

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

----- X

February 25, 2015  
Start: 10:31 a.m.  
Recess: 12:48 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway- Committee Room  
16th Floor

B E F O R E: YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Daniel R. Garodnick  
James Vacca  
Margaret S. Chin  
Stephen T. Levin  
Deborah L. Rose  
James G. Van Bramer  
Mark S. Weprin  
David G. Greenfield  
Costa G. Constantinides  
Carlos Menchaca  
I. Daneek Miller  
Antonio Reynoso

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

Diane Ehler  
General Manager  
Lincoln Tunnel and the Port Authority Bus Terminal

Bob Durando  
General Manager  
George Washington Bridge and Bus Station for the  
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

Giovanni Puello  
Staff Member  
Office of Gale Brewer  
Manhattan Borough President

Elizabeth Loris Ritter  
Community Liaison  
Senator Adriano Espalliat

George Fernandez  
Chairman  
Community Board 12

Mike Fleischhauer  
Regional Vice President  
Greyhound

Janna Chernetz  
Senior New Jersey Policy Analyst  
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Christine Berthet  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4

Quena Abreu  
President and CEO  
New York Women's Chamber of Commerce

Mildred Ortega  
Owner and Operatore  
Greg, the Iconic Look in the GWB Plaza

[sound check, background comments]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Good morning everyone. First of all, I apologize for my being late. Having two daughters in two different schools, sometimes I make it on time, but sometimes I have to face traffic. Good morning and welcome to today's hearing of the New York City Council Transportation Committee. I'm Ydanis Rodriguez, the Chair of the committee and I'm joined by my colleagues Council Member Greenfield, Chin, Reynoso, and Weprin. This morning, we will examine--we will be examining the Port Authority's two major bus stations in New York City. The status of the ongoing renovations as well as the impact on the surrounding communities, the George Washington Bridge Bus Station in my own district, and the Port Authority--and the Port Authority Bus terminal on 42nd Street serve as the point of access for tens of thousands of thousands of travelers and commuters each day. With the long plan of improvement to these stations finally on the way, the committee is interested in hearing what commuters and neighborhood restaurants can expect from the finished product. Including the way in which transportation altering will be improved.

Uptown in my own district, the Washington Heights community was happy that renovation plans for the George Washington Bridge Terminal finally get off the ground. Continually in need of repair, the George Washington Bridge Terminal's plans were pushed further and further into the future frustration--frustrating many of my constituency and many other riders who use the terminal every day. This station is the main access point for over 300,000 passengers annually. And offers commuters and travelers service across the GW Bridge into New York City and Upstate New York. With an estimate of \$183 million, the Port Authority and their partners in development will bring welcomed economic development drivers to this community. In addition to an increase in capacity for buses. The Port Authority Bus Terminal at 42nd Street is the largest bus station in the country and the busiest in the world. Serving close to 225,000 passengers on 808,000 buses every week--every weekday. And over 6 point--65 million people annually. Yet, over the past year, this station has developed a poor reputation. It is unfortunately seen by many as a place where crimes and homelessness persisted. Where few modern day amenities exist to

serve the riding public, and where services operate over capacity leading to long lines and delays.

While yesterday we were happy to hear of improving of cell phone service in the terminal, we are also interested in hearing why the \$90 million investment made by the Port Authority has and will deliver for commuters. And for new customers oriented amenities to expanding the capacity of the station itself. We also look forward to hearing more about the long-time plans for the terminal, particularly regarding how capacity for both layover and passenger trips might be expanded. However, with both of these projects, questions remain as to how the immediate community that's surrounding might be affected throughout the renovation and as well as once they are completed. With traffic congestion a major issue in our city, we are concerned about how the Port Authority is managing this through the construction process. And what the impact of more bus traffic will mean in our surrounding neighborhood streets. Additionally, we are interested in hearing the steps the Port Authority and their partners in these projects have taken to engage the community they are working in. Especially regarding notice of

lane closure, lessening of low noises and other speed lower [sic] affects from the renovation process. I also would like to hear from the Port Authority how they make the developer accountable to provide opportunity for women and a small business especially in the surrounding the community. And also, how the Port Authority is making the developer accountable to provide community space for the community. We in the committee are glad to see progress being made with our--with our aging bus station. But we want to ensure that the surrounding communities are taken into account throughout this process and beyond.

Before we begin, I would like to thank the staff of the Transportation Committee, Counsel Kelly Taylor; Policy Analyst Jonathan Masserano; Gafar Zaaloff, and Russell Murphy, as well as my Chief of Staff Carmen de la Rosa; my Chief Communications and Legislative Director Lucas Acosta. I now ask our Committee Counsel to please swear in the representatives from the Port Authority here today, and welcome them to offer their testimony. Thank you.

LEGAL COUNSEL TAYLOR: Kelly Taylor, Committee Counsel. Will you please raise your right

hands. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony before the committee, and to respond honestly to council member questions?

PANEL MEMBERS: We do.

LEGAL COUNSEL TAYLOR: Thank you.

[pause]

DIANE EHLEER: Good morning. Can everybody hear me? I have a little bit of a cold so you have to just bear with me. So good morning. My name is name is Diane Ehler and I'm the General Manager of the Lincoln Tunnel and the Port Authority Bus Terminal. I am responsible for the operations and maintenance of the Lincoln Tunnel and the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Midtown Manhattan. And I work closely with the Police Captain at the Lincoln Tunnel and the Port Authority Bus Terminal to secure those facilities. In this role, I advocate for the resources to maintain our assets and systems, ensure the best level of customer service possible and establish programs that recognize that our facilities operate within local communities in New Yorkers and New Jersey. I would like to thank Chairman Rodriguez and members of the City Council Transportation



Committee for your interest in Port Authority Bus Terminal improvements and planning that are currently underway. And I am grateful for the opportunity to begin a discussion about the serious issues the region is facing regarding Trans-Hudson Transit, and the role of the Bus Network and facilities.

The Port Authority's longest standing core business function is the operation of an integrated multimodal interstate transportation network of facilities, which today includes vehicular crossings; the PATH Railroad; ferry services, and the Interstate Bus Terminals. The Interstate Transportation Network has been the foundation of the region's economic competitiveness for many decades providing the infrastructure required to connect New York City and the region's central businesses-- district with the goods and services, workforce and visitors from west of the Hudson.

The Port Authority Bus Terminal in Midtown Manhattan is a major transportation hub serving more than 7,000 buses--bus movements and 220,000 passenger trips on a typical weekday. More than a bus terminal, the Port Authority Bus Terminal is a intermodal facility by virtue of its location

directly connecting the Lincoln Tunnel--connected to the Lincoln Tunnel; 11 subway lines; five city bus lines; and unparalleled pedestrian access to Manhattan's densest office locations; the Theater District; and shopping and entertainment centers. The Lincoln Tunnel provides the New Jersey access route to the Port Authority Bus Terminal, and serves nearly 95,000 peak period weekday bus commuters. More than any other Trans-Hudson Transit road including today's Commuter Rail Services to New York Penn Station. The existing Interstate Commuter Bus System is an essential Trans-Hudson Transit link for customer to Midtown supporting a flexible and going network of services.

These services rely on interconnected infrastructure comprised of a counterflow exclusive bus lane on New Jersey Route 495. Dedicated bus lanes in the Lincoln Tunnel and direct ramps and street level connections between the Lincoln Tunnel and the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Manhattan, and configurable dedicated New York roadways for handling Lincoln Tunnel traffic. There are 24 bus carriers who operate out of the Port Authority Bus Terminal, and during the afternoon peak rush hour, there are

over 400 bus movements. On a typical day, the Lincoln Tunnel serves 58,000 eastbound vehicles; 7,000 buses, 4,000 trucks, and 47,000 autos. Buses comprise of only 15% of the 6:00 to 10:00 a.m. weekday traffic at the Lincoln. But they carry 82% of the passenger trips during those hours.

This fact illustrates the fact that the Lincoln Tunnel in tandem with the Port Authority Bus Terminal serves as a critical regional mass transit facility each weekday. The Lincoln Tunnel's Exclusive Bus Lane is a foundational element of the transit role of the corridor. The XBL, as it's known, is a managed use lane that extends for 2-1/2 miles along Route 495 between New Jersey Turnpike and Route 3 and the Lincoln Tunnel. The XBL operates as a counterflow lane allowing eastbound bus traffic to New York, priority access to Lincoln Tunnel along Route 495 in the westbound lane. The XBL is by far the busiest and most productive highway lane in the nation. The lane operates from 6:00 to 10:00 a.m. on weekdays accommodating more than 1,800 buses and 65,000 bus commuters daily. The time saving the XBL office bus riders is the primary benefit contributing to its overwhelming popularity. On average, bus

passengers in the XBL save from 20 to 30 minutes in commuting time during the morning rush hour, as compared to that customers use-- As compared to customers that use the regular traffic lanes on Route 495. The XBL also offers a one-seat ride to Manhattan for many travelers adding to its attractiveness. Port Authority Bus Terminal and Lincoln function as a network but the performance of these facilities is dependent greatly on the performance of the New Jersey Highway Network to move traffic to and from the Lincoln Tunnel.

