're glad to see a collaborative approach to bring housing, treatment, and other support to people in need. As you work through the budget, we encourage you to consider adding funding for mental health crisis response, supportive housing and longer-term affordable housing. A safe system is one that everyone feels comfortable riding and will use to get to their jobs, to school, to other appointments and activities without fear. That's first and foremost.

Affordability is also critical for a more equitable transit system. We applaud the Council's commitment to Fair Fares and decision, with the Mayor, to baseline \$75 million a year for this important program. We agree with your initial assessment that more money is needed – but first, we need to see the demand. Increasing outreach and marketing to ensure that everyone who is eligible knows about the program is key. We urge the city to consider changing the eligibility criteria to the much higher NYC poverty level, which would more accurately reflect the cost of living here.

An investment in buses is an investment in equity. Our bus system is truly the backbone of New York City. We support the Mayor's pledge for 150 miles of new bus lanes and busways in place by the end of 2025 – though sooner is always better – along with the Streets Plan commitment of Transit Signal Prioritization at 4,750 intersections and upgrades at 2,500 bus stops. While we haven't seen that called out in the budget, we know it is a priority of the administration and hope that you will keep a watchful eye out, as will we and our colleagues in advocacy. But all the bus lanes in the world won't work without more and better enforcement. We support legislation in Albany to allow the city and MTA to be in charge of cameras, stationary or mobile, at locations determined by the DOT or the MTA. Working together, the City, State and MTA can help bring about a stronger, faster and more equitable bus system for the riders who depend on them every day.





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For riders who live in transit deserts requiring long bus journeys to the subway, inaccessible stations only add insult to injury. The City's \$3 billion capital investment will support much-needed accessibility improvements around the system so transit can be the best choice for all New Yorkers. The new – and existing – fare pilot programs, including Atlantic Ticket, City Ticket and OMNY fare capping, are also designed to make transit for affordable, and we look forward to working with you to promote their use and expansion, including to our Freedom Ticket proposal that includes free transfers to subways and buses.

February 4<sup>th</sup> was Transit Equity Day, but really, shouldn't every day be transit equity day? We appreciate your holding this hearing and your continued commitment to riders and this critical issue. Thank you.

## **Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Hearing re: Transportation Equity on 3/7/2022**

### **Testimony from Jackson Chabot, Director of Public Space Advocacy:**

I'd like to begin my testimony by presenting a vision for a safe transportation corridor. Imagine children and caretakers safely walking and scooting to and from school. People peacefully walk their dogs and can stop to chat with their neighbors and people of all ages and abilities biking along to their destination. Children are shrieking with joy, seniors talk together, and birds can be heard chirping.

Now, I'd like to tell you this exists, and we can have more of it with proper funding and a framework for management. This is 34th Ave in Jackson Heights, run by a fantastic group of volunteers that make this possible. But despite huge need and demand, most streets in NYC have no local organization that can manage public spaces and are therefore filled with vehicles, not people.

As a result of a lack of a management framework, most neighborhoods in New York City have not had access to Open Streets. For example, Transportation Alternatives found that 84% of Open Streets in the Bronx weren't even set up. The same report reported on the financial disparities too. A fundraiser for 5th Avenue in Sunset Park raised just over \$10,000, while in Park Slope more than \$30,000 was raised. Differing levels of resources shouldn't be the barrier to high-quality public space in our city. If we want a truly equitable and livable city, we must invest resources in every neighborhood's public space and create public space where more is needed.

At the moment, Business Improvement Districts are the primary public space managers providing care, management, and maintenance to some of NYC's best public spaces. BIDs have the ability to provide this level of service because they have the funding, staff, and mandate to manage public spaces properly. But even within BIDs there is a huge resource disparity. For context, the largest BID by budget is the Downtown Alliance at roughly \$24 million, contrasted with the smallest, 180th Street in Queens at \$75k.

Furthermore, BIDs cover only 2% of NYC and are primarily concentrated in Midtown Manhattan and below. Outside of BIDs, public space is less cared for by the City, particularly in low-income and residential areas. Coincidentally, BIDs are also presenting the most ambitious pedestrian safety plans in New York City. Meatpacking, SOHO Broadway, Union Square Partnership, and the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership BIDs have announced plans to transform their districts into areas that prioritize pedestrian safety. This is great, and I also want this to be true in other parts of our city.