The Interstate Bus System and its terminals have proven to be a critical resource during severe weather and other emergencies. Buses offer a very flexible and resilient source when other elements of Transportation Network are unavailable. During the most recent attacks of September 11, 2001, the 2003 Blackout and Super Storm Sandy, the Port Authority Bus Terminal played an important role in moving people when other modes were unavailable. It offers redundancy in the Transportation Network. For example, during Super Storm Sandy, the Port Authority Bus Terminal accommodated an additional 30,000

passengers each day for several weeks while New Jersey Transit System was being restored.

We recognize that the Lincoln Tunnel and the Port Authority Bus Terminal are a part of a vibrant and growing community in New York City that includes local residences and businesses, as well as many tourists and visitors. The community enjoys many benefits from having a multimodal transportation services essentially accessible with convenient connections to retail and other consumer services. Nonetheless, we recognize the impacts that a major transportation operation has on the neighborhood. We take our responsibility to be a good neighbor very seriously. This includes a partnership with other New York City agencies, and a full array of community and local organizations to manage congestion, noise, and pedestrian safety. And to ensure the quality of life for those that live, work and visit the neighborhood surrounding our facilities. This work is never easy, and never complete. Balancing very busy transportation operations with a growing community with growing needs requires an ongoing partnership and communication to understand the challenges, and to establish reasonable solutions.

I'm here to tell you our history with working with the community is strong, and our commitment is to continue to work collaboratively within the local community to advance, balance, and effective solutions.

While the system of facilities that serves Midtown Manhattan is incredibly productive, the ability for the system to perform reliability--reliably has become an increasing challenge. Not unlike much of the Interstate Transportation Network, the Port Authority Bus Terminal and Lincoln Tunnel are suffering from the pressures of aging, and outdated infrastructure coupled with passenger demands that exceed capacity. So while the system of facilities and services in the Midtown Corridor has functioned remarkably effectively for many years, daily operations have become increasingly a delicate balance of fragile elements. Reliability has become more difficult to sustain without new solutions and significant new investment.

The Port Authority Bus Terminal is reaching the end of its useful life, and will require major rehabilitation. The South Wing opened for service in 1950. That's 65 years ago. The North

Wing opened in 1981, more than 30 years ago. Many of the mechanical and electrical systems are in need of replacement. The structural slabs within the facility are nearing the end of the useful life, and will need to be replaced within the next 15 to 25 years. The bus terminal is physically obsolete, and does not account for many modern bus models. The Port Authority Bus Terminal was designed to serve 1950s era buses. Those buses were 96 inches wide, and 35 feet long. Today's modern buses are 102 inches wide and 45 feet long. The increase in bus size has added passenger comfort and capacity. The number of passengers on each bus has risen from 39 seats on average to 49 today. But longer and heavier buses present a challenge for an old terminal including the geometry of the ramps, the terminal roadways as well as the structural limits originally designed for terminal ramps. Modern buses now include articulated buses, which were not envisioned when the terminal was designed. The terminal was not only designed with the vertical--are also not designed with the vertical clearances to accommodate the bi-level, the double deck buses that exist today.

The Terminal operates at or beyond capacity during peak periods for both the bus operations and passenger handling. The capacity shortfall has been most pressing in the evening peak hours. The pure number of buses traveling through the Lincoln Tunnel for the evening commute often cause backups in the terminal, and on the Port Authority Bus Terminal ramps complicated by empty buses arriving to New York City too early for their outbound departure from the bus terminal. Bus congestions on the ramps had routinely backed down into the tunnel clogging neighborhood streets in New York City. We have worked cooperatively with New Jersey Transit and many other carriers since mid-September to advance operating solutions for the evening peak, which have brought much needed relief of the situation to the neighborhood, and much needed reliability to bus riders.

The Port Authority lacks adequate bus parking and staging in New York. The Midtown bus storage capacity in New York City is just over 300 spaces, and the estimated demand is 900. Port Authority engineers and transportation planners have identified the need for a bus garage with direct



connections between the Lincoln Tunnel and the Port Authority Bus Terminal. This would allow more buses to park in Midtown rather than New Jersey during the middle of the day, and to allow buses to stage for the evening departure before entering the bus terminal. Private development that allows for the development on and over Port Authority property will be the most likely source of financing of new bus facilities in New York.

The activity at the bus terminal is higher than the facility can accommodate reliably today. And significant growth and passenger demand is projected through 2040. By 2020, bus ridership to Manhattan--to Midtown Manhattan is projected to grow 9 to 18%, and growth is expected to increase by as much as 35 to 51% by the year 2040. Significant growth in travel demand coupled with aging infrastructure and systems, increasing functional and physical obsolescence of assets, and fundamental capacity shortfalls point to the need for significant investment. This is a regional concern that holds important implications for mobility, quality of life, and economic growth in Midtown--Midtown Manhattan and Northern New Jersey. We will need regional

cooperation, collaboration and cooperation in advancing a set of solutions for Trans-Hudson Transit capacity that recognizes the role of the bus system and facilities as flexible and resilient elements of a larger network.

When it comes to the bus terminal, there are no quick fixes or inexpensive solutions. Last year the Port Authority advanced the planning effort to explore potential long-term solutions to address the need for adequate interstate bus capacity, reliable services, and modern facilities. The effort has been designed to establish a road map to address current needs and future demand through initiatives that include both short and long-term objectives. The Port Authority Board of Commissioners announced last week that they will be discussing the work effort to date and next steps at their March 2015 meeting. We look forward to a broader engagement on this important set of regional interest shortly thereafter.

Meanwhile, we have heard loud and clear from customers, community groups, elected officials and many stakeholders about today's growing concern over deteriorated terminal conditions; service

reliability; and terminal services. The Port Authority Bus Terminal--the Port Authority Board of Commissioners and executive leadership are focused on improving current conditions at the bus terminal with immediate actions. As such, the Board has committed \$90 million for improvements at the bus terminal designed to begin immediate and short-term actions to address current issues including operating enhancements, building improvements, and new communications that will improve traffic congestion; facility access, reliability and the passenger environment. Some of those short-term initiatives have already paid dividends for both the community and/or passengers. We have continued to explore operational remedies to reduce travel times, traffic congestion, and bus parking and idling on city streets. Which benefits the bus carriers and all people who use the streets in the West Midtown area to walk, bike, transit or drive.

Port Authority staff have worked cooperatively with New Jersey Transit and other bus carriers to identify and implement operational changes to the terminal's evening peak operations. Which has reduced the bus traffic congestion in the

neighborhood and streets significantly and immediately. Those changes involve reducing the travel time given to bus drivers bringing empty buses from their parking lot to New Jersey to the Port Authority Bus Terminal. This has resulted in more just-in-time delivery of buses to the terminal. This has also allowed the Lincoln Tunnel to modify the criteria for diverting in-bound empty buses to the south. With less ramp congestion, the diversion of the buses to the south is now employed to short carefully managed periods. In addition, while in the past all vehicles were diverted south, the Port Authority Police Department are first diverting autos only, and allowing buses to remain in the queue for the terminal ramps.

Early buses--early arriving buses are now turned out of the Port Authority Bus Terminal. Under the current operation, early arriving buses are being sent out of the building. Without extra buses congesting the terminal, many more buses can now access the gates in a much improved and timely fashion. Buses turned away are being sent to a parking area on Galvin Plaza to ensure that

additional traffic is not pushed onto New York City streets.

The implementation of these changes would have had little to no effect if they had been done independently, but collectively they've yielded major results. The results of the evening operation put in place on 9/15/2014 were evident almost immediately to both bus passengers, passengers using the terminal and neighborhood residents. Bus riders saw shorter lines and more on-time departures. As for local community benefits, just ask Community Board 4. We had calls from the community leaders that very next week asking what happened. They reported typical evening bus congestion on Ninth and Tenth Avenues was virtually eliminated. It looks like a Saturday-- I'm sorry. It looks like a Sunday afternoon, one community leader reported.

Two months after the changes were enacted, we looked at the measured results. Bus movement and throughput increased. During the 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. peak period both the terminals third and fourth floors have accommodated more buses averaging 21 to 23% gains over the typical throughputs before the changes. The 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. peak hours showed

the greatest gain with a significant increase of 63% in bus throughput. That is 62 additional buses. This means we are getting buses to the terminal at a time they are most needed for the heaviest ridership. Through these efforts, general travel times between 3:00 and 7:00 p.m. along New Jersey Route 495 from the New Jersey Turnpike through the Lincoln Tunnel to New York has declined an average of 29% or 14.5 minutes. Travel times during the 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. peak hour experienced declines of over 31 to 25 minutes--or 25 minutes.

Other initiatives advanced as part of the Port Authority Quality of Commute Improvement Program include: Hosting quarterly commuter chat forums at the terminals to solicit feedback from Port Authority Bus Terminal customers and local residents. Providing more specific messaging to customers via the public announcement system in the Port Authority Bus Terminal. Social Media E-alerts. Establishing an evening rush management team; analyzing gate utilization to optimize terminal operations; enhanced cleaning routines; reduced leaks in public areas. And just last week completed a first set of public restrooms. We also enhanced cell phone connectivity

in the South Wing of the terminal. And to accomplish a lot of these goals, we awarded a construction management and general contractor agreement in order to commute--in order to complete these projects. That's the end of my formal statement.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [off mic] Thank you. Thank you again for being here with us, and sharing with us the great project, or the great development of bus, the 42nd Bus Terminal in GWB. We have some questions. I would like first to call my colleagues, and then I will be asking some questions.