We call on the city to create a framework and processes for better coordination, stewardship, and public space management. We call for an Office of Public Space Management to help achieve safe and equitable streets by providing a framework to care for, maintain, and coordinate Open Streets, plazas, and more. The pandemic has shown us how important public space is, now is the time to invest in it for the future.

## **Lindsey Mayer's Testimonial for Council Hearing**

Monday, March 7th

11am

Hello, my name is Lindsey Mayer and I am a Riders Alliance member and a bus rider in Queens. As someone that lives in a district with bus service but not a subway, I use the Q12 bus to reach the 7 train in Flushing. Waiting outside for the bus can feel like hours during rush hour when Northern Boulevard has bumper to bumper traffic. Sometimes commutes that were supposed to take 1 hour ends up taking up 2 hours due to waiting in traffic. Now is the time to redesign bus service so that straphangers can get to their job, meeting, or home in time. We know that bus lanes and busways are a sure way to speed up buses. The Flushing busway, for example, has increased bus speeds by 14%. The Mayor promised 150 miles of bus lanes, and according to the NYC Streets Plan he must put in at least 20 this year. Yet he hasn't released a plan as to when and where these bus lanes will be. Council members, can I count on you to make sure the Mayor releases a comprehensive streets plan that will ensure more bus lanes in Queens?



New York City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

March 7, 2022

Testimony of Eric McClure, Executive Director, StreetsPAC

This hearing, let alone our two minutes of testimony, will only begin to scratch the surface of the problem of inequity in New York City's transportation system. It's a crucial topic that requires much more attention and effort, but calling attention to it today is a good and welcome start.

New York City is plagued by inequality, and that grave imbalance extends from incomes and housing and education to the city's streets. Black and brown New Yorkers, and African Americans and low-income communities especially, are [disproportionately victimized by traffic violence](#). This is due in large part to the city's failure to make equitable and adequate investments in life-saving infrastructure, in traffic-calming designs like road diets, curb extensions, refuge islands and protected bike lanes, a failing underscored in an [excellent analysis](#) last month in *Streetsblog* developed by reporter Julianne Cuba and How's My Driving creator Brian Howald.

The New York City Streets Plan, however, is a promising step in beginning to address that inequity. Passed by the last Council and signed into law by then-Mayor de Blasio, the Streets Plan lays out important benchmarks for investment in the city's transportation network and infrastructure, and it rightly prioritizes that investment in communities that have been poorly served in the past. It's incumbent on this committee and the Council, and we in the advocacy world, to make certain that City Hall and DOT meet the benchmarks laid out in the Streets Plan – and to insist that it's fully funded.

We must also continue to prioritize investment in automated enforcement strategies that remove human bias, like speed and red-light cameras, and lobby Albany to allow those devices to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. We don't turn off ShotSpotter overnight or on weekends. We don't turn off security cameras after hours. Far, far too many crashes that cause death or injury happen in places with speed cameras that are not operating due to curfew. The Council must join with the Mayor in lobbying Albany for home rule, for speed limits as well as camera systems.

Our colleagues in advocacy have spoken and will speak about buses in greater detail, but we as a city must make better bus service a top priority. Buses are lifelines for working-class New Yorkers who often don't have other means to get around, but we neglect them by allowing single-occupancy private vehicles to hog road space. A lone double-parked SUV can ruin a commute for 50 people on a bus. We must build more busways and separated bus lanes, rapidly expand signal priority and all-door boarding, and put enforcement cameras on every bus in the city.

We also must make cycling attractive, affordable, and safe for many more New Yorkers. Biking has boomed during the pandemic, but there's so much more we can do. Subsidizing accelerated expansion of Citi Bike to many more neighborhoods, rolled out in tandem with a robust network of safe, protected bike lanes, is a great place to start. The city's bike-share system is immensely popular, but it has yet to reach many New Yorkers for whom it would be an attractive mobility option. As the only facet of our transportation system that doesn't receive public funding, it's high time that we boost the bike-share program with operating subsidies, and with the kind of safe bike-lane network that will attract and protect new cyclists. Let's see a bill come out of the Council this year that puts that in motion.

Dear Honorable Councilmembers,

My name is Carina Nieves and I am a native New Yorker residing in Richmond Hill, Queens. I am testifying in regards to the upcoming MTA's Queens Bus Redesign Draft 2 that will be released soon. I am deeply concerned about how the MTA has done public outreach in the past for this project.