[background comment]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Oh, sorry.

BOB DURANDO: Okay, great. Good morning. My name is Bob Durando. I'm the General Manager of the George Washington Bridge and Bus Station for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. I like Diane am responsible for the operations and maintenance of the George Washington Bridge and the Interstate Bus Station in Northern Manhattan. I also work closely with police--the Police Captain of the George Washington Bridge to assist in securing these facilities. In this role, I strive to maintain assets and systems in one of the region's busiest

corridors. Balanced with the highest level of customer service possible, and an ongoing recognition that my facilities operate within local communities that have local needs. I would like to thank Chairman Rodriguez and members of the New York City Council's Transportation Committee for the opportunity to talk about the George Washington Bridge Bus Station and the redevelopment of the facility that is currently underway.

The Port Authority's core mission is to operate and invest in a safe, reliable and resilient transportation network that serves the mobility needs of people and goods in the New Yorkers/New Jersey region. A critical element that the Interstate Transportation Network is the region's Transit Network. Our transit services and facilities play a tremendous role in serving millions of residents, businesses and visitors that make New York City and Northern New Jersey a vibrant economic center. The Interstate Bus Network is a critical but often overlooked element of what makes transit ridership in our region on par with no other region in the United States.



I'm here today to discuss the redevelopment underway of the George Washington Bridge Bus Station. While its activity in the service area are no match for the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Midtown Manhattan, the GWB Bus Station represents a sizeable bus operation by any other standard. The GWBBS serves 15,000 daily bus passengers on more than a thousand bus movements on a typical weekday, which last year totaled 4.7 million bus riders in 2014 on more than 337,000 buses. While the bus station is important on a regional scale, we're very aware that the facility operates within the community and is part of the fabric of the neighborhood. As such, we recognize our role and responsibility in serving the local community comprised of residents and businesses that use our facility, rely on our services, and live with its activity on a day-to-day basis.

The George Washington Bridge Bus Station opened in 1963. It has faithfully served Washington Heights and the neighboring community both New York and New Jersey for more than 50 years. The station is a multimodal facility providing commuters with links to the New York City subway, New York City MTA

buses, several bus and Jitney carriers such as New Jersey Transit, Coach USA and Spanish Transportation. The bus station not only serves a role in connecting New Jersey and Northern New York's State with New York City, but also serves a vital role in providing transit access for New York City residents to easily access employment, shopping and recreational centers in Northern New Jersey.

The 52-year-old bus stations undergoing a full-scale modernization, which is well timed with the current growth and revitalization of Washington Heights and neighboring communities. This is the most significant construction project to occur at the bus station since it opened. And represents one of the most significant neighborhood investments ever. The new station will be ADA compliant, and include a fully enclosed air conditioned passenger pavilion and a reconfigured bus concourse all directly accessible from the street and subway levels. In addition, the modern bus station will have significant retail partners including major national retailers and locally owned small businesses. In an effort to extend the Port Authority's investment dollars across many priorities, we've sought innovative ways of

delivering new public facilities. The redevelopment of the bus station is a public-private partnership, P3 arrangement involving a private developer working in consort with the Port Authority. The redevelopment would not have been possible without this P3 arrangement with both the Port Authority and the developer investing considerable funds in the project.

The agreement between the Port Authority and the GWBBS development venture, also known as DV, has created the opportunity to implement the massive renovation needed for the bus station to become a state of the art transportation facility, and simultaneously create a major retail destination named the George Washington Bridge Market, GWB Met Gatto. [sic] The DV and the Port Authority share the cost of the nearly \$200 million in the redevelopment of the GWBBS. The DV is responsible for the construction of both the retail and the bus project components. Upon completion, the DV will operate and maintain the retail space, and the Port Authority will operate and maintain the bus operations. This project currently in its second year of construction is now accomplishing a long-standing vision or

joining modern and reliable transportation facilities with retail and services that enrich the quality of life and economic development of the local community that the bus station serves.

I've worked with the Port Authority Tunnels, Bridges and Terminals Department for 37 years, and I have personally worked with the George Washington Bridge and Bus Station since 2002. I cannot begin to express the excitement that my staff and I share as we watch this incredible transformation of the bus station take place together. Major transportations and busy transportation hubs do not come without sacrifice. And this is definitely evident as we are going through the construction phase of this project. During this phase, our customers are being served in temporary quarters, which has presented some challenges, but services continue, and the environment has been made as pleasant as possible. The Port Authority and the developer have been active in their respective coordination and outreach efforts with outside entities including New Jersey Transit, the MTA, New York City Department of Transportation, Con Edison and Community Board 12 regarding project

related issues that potentially impact the local community.

Both the Port Authority and the developer committed to continuing these efforts until the project is completed. Our schedules expects that by the end of this year, we'll be enjoying substantial delivery of a new bus station and retail center filled with modern conveniences and services. I would like to elaborate on some of the many features and benefits of the redevelopment project to the community and the region.

Modern Transportation Services and Conveniences: The ongoing modernization of the bus station is comprehensive and will bring significant upgrades and improvements to nearly every aspect of the facility. After more than a half century of service, the former bus station lacks the amenities and service levels of expected of modern intermodal transportation centers. Without elevator service to the bus operating levels, air conditioned terminal waiting areas, ADA accessible bus gates, efficient bus traffic design, and real time passenger information, the station lacked the modern features required to serve growing passenger needs. The

addition of the state-of-the-art passenger signage, modern information systems will be another significant improvement compared to the older signage and passenger advisory systems at the current station.

The station development will completely modernize the facility and its services. A spacious passenger terminal--I'm sorry--a passenger pavilion will house a passenger waiting area, ticketing information, and restrooms. And will provide passenger's direct use of the George Washington Bridge from one side and arriving and departing buses from the other, New passenger pavilion will be fully air conditioned first at the bus station, and will also provide same-level access to bus gates along with passengers to see their buses arriving at their gate. The newly configured bus operating level is designed to provide bus riders with efficient and reliable services from all the current bus carriers serving the bus station. And room for potential new bus services to be added in the future. Bus carriers will enjoy a vastly improved bus traffic flow design, allow for improved throughput and greater terminal efficiency in promotion on-time services. The state-

of-the-art passenger information system will be available through the facility in providing up-to-date bus service information and way finding throughout the station and to its connecting services.

New elevators and escalators will serve all levels of the bus station making the whole facility easy to access for all travelers. The facility will be fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act including dedicated elevator services for the third floor bus level accessible at the Fort Washington Avenue and Broadway entrances of the station. Dedicated elevator services in the third floor bus levels is another first for the bus station, an important upgrade in the facility with both compliance and customer service. The bus station will be a primary transportation hub providing direct and easy connections with New York City subway, MTA buses and interstate bus services between New York and New Jersey.

Retail Expansion: New retail will provide new services to the neighborhood and feature local merchants, which the developer prioritized in its leasing efforts. The new station will offer

nearly 120,000 square feet of modern retail including a combination of local merchants and major retailers and food services adding significantly to the 30,000 square feet of retail previously available. The project will provide a balanced combination of retail including local merchant shops, such as Cobbler and Shine; Lulu and Angie Pastries, Pick and Eat; Ticketro; Asian Express; Mr. Nice Guy; Cafe Bellini; Al Fares for Optical [sic]; Pollo Di Pepe; Greg the Iconic Look by Mildred Ortega; and others will be a part of the new GWB mercado. The developer actively recruited these business by going door-to-door over a year ago to make sure the new facility represented and reflected the local businesses in the community. Big name anchor tenant--[coughs]--anchor tenants, Marshall's; the Gap Outlet Store; Buffalo Wild Wings; Fine Fair Supermarket; Lean Fitness; Time Warner and others will contribute to the GWBBS becoming an attractive shopping destination for neighboring communities.

Minority Business Participation, Job Creation and Economic Activity: The project is creating economic opportunities for minority and business owned--and women owned businesses



enterprises as well as job opportunities and economic activity that will benefit the local communities.

Job Creation: This project is resulting in 324 direct job gears and direct payroll wages of \$19 million. An additional estimated 530 union construction jobs and 129 indirect and induced jobs are being created. The project will generate \$31.7 million in total regional economic activity. The project's construction phases have established an MBE/WBE participation goals of over 20%, which exceeds the requirements of the agreement. Examples of participating MBE/WBE firms include Espinoza Group; Eden Electric; AFI; Island Pavement and Cutting; and Tux Cleaning. The Port Authority has worked proactively with the Community regarding local hiring. Last year we hired New York City Women's Chamber of Commerce to express--for the express purpose of assisting the local community regarding job opportunities, MBE/WBE certification and other related issues, and will continued to assist in that manner.

Community Space: We should not overlook that the primary benefits of the community is improving the critical transportation facility for

the tens of thousands of people in the community it serves every day. Nevertheless, we are keenly aware the interests of the local community has space available within the new facility for various local functions and events. After meeting on many occasions with elected officials, local community boards and local residents, the Port Authority has made special efforts to address the interests by joining with the developer to commit over 1,600 feet of prime space on the first floor of the new station for use by a non-profit business to be chosen by the community. Including the commitment by the Port Authority to cover the rent for the initial term for three years with an option for another three years. If this space is well used by the community and the not-for-profit in its initial three-year term, we will be happy to discuss with local leaders the possibility of additional space.

The Port Authority is currently in the process of renovating Dolphin Park located at Cabrini Boulevard. To date, we've spent \$265,000 of the anticipated total project costs of \$550,000. During the past few months we've installed playground equipment, benches on Cabrini Boulevard, wood fiber

surface for play equipment and have relocated the Play Elephant. As it gets warmer, play surfaces in blue stone pavement will be installed as well. The renovations are scheduled to conclude in June of 2015.

Transportation Study: In response to local community leaders' request, the Port Authority is partnering with the New York City Department of Transportation and the community to help fund the comprehensive Transportation Study of Northern Manhattan between 155th Street and 182nd Street including the areas surrounding the bus station. The study has been underway for months and is included in active involvement of local community interests notably a productive feedback session with New York Presbyterian Hospital held recently in November.

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to provide the City Council Transportation Committee with this update on the Redevelopment Program underway at the George Washington Bridge Bus Station. We are confident that as the construction program draws to a close later this year, we will have a revitalized facility not only set to serve generations of future travelers, but also to live as

2 an integral part of the growing and vibrant community  
3 in Northern Manhattan that it services. Including  
4 job creation, and improved transportation facility  
5 and better retail offerings for everyone. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. [off  
7 mic] I have two questions and I know my colleagues  
8 also they have [on mic] other questions. First, when  
9 it comes to the expansion of both, the GW and the  
10 42nd Street, how--what repair is about the GW and the  
11 42nd Bus Terminal ready? How ready are you to deal  
12 with the additional buses that you will be attracting  
13 to the bus terminal especially on how they will  
14 impact traffic in the surrounding community?

15 [background comments]

16 DIANE EHLE: Better if I have the mic  
17 on, huh? So, you know, the addition--the additional  
18 bus traffic I think in the very near term, you know,  
19 some of the operational improvements that we put in  
20 place in September will enable us to continue to  
21 function without having the buses spill onto the  
22 local streets. But we are in a long-term effort.  
23 There have been individuals working on a master  
24 planning effort that was advanced also last year that  
25 the Port Authority Board will be talking about in

March. They will hopefully address the longer-term solutions. So the short-term answer is really the operational improvements that we put in place, and operational improvements that we're still considering.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Great. What about the GW?

BOB DURANDO: As you know, Mr. Chairman, there was a lot of existing capacity. In the old terminal we had shut down half of the pull-through gates that were unutilized or under-utilized. In addition to that, OMB [sic] surveys of bus traffic that's currently going into the terminal shows that most of the equipment that's entering the terminal is only about half full. So there's existing capacity without any additional service, and the new terminal will have 21 sawtooth gates, more efficient operation. I don't know the exact percentage of increase. but we're told by our planning folks that we're equipped to handle growth well into the future.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: How much square feet did we at the GW Bus Terminal lost as a result of these renovations?

BOB DURANDO: How much did you lose?

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

BOB DURANDO: As far as overall space,  
retail?

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing] As  
far as the whole second floor that will be used for  
commercial space?

BOB DURANDO: Well, we're expanding the  
amount of commercial retail space from 30,000 to  
120,000 square feet.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: For the  
commercial purpose, yes, but for the common use of  
people being able to cross from Broadway to Fort  
Washington and walk in the middle of the bus terminal  
that will be lost. So how much are those square feet  
that people will not be able to walk in the middle of  
the second floor crossing from Broadway to Fort  
Washington?

BOB DURANDO: But that's all retail  
space. That's not lost space. People are going to be  
able to walk through the retail to get from one end  
to the other.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No, no, it's not  
the same as it is right now as it is right now. As  
it was before renovation, it was open space. You can

say people will be walking in the middle in retail,  
but how much open space are we losing?

BOB DURANDO: Off the top of my head  
square footage wise the main floor is to be  
Marshall's.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Sir, I said how  
much are we losing? Right now, up to now--

BOB DURANDO: [interposing] I don't know.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --it's open  
space.

BOB DURANDO: I don't know, Mr. Chairman.  
That's all going to be Marshall's space on the second  
floor.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Exactly. It's  
not going to be open space any more. It's going to  
be commercial.

BOB DURANDO: It's going to be retail  
space.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Exactly. It's  
going to be open. So we're missing the whole second  
floor that right now is open to be used for  
commercial. How much--how much did the developer  
invest? As you--I agree with you that depends on the

2 developer--the developer because he--he was a key in  
3 the development of the GW. How much is he investing?

4 BOB DURANDO: The project is a total of  
5 \$183 million. I believe the Port Authority's end of  
6 that is \$70 or \$80 million and the developer is the  
7 balance.

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: What is the  
9 incentive that the developer is getting?

10 BOB DURANDO: The incentives as far as  
11 what their-- They're building a retail space.  
12 They're going to be the landlord for all of the  
13 retail space that occupies the building, and they'll  
14 be collecting rents. That's their incentive.

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: That's the their  
16 incentive?

17 BOB DURANDO: As far as I know.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Does the Port  
19 Authority guarantee a living wage as the  
20 Administration with that developer?

21 BOB DURANDO: Mr. Chairman, I operate the  
22 facility. I run the facility of the George  
23 Washington Bridge and the Bus Station. As far as  
24 negotiations and procurement, rules and regulations,  
25



that falls outside of my purview. I can't answer your question.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Well, we know that there is no living wage guarantee?

BOB DURANDO: I don't know that. As I said, I operate the facility. I don't negotiate terms of leases or wages, et cetera. I operate the facility.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So the information is not--the information is not there's no living wage guarantee in that location. On page 5 you mentioned--and okay for my colleagues we have a level of frustration in Northern Manhattan in this project. You know, when the Vice President came to invest in La Guardia Airport and he said that this was a third world airport that was their reaction on how the community feel on how we've been treated. As a third world class community. We know that it would never happen in the West Side, in the East Side, or even there. It would never and that's--and that's something that that's how frustrated the community is. Like right now they can't even save 3,000 square feet for community space. We're losing the whole second floor. I don't know how many of you are

familiar with the GW Bus Terminal. Right now when you cross the whole second floor is open.

So how do you--someone to go to the stairs to the second floor, walk through the whole area, cross to Fort Washington on the other side, the area will be translated into commercial. There is no living wage included. And the pay side, you're mentioning all who will be including as a WBE. Is anyone of those from the community?

BOB DURANDO: Mr. Chairman, I have no idea.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No, sir, it's not. No one from the community and with the businesses that they have done so far today, no one, there is no small business. Not one from the from the community that have been included in this project. And it is a shame that the many negotiations we talk about there's going to be a community space offer before they came. And again, I'm not blaming the--you guys. I'm not blaming the Port Authority. I'm blaming the developer who refused to come here today. Who was invited and he said yes first, and then two days ago he said he couldn't make it. They couldn't even send one person

to come here and answer any questions that we have. And when we are starting this conversation with them, they offered 400 square feet. That's all they offered. We're losing the whole second floor that was used for art exhibitions, for all the activities. We're losing everything. There is not a living wage included. They came to offer and they said we offer 400 square feet, and we said not at all. We're not taking this. We demand respect.

Then they talk about 1,500 square feet. And they said that the 1,500 square feet was supposed to be for the time when the developer will have a lease that is 99 years. And you look with the changes going on inside the Port Authority, and the developer. Now they're coming and saying it's a three-year lease. Shame on the developer. Shame on the developer who went to Washington, D.C. and got an award of one of the national developers on getting community engagement. And he had not engaged the community in this process. And he went to D.C. saying that he got the community engaged, and here you will hear from the Chairman of the Community Board 12. You will hear from a small business, and they will tell you that the community would never engage. It

is in the last couple of months when the elected officials say we wouldn't take this any more. And we're talking to the Governor. We're talking to the Port Authority, and we demand respect, that suddenly they offer 9900-- the 99 years, and now they say three years. We will not take this. Council Member Chin.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair. Well, thank you for enlightening us. We didn't know about all the background on this issue. I wanted to ask a question relating to the terminal in 42nd Street. Because you could not accommodate a lot of the buses and the bus company, there's been a lot of curbside picked up. So, you know, that has a great impact on the local community, and we all know that. And the other thing is that have you considered what kind of impact that has on the bus terminal in terms of your revenue? Well, you just said that we cannot accommodate any of them anyway, so we're not losing any money.

DIANE EHLE: I mean the bus terminal itself, you know, really can--it was really struggling to accommodate the buses that we already had, especially in the peak periods until we had

those operational changes that we put in place in September. And things seemed to working quite a bit better. But as part of the master planning effort itself, we have looked at the on-street bus, and we're trying to-- You know, it's part of the conversation, you know, when it comes to what are we going to do regionally in order to accommodate bus activity in Manhattan. But it's broader than just the Port Authority. This is going to involve regional partners including folks from the City and the bus companies as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, I think that you--it's good that you're looking at that because when you were talking about how you, you know, get people through the tunnel making sure it's not clogged up. I mean we have so many buses on the curbside. I mean who is like queuing them to get on the tunnel or the bridges or whatever? I mean, and they're clogging up the local street. I'm sure you're going to hear from the local community board on that.