The first draft of Queens Bus Redesign really took many people by surprise. It was released in the Winter of 2019 right before Covid19 became the topic of conversation. The people who were in charge of the outreach sessions brushed off many concerns that the community residents had about their local bus transit that they're familiar with. I agree that the bus transit system has to be reimaged, but the MTA made it very difficult to navigate their site and submit comments on their proposal. They changed the bus route numbers, had too many links to get to see the info and had a map system that even I someone who is familiar with using technology had a hard time trying to navigate. I hope they can redesign their website to be more user friendly and have side by side comparison maps of each route current and proposed.

Some bus lines are being consolidated into one or eliminated altogether. The MTA should ensure that those who live in transit deserts and those with limited mobility have adequate access to bus service and if needed expand bus lines that could be better utilized. My two examples are the Q10 and the 52/53 both in the top for ridership. The bus I take often is the Q10 Kew Gardens to JFK airport. The MTA had proposed it to be consolidated with the Q64 which serves Forest Hills to Pomonok Electchester. The Q10 is a lifeline for residents in Kew Gardens, Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park and for the people who take it to the airport. I believe that the Q64 bus could be better used to connect Central Queens to transit desert neighborhoods like Oakland Gardens via Jewel Avenue to 73rd Avenue. The proposed new route for the Q52 & Q53 would make it harder for those in transit desert Rockaway to get to the mainland, thus they have to make more transfers. These buses are vital for residents, businesses and for those that go to enjoy Rockaway beach.

Overall, I hope that the new City Council keep an attentive eye towards what the MTA is proposing and ensure transit equity and accessibility is included in this plan. Thank you!

Regards,  
Carina Nieves

I became a member of Families for Safe Streets after I was seriously injured in December 2017, when a car making a left turn hit me, a pedestrian in the crosswalk who had the light, at the intersection of East Houston Street and Elizabeth Street in Manhattan. I was downtown doing after Christmas returns for family members.

But before that I was a citizen deeply concerned with systemic equity, never-ending costs of being poor, radically unequal healthcare access, and institutional racism.

And for all my 36 years, I've been a person who lost three of my eight great-grandparents to traffic violence. The only thing they all had in common was that they were between their 60s and mid 90s in age. Two pedestrians and one a car passenger. One in Greece, one in North Haven, Connecticut, and one in Queens. One had immigrated to this country around age 30, one's son had, one's parents had. One a hit and run, one hit by another car, and one struck by a bus. Two dead instantly, and one left with injuries that led to surgeries, amputation, and then her death.

In New York so far this year, we are seeing record levels of serious injury and death in car crashes. Babies, Holocaust survivors, middle school students, retirees, delivery workers – nobody is immune. We know from data that it is our most vulnerable citizens who are most likely to be injured and killed by traffic violence: the youngest, oldest, people who cannot work from home, commuters traveling to or from work in the dark, and people with disabilities. Communities of color are disproportionately affected.

And when people who already have some vulnerability are injured or killed in a crash, they and their loved ones are more likely to face further vulnerability, like the loss of a breadwinner or caregiver of minor children, needing to make medical decisions in a language they do not speak, unpaid time off work, getting behind on rent and facing the prospect of homelessness, dealing with the legal system, huge medical bills, and lack of access to affordable grief counseling. They have less of a cushion to deal with a crisis.

I urge you to fully fund the Streets Master Plan, expand busways, prioritize street redesigns at intersections known to be deadly, and build protected bike lanes. From subway service to Citibike access to bike lanes, it's way past time for New Yorkers who don't live in Manhattan to have more equitable access to safe, reliable, and efficient transit options. As the transit landscape stands now, it's hard not to think that the lives and time of everyone who doesn't live in Manhattan just aren't valued as much as those who do by people in power in this city, state, the MTA, and the DOT.

Sincerely,

Kate Brockwehl

Current Manhattanite who doesn't deserve better transit than any other New Yorker



Hi Councilmembers,

Congratulations to the new Council and thank you for hosting this Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure hearing. I would like to testify today in support of increased transportation access for all.

Although the scope of this meeting is Transportation Equity, I believe it is important to mention the budget impacts of Mayor Adams' Preliminary budget, as it impacts the ability for DOT to carry out its mandate. The budget calls for a PEG, including vacancy reductions that severely damage the agency's core operations, and a cut to the Capital Program. In principle, I am not opposed to Mayor Adams' desires for a more efficient government, where taxpayer dollars are not squandered, and budgeted capital dollars are actually committed on-time. DOT faces many problems, including poor capital commitment rates and inefficient, lethargic operations, that negatively impact all New Yorkers—particularly those living in transportation deserts and in Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity (TRIE) neighborhoods. Year over year the agency drags its feet to design, execute, and implement proactive treatments and traffic redesigns. The result, traffic violence and deaths. As you know, since the pandemic began, traffic violence has surged. 70% of cycling victims are people of color, and 90% of crashes occur in under-resourced communities.

Thank you to councilmembers that are fighting the good fight. My councilmember, Lincoln Restler is fighting the good fight, as is Amanda Farías, see her Opt-Ed, "Transit equity starts in the Bronx" as an example. But all of council needs to prioritize transportation equity, and to make sure that DOT follows through. Prior councilmember Helen Rosenthal was onto something with her outspoken desire for more capital coordination and accountability—for all agencies.

I would like to see transportation equity in all of our city. A good first step: Citibike for All. Another good first step would be following through with DOT initiatives that started in the prior-Administration: transferring parking enforcement from NYPD to DOT, incentivizing off-hour deliveries by expanding the existing OHD program, creating the Crash Investigations Unit at DOT. These are just first steps, but they are immensely important to create more transportation equity in our city.

Thank you,  
Kevin Costa

The Interborough Express between Brooklyn and Queens is a great idea. We should find a way to add a Green Pedestrian and Bicycle Path to the Interborough Express. A Greenway would be beautiful, allow people exercise, be ecological, make sure that there is constant cleaning and prevent trash from accumulating. It would give a great boost to the surrounding neighborhoods – like a “high line” in Brooklyn for the people, and even perhaps attract tourists and some commerce along the way.

Right now, the cut between Avenue H and Avenue I is an unsightly mess, used by no one, accumulating trash, ugly and wasteful.

Can the two ideas be combined? I think that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, a design and technical way of combining both can be found.

Finally, a Green Pedestrian and Bicycle Path accompanying the Interborough Express would definitely blunt the opposition of property owners along the pathway.

**Larry Magarik**

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March 7, 2022

Re: Transportation Equity

To the City Council:

**New York City has unfairly and caused hardship for bus riders by closing avenue/street closures for “Open Street and Open Restaurants” on established bus routes and diverting critical bus transportation. Rerouting buses is not equity.**

Using just one example: In Manhattan in 2021, three segments of Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues – normally routes for the M7 and M11 buses - were closed on weekends to accommodate “Open Restaurants and Open Streets” and thus the M7 and M11 buses were detoured. (see listing below)

Focusing on the M11 which normally would go northbound on Amsterdam Avenue – depending on the weekend, Amsterdam was closed 97<sup>th</sup>-111<sup>th</sup> Street and the M11 bus was detoured to Broadway. However, because of the Columbia University campus, the bus detour was even lengthier—the M11 bus could not return to Amsterdam Avenue until 120<sup>th</sup> Street.

Detouring buses from Amsterdam Avenue is a particular hardship for people who need to get to/from Mt. Sinai/St. Luke’s Hospital on Amsterdam, rehab and senior residence situated on Amsterdam Avenue and a nursing home just off Amsterdam and 106<sup>th</sup> Street. There are also NYCHA buildings, churches, schools and grocery stores situated on Amsterdam. The walk from Broadway to Amsterdam is quite long, and impossible for anyone using a cane or a walker. The extra block is potential crime danger at night when it is dark. The situation is further worsened during bad weather.

(Another significant issue albeit not transportation: Please also note that ambulances could not go northbound to the hospital)

Moreover, on several occasions when there were street fairs on Broadway, there was essentially no bus service at all.

**The elderly, disabled, families with children, women, POC and low-income individuals absolutely depend on buses.**

**In contrast, the individuals benefiting from the street closures were chiefly affluent individuals who could afford to drink and dine at restaurants.**

Mass transportation must be the City’s priority. It is completely unacceptable to divert bus routes. **The City must end the practice of avenue closures.** The City must ensure equity—complete access to regular bus routes.

Sincerely,

Melanie Saltzman  
msaltzman66@yahoo.com

Approximate Avenue Closures on Weekends:

Amsterdam 97<sup>th</sup>-111<sup>th</sup> Street – M11 buses northbound detoured to Broadway, returning to Amsterdam at 120<sup>th</sup> Street. M11 buses southbound detoured to Broadway.