As part of your master plan I hope that you also look at the impact on the local community. Like in my district in Chinatown. I think we have

our own terminal. We don't have a terminal, but we have enough bus traffic that-- I mean we have everybody down there including, you know, Greyhound. I mean, we've got the Yellow Bus, and the number of trips that they do everyday. And then also together with all the other buses, we're getting inundated. I mean, we've worked to get a permitting system that helps a little bit. But, we just don't have the capacity in our community to accommodate all the intercity buses that come in and out of Chinatown on the Lower East Side. So in doing your Master Plan in terms of the Port Authority, don't forget about us. Don't forget about the local community because they're a part of the transportation system. So maybe we can also sit down and see how we can organize that, and get the Port Authority to also look at investing in the local community to see how we can enhance the bus service and also improve the quality of life for the neighborhoods and the residents who have to deal with this every single day.

DIANE EHLER: And I can appreciate your concerns. I do think that the conversation is going to be a much broader conversation, and we're going to

need regional partners in order to be able to identify solutions.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, but I look forward to seeing the--I mean for your expertise in terms of running the terminal on 42nd Street it would be great to really have some input in terms of how to go about even planning and doing some immediate action to really alleviate the congestions that we're having right now in our local district. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [off mic] Council Member Menchaca. [sic]

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Good morning, and thank you for being here to testify. I know my colleagues are going to be--we're all going to be focusing on different pieces. And I just wanted to focus on one regarding the testimony given by Dian Ehler. You talked about empty buses and a question maybe for both of you. Are a majority of the buses parked?

DIANE EHLEH: Well, I think I mentioned in my statement we have about--there's about 300 buses parking spaces in Midtown Manhattan. The need is about 900. So we do get--a lot of the buses are in

the morning after they drop off passengers they do end up in New Jersey, and then they have to come through again. So those are the empty buses trying to meet the demands of the commuters.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [interposing]  
Do any of them park in other—other boroughs outside of Manhattan, or are most of them in New Jersey?

DIANE EHLE: Most are in New Jersey.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: In New Jersey.  
Okay, and I guess the bigger question to us is really I think what we're trying to say here is that you all with the massive presence of buses and really the organizers can really set some tones for other smaller companies that are doing work. And so for Red Hook—I represent the district in South Brooklyn, Red Hook and Sunset Park. They run buses that would go empty. And I know you're trying to mitigate some of that, and it looks like some of that has been working. But there are still empty buses. And so I'm hoping that you can kind of set the tone for some of our local battles with our buses so that buses are never empty. And so that we create new pathways for our communities where they are parked to be able to get on that bus. And create new connections for



1 local communities where they are being parked to the  
2 city. And I'm hoping that we can--this has been a  
3 Red Hook Battle for a while, and everyone kind of  
4 points fingers and says it's just not done. Those  
5 models are not existing. We have a schedule. We  
6 know where it will be. [sic] And the bus is  
7 invisible until it gets to its beginning point and to  
8 its counterpoint. And I think there is some  
9 creativity to solving some of this, and really until  
10 the Port Authority and MTA and our Department of  
11 Transportation kind of take this on. Have you been  
12 exploring those models? Those kinds of models?

14 BOB DURANDO: I don't have that problem  
15 with the bus station, to be perfectly honest with  
16 you, because given the a.m. commute, people are  
17 looking to get into Manhattan. There's also a  
18 significant reverse commute out of the bus station to  
19 people to businesses in West Patterson and Western  
20 New Jersey, et cetera. So it's coming in full, and  
21 it's leaving whatever full is, right? It has  
22 passengers on it coming into the station. It has  
23 passengers on it leaving the station. And then in  
24 the afternoon, the people that are coming in, in the  
25 morning are going home and vice versa. So, I don't

necessarily have the dead head issue that Diane experiences at the bus terminal, but she's got ten times as many movements a day than I do.

DIANE EHLE: But yeah, I think one of the--one of the issues is the time of day. So the peak periods are the peak periods. So both the city buses and interstate buses, you know, are ramped up for those peak periods. The off-peak periods is where we have, you know, kind of the empty buses, but nobody is looking for the services at that time. So, I know I've been asked that question occasionally is there a way to kind of look at bussing operations differently? We're always looking at are there--is there another-- You know, is there another use or whatnot. I think it has a lot to do with peaks versus non-peak periods.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Right. But you set tone. And so, how--how can we continue to explore some of that work? And I'm looking forward to doing that with you all. Thank you.

[pause]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you chair. Thank you guys for being here, first and foremost, and I just want to say I'm extremely concerned I mean

just listening to Council Rodriguez speak in regards to community engagement, and community relations. It seems like a theme for the year so far when it comes to how we get things done, and the value of communities and neighborhoods. What I--what I'm hearing--and I like to paint pictures--is there's a house that is in need of some work and someone would come into the house. They're going to paint. They're going to put maybe some new carpeting, some new flooring, they're going to add a second floor. It's going to be beautiful and they're out there showing the neighbor somewhere. And then they open the door, and they tell the tenant, you could live in this closet for three years after we finish this. And if you're a good person and you do a good job of being a tenant in this closet, we might give you a three-year extension on that. And then after that you have no--there's nothing you can do, and we keep you're house. We're in your neighborhood, and by the way, we're going to build an extension in your back yard. So you can't play around in the back yard either. And it's just--it's just overwhelming to see all the work that's going to happen here, and what I see or what I believe I mean how little the community

is getting back. And how many sacrifices they're making and almost a dismissal of their sacrifices that the community is making. I'm sorry. I just wanted you to be very clear of the perception that is being set here. 1,600 square feet for two years, and if they behave or they-- What I heard here is they community space is well used for three years, then you would consider giving them an extension to that. I think that that's just-- You need to rephrase that, or there needs to be a conversation about how that--what that looks like in the perception you're giving to that community. And also, I want to speak to local-- And then the community is seeing this house get built. No one from the block or from that community is building the house. No one is fixing up the house in the community. There's no local workers. It doesn't seem that you contracted any MWBEs from community. It seems like they're all from outside of the community. It's just a lot to bear for a community that is a low-income community that is a community that needs a lot. And while there are things that you guys are accomplishing in the ways of transportation, which I care deeply about, and I respect, I just think that you need to revisit what

community relationships are. And not only community engagement, but what relationships are. Who you-- what you represent now, or what you're going to represent in the future. And I think you guys are jeopardizing that through this project. And I would love for you to respond to that statement.

BOB DURANDO: I can certainly appreciate your concerns and that of the chairman. I will certainly take these things back, and discuss it with my colleagues. However, I think it's appropriate to say this is a great project. An almost \$200 million investment in a transportation facility that has seen little if any improvements over the last 50 years. So from that perspective, we getting you a brand new-- getting us a brand new transportation facility with all of the modern amenities for however that lasts. We may have started out with a couple of bumps in the road with regards to reaching out to my friends in Community Board 12. I think we've right that from a facility perspective, and we encourage our partners in government and community relations to go along with us to those things. We've done a significant amount of outreach, and we will continue to do so. As I said, we didn't start off on the right foot, but

I think we've righted that, and we'll certainly correct that in the future.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Council Member Rodriguez speaks to open space on the second floor. Can you explain what you think that is? And because I feel that the community values it one way, and you value it another. And so, I just want to know what do you think this second floor space is?

BOB DURANDO: Prior to the redevelopment, the second floor was open space. As the Chair is characterizing it with smaller stores on the perimeter. So people were enabled to enter from Broadway, go up to the second floor concourse, walk across and go down the escalator into the subway, and walk out onto Fort Washington. As I understand the floor plan, they're still going to be able to do that, but it's not going to be open space. It's going to be Marshall's. So it will, in fact, be retail. There will be elevators that go directly from Broadway up to the third floor, which currently is not in existence. So there are amenities that are coming along with this project. The Chairman views the loss of that space to Marshall's as losing the space. I can certainly appreciate that, but it's

going from a walk-through area to retail for Marshall to sell their products.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay, so now in the Parks--I'm guessing this is about the Parks Department. But the Parks Department has very clear guidelines when it comes to open space given how little we have in this city, and how valuable it is in the city. If you ever--if you were ever to replace parkland anywhere in the City of New York, public parkland, you would to find one-to-one in acreage replacement for it because of its value. So it doesn't matter what you build on it, or what value you think the possible project that's coming into that community or on that parks space is, you need to replace that park space somewhere else. In this case, it seems like the Port Authority has determined that the sacrifice of this open space that Marshall's is of value to the space in respect to the open space. And our community doesn't necessarily see it that way even though there is value in Marshall's being there and being valued. And I know you guys need to generate the income in order to produce this great plan, and to allow for the buses to move.

I just think that again, the community is losing park spaces. They have the Port Authority who hasn't been the greatest--hasn't done the greatest job considering their limitations with infrastructure, but they have this park. Now, they're going to lose their park. There is going to be efficiency in the transportation system. There is going to be no one working there from the community, right? Or, working on the project from the community. There are now MWBEs from the community. They lose their park space, and they really feel that you guys haven't listened to them. And bumps on the road should occur over a construction project maybe, but not with our community. Because you're coming into their house, and you're in their house, and I think that the--there's a-- I just don't feel like the relationship is there, and I think that it should be your number one priority.

BOB DURANDO: We're certainly sensitive to park space. We created a park at 181st Street in Cabrini. Julie Pogie [sp?] runs that. She's been a community activist for decades. We're actually celebrating our 20th anniversary of that park being in operation for local children. Open space, though,



as it's being characterized here, the second floor isn't--isn't outside. It's inside the terminal. So it's available. It's viewed by the--by the developer as available retail space, and that's how it's being utilized in the new--in the new configuration. It's not a building being built on what's currently open space or park or a galore of proper, et cetera. This is all happening within the footprint of the existing building.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Right, and this is just my last comment. It's just that it seems like the developer walked into a room or walked into a space and says, this is what I think it is. And I think he should have first asked the community, what do you guys consider this to be so I can respect your--who you are and what you think this space is as to not disrespect the community is exactly what's happening.

BOB DURANDO: And I hear you loud and clear.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Because let's say that that space was a holy space for someone, and the developer just walks in and says, I want to building Marshall's here, you would get in big

trouble. There would be a big problem with that. But the developer has no perspective or community perspective, and I don't think that he sought that. And then to not be here is also of concern to me. He is also disrespecting the elected officials. And, you know, Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez represents 170,000 residents. So that's what he's coming in here with, and for a developer to not think that that's of significance by not being here--is how I take it--is also of concern. So it's just the relationships here are not good. I mean it doesn't look like it. I hope they repair it. It looks like the Port Authority is the biggest problem. But you guys are almost complicit in allowing him to do that, or allowing this developer to not show up. And I think you should demand it.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, and before calling on my next colleague, continue elaborating on that. This is all elected officials from Northern Manhattan that have that point of view in what's going on. This is the same comment that you will hear from Chairman of Community Board 12. They have the same point of view. It's the same level of frustration of many of the small businesses

that we have. And for me what hurts me the most is when I saw the brochure from Tutor Perini getting an award in Washington, D.C. as the national model of community engagement. That's a shame. That's what shamed me. And when the developer got--we can go over, and we would like to, you know, see what the Port Authority is going to share with us. It is not in capacity. I would like to get a contract. You know, whatever, 200 pages or documents you have, or what you might share with other developers. I would like to have access to that. Because nobody would have to be insane to go with that developer. And someone as a Tutor Perini, who is a national, coming in and having that approach in the GW venture, you know, this will not fly, and you should know. We have had many meetings the last couple of months, and you have been saying yes we will take care of it. We will listen to this, but so far to now, construction is almost done. And no local business has been included. When will the local businesses will be included for Northern Manhattan?

[pause]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No, way. And none of us that you name are in the community.

That's enough to be offered the community. But that saying leave 20%. You will not do it on the West Side. You will not do it on the East Side. You will not do it in the Riverdale, and that's why it is for me it is unacceptable. You will not go to none of the middle-class or upper-class community doing a major project. Saying, here we're included as women business opportunity, and not having one business. And we know the whole--all the obstacles that that project went through. We know when we started, you have to change it because the first one there were corrections. And I don't know what relationships there are with the current or the previous one. We've been very patient as a community, but enough is enough. Council Member Rose.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you, Chair Rodriguez. And I recognize your frustration having had a larger project in my district, and it seems to be recurring theme in terms of private-public ventures where the community benefits are far more diminished than what the economic gains are for the developers. And one of the access points for community engagement and involvement is the MWBE percentages and regulations that are required of

1 developers. And for the redevelopment of the GW Bus  
2 Station. The MWBE contracting goals were set at 12%  
3 for minority-owned businesses, and 5% for women-owned  
4 businesses. And it's amazing to me because there are  
5 underwhelming percentages. And so, I was wondering  
6 why if there was a reason for such un-ambitious  
7 goals, and are these goals binding. And, you know,  
8 it would--if these goals were even met, it would go a  
9 long way to at least presenting access to the  
10 community that the council member is so trying to  
11 make sure has an active part in this development.  
12 So, could you tell me, you know, are these binding  
13 goals, and what are they so low?

15 BOB DURANDO: Thank you. Thank you for  
16 your question. My understanding of the 17 or the  
17 total 17%, 12 and 5, are in accordance with  
18 limitations established within the state. Those are  
19 the limitations that the developer and his  
20 contractors are required by law to provide. As I  
21 read in my statement, I believe that those numbers  
22 have been increased to 20%. The developer and Tutor  
23 Perini has conducted a number of job fairs within the  
24 neighborhood trying to recruit folks from the  
25 neighborhood to work on the project. Again, as the

2 operator of the facility, there's a certain distance  
3 between me and that process.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing] Uh-  
5 huh.

6 BOB DURANDO: But, that's my  
7 understanding of how this works.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Are there standard  
9 compliance procedures employed by the Port Authority  
10 to determine the actual percentages of MWBEs that  
11 participate on these projects?

12 BOB DURANDO: The Port Authority has an  
13 Office of Business and Job Opportunity, which  
14 routinely oversees compliance with construction  
15 projects, goals. I don't know if that's occurred on  
16 this job. Again, I hate to keep saying it, but  
17 there's a distance between me and the folks who do  
18 those kinds of things. But, Councilperson Rose,  
19 we'll certainly take your concerns back, and we'll  
20 get back to you as quickly as possible.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I would also like  
22 to request that, you know, a report be, you know,  
23 filed with us so that we would know what the  
24 compliance levels are, if you've reached those goals.  
25 I have a concern about the environment, and the

environmental impact that this project will have as well as the Midtown planning on the neighboring communities. We all know that the air quality in Washington Heights has been an issue of concern. There are high levels of asthma. And so, I wanted to know what are--what are, if any, special measures were taken to diminish the negative impact on the air quality in this community, and in the surrounding communities in Manhattan?

BOB DURANDO: Actually, the manner in which we'll be handling particularly Jitneys. Once the station is finished, as you're familiar with, Jitneys enter on 179th Street and exit on 178th Street. So there's that constant loop between 178 and 179 along Broadway. That location will become refined [sic] for a supermarket so that access and egress to the lower floor of the station will be closed. There will be supermarkets. So all of those Jitneys now will have direct access to the upper floors. All the bus operation and full size and Jitneys will be up on the third floor. So it will significantly eliminate that movement from 178th to 179th because in order to drop off and pick up a Jitney would have to make two loops. That's being

eliminated. So I don't have the statistics, but I have to believe that it would significantly reduce the amount of idling on the part of those vehicles. The amount of trips being made along Broadway going directly up into the third floor of the station. It should have a significant impact on the quality or on air quality within the environments of the terminal itself.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And so, we're going to meet all of the environmental standards in terms of emissions, idling. Are there any special modifications that's going to be put on these Jitneys to ensure that, you know, maybe the emission level is safer or something?

BOB DURANDO: Again, I certainly appreciate your question. I do not have the knowledge and the understanding or the wherewithal to answer your question.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay, thank you. In the Port Authority, as one of the issues as a person who has had relatives traveling through there, is the cell phone dead zone area. And it makes me crazy that I can't establish contact with my loved one to know if they've arrive or if they haven't or



1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

65

2 if they're safe or whatever. Have those issues been  
3 addressed at the Port Authority?

4 BOB DURANDO: They have. We'll be--we'll  
5 be--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing] For  
7 both of you.

8 BOB DURANDO: I'm sorry.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: No, it's okay.  
10 It's okay.

11 DIANE EHLER: [interposing] Oh, I'm  
12 happy to answer all the questions.

13 BOB DURANDO: I'm just trying to give  
14 your voice a--

15 DIANE EHLER: [interposing] That's fine.

16 BOB DURANDO: I'm trying to give your  
17 voice a rest. The best station will be wifi capable.  
18 So you should not lose your phone. You'll be able to  
19 go on your iPad, et cetera, et cetera. A fully 21st  
20 Century facility.

21 DIANE EHLER: So at the Midtown Bus  
22 Terminal, we've actually made some great strides.  
23 This is one of the things that we talked to our bus  
24 passengers, it was clearly a key issue for them. So  
25 we've already put into place in the south wing the

ability, as I understand it--technology is not my thing per se--But we were able to take the signal that existed around the terminal and kind of bring and amplify that into the building as a first phase, and there is already quite a bit of improvement on cellular service within the terminal as a result. There is a second phase, and the gentleman earlier talked about painting pictures. So painting a picture for that it's like making the bus terminal itself a cell tower. So that's something that's been studied, and we're looking at how we're going to be able to implement that. So in my estimation, a year from now we should see really a dramatic improvement with regards to that. But there has already been some improvement that has been made.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And my last question and my pet peeve is the signage. As a person who isn't normally a commuter--I'm sorry Vision Zero Chair, but on Staten Island we drive everywhere. But the signage in the terminal is not consumer friendly. Are there measures to improve the signage and make it so that a person who is really arriving for the first time in that facility would be able to find what they're actually looking for, and

get to the subway line or the bus line that, you know, they need to get to?

DIANE EHLER: For signage?

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Yes.

DIANE EHLER: Speaking for the bus terminal and signage. So actually, last year was a good year for us in terms of we've identified signage as an issue, and we were able to install what we felt at all the critical, you know, points we were able to install some new signage last year using a signage stand that's really much more modern than we had had. And we hope to do is in a phased approach be improving the signage. So there would be additional signage improvements that will take place over the years. The first phase was put in place. So those would be the signs when you walk through that have the green and white and the black and yellow, which are Port Authority standards now. So we're starting to bring them to the bus terminal. Thank you for your question.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And do you mind if I just ask a question about sort of cultural competency. In both of the terminals are announcements or signs in multi languages, or how do

we address the non-English speaking commuters or consumers who are utilizing the terminals?