Columbus Avenue 110-106<sup>th</sup> Streets – No M11 buses southbound on Columbus.

Columbus Avenue 78<sup>th</sup> – 68<sup>th</sup> Streets – No M7 or M11 buses southbound on Columbus. (Note: regarding “recreation”, Central Park is only one block away and there are many playgrounds on the West Side)

Hi all, my name is Miles Grant.

I'm here today as a bus rider in Flushing and eastern Queens and a member of Riders Alliance. I definitely prefer taking the bus to driving, but especially coming out of covid it's been irritating to see the buses not coming back along with the rest of the city. The way I know the local buses in Queens could be better is because we have better buses in the rest of New York! When I'm on 14th street I don't have to check a schedule or even an app to know when the bus will come. I just turn up at the stop and know that I'll get a quick ride within minutes, and that I won't get stuck in traffic. Compare that to any bus that goes east of Flushing and the nightmares begin -- we're talking almost hourly service outside of peak hours on some routes, getting stuck in traffic when those peak hour buses finally do come, and an absolute coin flip for if the bus will show up at all. All of these factors combined stop me from going into eastern Queens as much as I otherwise would, and for those living in more eastern parts of Queens I'm sure it stops them from heading out or getting to work on time. If I ever have even a slight hesitation of going somewhere with lousy bus service it's just not going to happen! More likely, it's probably putting them into cars.

If we could have turn-up-and-go service at all hours of the day not just here in eastern queens but all over the city, I'd be able to get around the city more often. Elected officials need to realize that bus riders keep the city's economy moving by traveling to work and frequenting businesses. If the buses I'm sitting in were able to skip traffic, either in a bus lane or a bus way that's more than 3 blocks long, buses would show up more often and then maybe I'd have an easier time convincing others to leave their car at home and take the bus with me. We shouldn't need to plan 20 minutes to an hour of waiting and traffic time just to take the bus! Bus lanes and bus ways are the cleanest way to do this. As the city begins to open up, I'd like to be able to visit it without thinking. Council members, can I count on you to pressure the Mayor to release an ambitious streets plan that will put in bus lanes that will speed up buses all over the city! thanks.

Members of the City Council Transportation and Infrastructure Committee:

I am writing to testify to the neglect of overall safety, especially pedestrian safety, in the neighborhood streets surrounding the Holland Tunnel Canal Street entrance. I am a 20-year resident of Watts Street.

Over the years, pedestrians have performed a daily death-defying act of crossing intersections at Canal/Hudson/Greenwich/Watts/Varick Streets due to a lack of basic traffic law enforcement and a common-sense plan to manage vehicular traffic.

Necessary changes include:

- 1) **Install permanent lane separators on Canal St. from West Street to 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue** to physically separate the Holland Tunnel entrance lanes from the through lane heading eastbound. **This is the most important change that can impact traffic management, as is evidenced by the lane separators recently installed along Hudson Street leading to the Holland Tunnel entrance.**  
**Why?** Vehicles block the Canal Street eastbound through lane while attempting to cut into the Holland Tunnel lanes. The same occurs on Watts Street at Canal Street. Cones are erected periodically during “rush hours,” but are taken down when the traffic police's shift ends, and city’s true rush hour continue. Vehicles run over cones to cut in. While cones deter some vehicles, they are not erected through to West Street causing the issue even further west along Canal. When cones are in place, vehicles travel east toward Varick Street and U-turn into the Holland Tunnel lanes causing blockages. The result is that pedestrian crosswalks are blocked and dangerous and honking is incessant. Road rage ensues between drivers and pedestrians and altercations, including physical ones, result at various intersections surrounding the Holland Tunnel entrance.
- 2) **Close off Watts Street to non-local vehicular traffic at West and Washington Streets.**  
**Why?** Vehicles use Watts Street to illegally attempt to cut into the Holland Tunnel lanes blocking eastbound Canal Street traffic. The result is traffic jams, crosswalk blocking and constant honking. It is a residential street and should not have three lanes of vehicles trying to force their way through these streets and crosswalks. Permanent lane separators on Canal Street could help alleviate this need. Traffic management personnel are needed along these streets.
- 3) **Install police officers and train them to adhere to a mindset of protecting pedestrians/ enforcing current traffic rules** rather than a vehicle first mindset of trying to ram as many cars through the lights as possible  
**Why?** Current traffic officers are too few, have no enforcement power and seem to lack training. Vehicles heading westward along Canal into the Tunnel are allowed to pass through and are even waved through the red traffic arrow. Large truck drivers illegally running through this red traffic arrow cannot see pedestrians legally crossing in front of them. Trucks from the far lane drive through the crosswalk as pedestrians traverse the multiple lanes and some (including myself) are nearly hit. Driver habits need to change. Understanding that rules will be enforced may curb these violations. Fees from tickets could fund needed traffic management resources.  
If existing traffic laws are followed/enforced, pedestrian safety can be maintained. (i.e. No turns on a red arrow. No blocking crosswalks. Stopping at stop signs and red lights. Maintaining the through lane for traffic heading east on Canal Street.)
- 4) **Install Police with enforcement capabilities at the Canal Street / Greenwich Street intersection**  
**Why?** These crosswalks are constantly blocked, making safe crossing impossible. Drivers turning South onto Greenwich using the left turn arrow are blocked making pedestrian crossing dangerous and making the left turn dangerous for drivers crossing through the eastbound traffic.