BOB DURANDO: Sure. As an example, the way finding signs around this station right now directing people to subway at 177th Street and 181st Street are bilingual, English and Spanish. I make it a point that any announcements--and hopefully we'll be doing that a lot more once the building opens--to putting out notifications in both English and Spanish recognizing the population in Northern Manhattan. Plus my wife is Puerto Rican, and she kicks me every time I don't do that. So, yes, there are-- As far as signing inside the building, we're pretty happy about the fact that along with this really great project that we're building we have clean slate on the inside to modernize the signage, way finding and the like. So, I think the long answer, my long-winded answer to your question is yeah, we're going to do much better signing--job with signing and way finding throughout the building.

DIANE EHLE: And so at the bus terminal itself this is an area that I know we can make greater strides in. But for example last night we had a commuter chat for the building, and the posters

2 for them were both in English and in Spanish to try  
3 to-- You know this is something that I think we need  
4 to do more of, an area we can improve.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: If someone is lost  
6 and seeks information is there any sort of  
7 interpreter services in the Port Authority?

8 DIANE EHLER: Yes, if you go to a Port  
9 Authority information booth we can help people with  
10 multi-language assistance.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And I'm sorry,  
12 Chair. I sorry. I'm back on the environment and the  
13 George Washington Bus Station. You said that there  
14 are ramps. Additional, I guess, slots or bays for  
15 additional buses. When you--and you were going to  
16 seek additional service providers for that area,  
17 right?

18 DIANE EHLER: Sure.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And were--was that  
20 increase include in an environmental study in terms  
21 of impact of again on the--

22 BOB DURANDO: [interposing] Again,  
23 Council Member--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: --the environment/  
25

2 BOB DURANDO: --we could take that. I  
3 don't know.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I would really like  
5 to see it because from a health standpoint--

6 BOB DURANDO: [interposing] We can give  
7 that to Lois, [sic] and she'll-- She'll come back to  
8 you and get you and answer.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: This is a community  
10 that suffers from health related issues that are--  
11 You know, can be--there's a correlation between the  
12 emissions from the fuel that's used. So thank you  
13 for answering my questions. Thank you Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. And  
15 to let you know because I also know that you have--  
16 you have to leave early, but for the purpose of it we  
17 want to know. Even though the panel they will leave,  
18 and they will leave some stuff here from the Port  
19 Authority so that it they will be more represented.  
20 I just want you to know that I don't think what I ask  
21 is too much. I just think that--I just hope that,  
22 you know, we can go back and forth to argue basically  
23 for the GW Bus Terminal. I just hope that by next  
24 week we can resolve this most issue. I don't care.  
25 I don't have any interest who is the City of. Bring

CUNY, bring in the Council, bring SUNY. Come on with something that you can argue to [sic]. Do whatever you want, but bring something that is permanent for the community as a community use facility. And get the developer because he's benefitting a lot. He got--he was able to get good money. You know, most of his money is he find money.

So he was able to get a lot of money from the bank, from HFA [sic] and other places. It's a great deal for him, and I think what we ask for the community is too much. We're losing a lot. The second floor open space was very useful for the community, very useful. The senior citizens they were taking the stairs, going to the second floor. Going to the other side of Fort Washington. It was used for job fairs. It was used for artists exhibitions. No. Tutor Perini lied to you. It is not true that they have a number of job fairs. They only have one, and from that job fair, they only had one person, and that person was not from the community. That's a fact. That's not any assumption. So, you know, we have to be able to sit down again at the table, and correct what is not working. Because we all agree, all residents of the

community this is a great project, and we appreciate what the Port Authority is doing.

The GW is very important for everyone. It's in the same general location, but we just want to get our interest be taken into consideration. And that's the interest of everyone, all residents of Northern Manhattan. So even though I know that is the decision of the leadership or the Port Authority. I know that conversation has started for months. I just hope to see some results from this, and I just hope that by next week we should be able to sit down, and get to some solution to all those concerns that you heard from us. And that you will hear from the Chairman of the Community Board 12. That you will hear from the Office of Senator Espaillat. That you will hear from the small business. So this is like, you know, about like 40% of the residents have this concern and 60% agree. This is most of the city is also going to say this is wrong what is happening in this community. And by the way, they have a developer and, therefore, they will look at the Port Authority having pre-announced.

I just hope that and we will also have the opportunity today that Greyhound to also come and



testify. Well, I just hope that also where can we with them and the rest of the bus services that we can be able looking at GW to expand services at GW. I think that bus terminal, that central location should provide opportunity from the market point of view to the residents of this area to say we can take the bust at GW and go to Upstate New York. We can take the bus there and go to other places. So I just hope that as the 42nd Bus Terminal is overcrowded, that we can be able to work with some of those services, and transfer those services from the GW Bus Terminal. So that it will be a win-win situation. It will be good for the 42nd Bus Terminal because it can take some of the bus services from there. It will be good for the community because residents who live in that area of Jersey or Bronx or Washington Heights, they should be able to say we can take the bus here at 8178 instead of going to 42nd Street. Thank you.

[pause]

GIOVANNI PUELLO: Good morning. My name is Gale A. Brewer, and I am the Manhattan Borough President. Thank you to Chair Rodriguez and to the members of the Transportation Committee of the New

York City Council for the opportunity to testify today. The safe ride on the bus has become a ubiquitous part of the landscape if you live or travel anywhere near Midtown Manhattan. This is in large part because of the Port Authority Bus Terminal, the largest in North American, is overcapacity. The Port Authority staffs more--serve some 8,000 buses each day. This almost equivalent of 1-1/2 times the entire fleet of New York City's MTA buses concentrated in just one small geographic area in Manhattan. It is apparent to anyone that lives and work in the area that the Port Authority is well overcapacity. Though they're full, however, it's only one in the Midtown community. Turning neighborhood streets into one large curbside terminal What's more, it's a problem that is only expected to worsen. By 2040, the average bus traffic is expected to increase by 25 to 39%.

For this reason, as the Port Authority continues its 89th [sic] study to identify solutions to its capacity problem, I am pleased the plan for the construction of the 500-Bus Galvin Plaza Annex continues to be under consideration. I believe such a facility will go a long way towards helping

ameliorate the issue. This new garage will not only help reduce bus overflow on city streets by providing at least nine-door parking, but will it will also help speed bus trips for roughly 80,000 passengers daily. Moreover, I have personal concerns that the construction of the garage may not come to fruition in a timely manner due to unfortunate setbacks. Delaying the construction of this garage will only exacerbate the problems cause by the bus backflow for the residents and workers of Midtown. I strongly encourage the Port Authority to prioritize the construction of the garage and hope to see it as a prominent feature of the 2015 Master Plan soon to be released by the Port Authority in New York and the U.S. [sic]

It must also be said, however, that a double class A [sic] bus garage will not completely resolve the actual cause by increasing ridership bus ridership into Manhattan. Elevem miles worth of buses wait to enter the terminal each day, and bus ridership continues to grow each year. We will need to entertain additional creative solutions to this problem. And it calls for a sample by imposing a new operation of rules implemented by the Port Authority

of New York and New Jersey have helped reduce the diversion of buses onto city streets, which has not really reduced congestion on Fifth [sic] Avenue.

I look forward to working with the Port Authority and yes and the Council to identify additional solutions such as this, and work the hours of implementation. Lastly, I would like to further support the Port Authority of New York, and ask it to take pains to ensure community members are both informed of the progress being made on this master plan. Council Member Rodriguez is very familiar with the George Washington Bridge bus and park renovation. I think he would agree with me that the Port Authority takes advantage of greater communication with Community Board 12 during the renovation and in the future. That every personal signage has to be in Spanish and English. There is also a need for maximum lighting and under construction site, and the construction of exits, entrances are ADA compliant. I am sure they will be when the project is complete. Community members have asked about the status of a traffic study and air quality study of the area, and about the status of the outreach that will be done regarding permanent jobs at the bus station. Lastly,

I would like to encourage support from New York and New Jersey to take pains to ensure community are involved and informed of the progress made on this Master Plan. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to working with you to ensure that the Port Authority continues to be a world class transit hub for residents and of visitors to New York.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you and again it was Giovanni Puello, of the staff of Manhattan President Gale Brewer reading her testimony.

[pause]

ELIZABETH RITTER: Good afternoon. My name is Elizabeth Loris Ritter. I'm the Community Liaison for Senator Adriano Espalliat. I am obviously not Senator Espalliat. Council Member Rodriguez, thank you for giving the senator the opportunity to testify on an issues, which will affect our constituents for decades to come. Both the George Washington Bridge Bus Station and the Port Authority Bus Terminal are located in the 31st Senate District, which stretches from and Inwood and Washington Heights through Harlem and Manhattanville

on the West Side to Chelsea. The renovations of both facilities are exciting projects, which will improve the commute of the almost quarter million people who pass through them each day while providing a number of important changes to neighborhoods in my district. But these renovations must be done with their respective communities in mind. In Washington Heights George Washington Bus Terminal will house four times the retail space it once did.