The pandemic gave some intermittent, but quickly evaporating, relief to a problem that has been exacerbated by an abdication of responsibility by all parties (DOT/Port Authority/NYPD etc.) entrusted with the safety of New Yorkers. New York is a pedestrian city being overrun by unmanaged traffic. I personally have attended 1<sup>st</sup> Precinct meetings, written to City Council members and more. Each entity places blame and responsibility for this mess on the other. We deserve more from our city agencies and elected officials.

Thank you,  
Trina Quagliaroli

Will this committee address the ongoing problem of helicopters for people in NYC? We have no peace when we are harassed even in our own parks by hovering helicopters and commuter helicopters going up and down the Hudson. In the past year, we've had 29,737 NYC311 helicopter complaints (Jan 1, 2021 - Mar 7, 2022). The majority of complaints in Manhattan came from the UWS. Noise is a real stressor for us residents and there's no place to escape to anymore when there are helicopters over every park in the city. What can this committee do to help us with this issue?



Do transportation goals include Staten Island or is it just equity for four boroughs ?

1. Where is the equity in bike share ? Staten Island lacks bike share. Please look at ways to subsidize/fund it here. We need regular bikes, E-bikes, E-scooters etc. just like the other boroughs have.

2. Protected bike lanes are few and far between on Staten Island. While the city promises equity in miles of bike lane production, SI is largely left out. I believe that the SI cycling community should have a say in locations of bike lanes. For instance, we are asking for bike lanes on certain sections of Hylan Blvd including the stretch from Lipsett Ave to Poillon Ave, which is the site of a ghost bike and several other fatal crashes.

3. Where is the equity for Staten Island open streets ? Bank Street is listed as one of our few open streets, yet it lacks true access and it is currently a poorly lit dumping ground of sorts. After years of waiting for the completion of a successful EDC project in this area, we believe that this street should now be given back to the people. In the past, this street was used by SI ferry commuters as well as by the residents of Richmond Terrace houses.

4. SI is the only borough that lacks bike access to the other boroughs, as there is no cycling permitted on the VNB. MTA will not even allow us to take over a car lane on slow summer weekends. So, while this is an MTA issue, it would be helpful for DOT to take the lead with different agencies in conversations about transportation equity for SI.

5. Likewise, SI is the only borough that lacks connection with one of the central hubs of the fast ferry. We are left out of routes that connect one neighborhood to several other neighborhoods. Thousands of residents have expressed the need for a Brooklyn Staten Island fast ferry. While this is an EDC issue, it would be helpful for DOT to lend us support and to take the lead with different agencies in conversations about transportation equity for SI.

6. SI has many wide residential streets that are often used as thruways. For years, we have asked for speed cameras to provide street calming to many streets including Oakdale Street in Great Kills, where rampant speeding exists. This street intersects with PS8. We are still waiting.

7. We have many transportation deserts on Staten Island, for example Mariner's Harbor. We have had study after study regarding a North Shore BRT which would help the residents of the EJ areas of the North Shore of S, including Mariner's Harbor. We are hoping to get past the stage of studies and get some real help for our residents in transportation deserts.

8. SI residents have the worst work commute and one of the most expensive commutes in the nation. Therefore, I hope that DOT keeps extra lines of communication open with transportation activists on Staten Island. It is a matter of equity.

Thank you for your consideration.