It is vital that these business hire locally, and that some of those businesses themselves be local. It is equally important for a traffic study of the area around the bridge to include all of Manhattan to its tip, not limit itself to the immediate few blocks to the north of the bridge. And adequate space must be built so community organizations have a place to gather and host events. [sniffs] Council Member Rodriguez has pledged a significant portion of the funds needed to renovate that two-story mechanical space at West 178th Street and Wadsworth Avenue for this purpose. The Port Authority must pledge the remaining funds to ensure that this space be built. The Port Authority must facilitate local hiring by making good on its

commitment to host a jobs fair for local residents in the retail businesses that will move into the updated terminal. I cannot overstate the value to local economic development of hiring locally. To these ends, the Port Authority must continue to meet with local stakeholders. In order to assess the PA's success in meeting the communities needs, the Port Authority must make available the following information:

1. The number of local businesses that have signed leases for the new retail spaces.

2. The number of Minority and Women-Owned Business enterprises involved, and how many of those are local businesses.

3. The number of neighborhood residents that retailers have agreed to hire.

4. The amount of community space to be built and outfitted.

5. The specific plans, including scope, start date, and completion date for that traffic study.

On 42nd Street the Port Authority must ensure that its plan provides ample layover space to reduce unwanted trips throughout the surrounding

neighborhoods; updates the entire interior; and provides much needed amenities for the commuters and neighbors alike.

I want to thank the Port Authority for the work they are doing to improve the city's bus terminals, which are overcapacity and have fallen into disrepair. I encourage the Port Authority to continue to collaborate to meet the goals I have laid out. Thank you for your time and thank you to you and your colleagues for your interest and your support.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.  
Chairman of Community Board 12, George Fernandez.

GEORGE FERNANDEZ: Good afternoon, everyone, my name is-- Well, thank you for Council Member Rodriguez for having me here today to testify. It's my first hearing so I didn't know I had to bring copies of my testimony. So I just wrote some notes here. However, I would just like to highlight. I'm George Fernandez. I'm the current Chairman of Community Board 12. This particular project spills over from the previous chairs. It's been around our community for many, many years. I'd just want to highlight that while many folks glorify the fact that



this bus station is being renovated, before this the bus station was in piss poor condition. So that tells me there from the beginning how much of the attitude to care about our community when you run a facility. As they sit here, the general manager and gloats of this facility that it looked horrible. Horrible conditions, piss poor maintenance, which everybody tried to get someone to help our seniors. The escalators are constantly breaking down. It was like if you were to walk into an abandoned building. And that was like that for years until they tried to negotiate to get the monies. I will be clear. Everyone is glorifying the project. I feel highly disrespected about this project. The Community Board has been left out of the loop. The General Manager of the station states "bump roads." It's inappropriate language, if you ask me, for a general manager to use when you talk about community engagement. We have been humble in this process. We have been calling them to come to the table.

In 2012 in February we passed a resolution that spoke to-- Well, we supported project notwithstanding recommendations of concern of traffic congestion, air quality, impact. An

environmental impact study, traffic studies.

Requesting for more traffic agents to direct the flow of traffic because we know that once all these construction trucks are around working that it's going to limit the traffic flow. We know that our seniors are disabled. They're having a difficult time.

Now, let me be clear. Our community makes up of 73% immigrant and Latino base. I've got to say to you this is an act of discrimination. This is almost a \$200 million project. Our MWBEs are down to zero. When you talk about a living wage, they're not looking in our community. They're smacking us in the face. They're coming in there taking our home, and not even letting us rent. And I've got to agree with the council member this thing about a three-year lease for space. We deserve more than that. You're taking the entire second floor and giving it to a big chain store, Marshall's. I don't know of anyone surveyed me to ask me about one of the Marshall's in my community, and what that would do for economic growth. And I doubt that they're going to be giving a living wage, and we also pushed for HR, permanent positions, managerial. Our community is blessed with

talent and professions and we are downgraded to what is that is that called? Minimum wage for the people that live in the community?

Because they feel that they have language barriers or they don't have the appropriate skill set to service the industry, and I beg to differ. I am proud of our Latino community. I am proud of Community Board 12. And the GWB has not been at the table with us. We have had over three liaisons, and none of them can give us direct answers. It's always what this GM just did, Mr. Durando: I will take your questions and bring them back to the developer. And, you know, I've got to say that the Port Authority is involved in these negotiations, and bad on you, shame on you. You do business with an employer, a developer who does not engage the community. He wants to come in and take our land as historically it has been done. It continues to be done, and we are not getting no benefits from this. I will tell you that we will not support what you're doing at all until you don't bring us in. Just two weeks ago, a meeting was held.

Did they reach out to my District Manager or me to say, Hey, George, come in here to talk about

1 this community space. I thank my elected officials,  
2 the Office of Borough President Brewer, and all the  
3 council members, Council Member Rodriguez. So they  
4 have those discussions with them, but it's not up to  
5 them to invite me, or the board. It's up to the  
6 developer to invite the Community Board to the table,  
7 or to the table to talk about community engagement.  
8 Because that resolution started with us. We get no  
9 feedback. We get no input. We are not invited. You  
10 talk about a job fair, several job fairs. One  
11 recruitment effort is not several job fairs. That's  
12 false tongue in live testimony. And I denounce these  
13 acts, and I ask that the Port Authority step up your  
14 game and enforce or ask this developer to do the  
15 right thing. It's embarrassing. You talk about it's  
16 yes, it's an exciting project. For whom? For the  
17 rich person that's getting all the money, and the top  
18 corporate executives that get the money?

19  
20 How about the poor people, the working  
21 class? You know what's our annual median income in  
22 Washington Heights? \$34,336. We represent close to  
23 200,000 constituents from one 155th to 218th from  
24 river to river. None of those folks have been asked  
25 what do they want to see out of this project. And I

will hold my tongue now, and I think you get a gist of what we're talking about in being left. And it's true with the council members. It is Downtown, the East Side, the West Side, the Upper Side. I got to tell you, you've got to stop discriminating against the immigrant and Latino communities. It is time that we get the respect. We built America and yet it is the 21st Century, and we still fight for our rights. What is this about? It's a joke. And as volunteers we have over 50 board members that are concerns about their constituents. And it hurts to see that even educated people cannot get a decent break of Latino background. We do what we say. We still get nothing.

How much more do you want from us? More sweat? More blood to build your land? We've been here 73% Latino-based, Dominican background plus other immigrant background. MWBEs are at zero. They did one in 2013. It ran for two hours. Horrible outreach. They did this recruitment and at the 11th hour they changed date to a different site with a truck that threw everybody off to even participate in that recruitment effort for union workers. All of the MWBEs are outside of the borough. All of them

and I know for a fact that Washington Heights and Inwood has electricians, plumbers, carpenters, people that are great with their hands and are certified. But yet due to poor outreach and not the willingness to inform them of the process, to keep them out. The no bid--what is that they call it, the no-bid contracting stuff that goes on. It has to stop. You have to give people a fair opportunity. Thank you for your time, Council Member.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And I just before the panels leave, I will also like to know because also we have meet--we have been together in this conversation. One suggestion that we made to the developer and the Port Authority was to diversify the tenants to be brought to the bus terminal. We saw that in that community there's a market to provide a business for art, for music, for children. Attract someone who would like to work in a gallery. So that--you know, our community cannot be seeing just have the Marshall and the Target. We are more than that, and in this community, as George said, we have like a strong working class and middle-class community that also demand many services. So, but again, you know, I still--I can expect that it's

going to be the last chance of being fair, but we need to hear from you guys. And I would like to hear in the next couple of days to hear from the Port Authority because we have good intentions. As I said before, we want to work with you. This is important. We believe in a free market society. We know that the developer take a risk. He or she should be able to get supported to get a good return, but what we are saying is that, you know, this is like--this isn't fair. And we've been very patient, but patience already got too late. Thank you.

GEORGE FERNANDEZ: [off mic] Thank you, sir.

[pause]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay, so the next panel is going to be Mike Fisherman--Fleischhauer from the Greyhound and Janna Chernetz from Tri-State Transportation Campaign.

[background comments, pause]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Let's also get a representative Christine from Community Board 4.

[background comments, pause]

MIKE FLEISCHHAUER: Okay, good afternoon. My name is Mike Fleischhauer, Regional Vice

President, Greyhound in the Northeast. My office is located here in New York City. Today, Bill Blankenship, who is our Chief Operating Officer was supposed to be here today to give these comments. But if you look on the weather map in the south, a lot of bad weather and he couldn't make it. So, I'm his last minute replacement. So wish me luck.

[coughs] Greyhound has been in the intercity bus business for 100 years, providing safe, affordable, and reliable travel to millions of customers every year across North America. The company has been going--has undergone a significant transformation over the past few years. All designed to give the customer a better travel experience. We have purchased new buses equipped with the latest modern amenities such as wifi, power outlets for every seat, reclining leather seats, extra leg room, and three-point safety belts. Buying a ticket has also become easier with the launch of our mobile app in the Year 2014. In other major travel locations we have installed self-service ticketing kiosks. We offer customers free wifi while they wait for our--for our schedules. We're rolling out a new boarding process. We're investing in bus tracking technology that will



provide our customers real time information as to the location of their bus.

Greyhound has many terminals across the country that it owns and operates. In some places we made significant investment to upgrade our existing facilities. In others, we've worked with City leaders to build modern terminals. We are now part of 100 intermodal facilities like New York's Port Authority Bus Terminal where we connect customers to other modes of transportation, such as light rail, Amtrak, public transit, and regional carriers. Greyhound is also seeking such opportunities to join such facilities as we recognize the importance that an intermodal transportation center serves for our customers, the company, and community. In fact, Greyhound recently left its longstanding terminal in Washington, D.C. to move into the city's grand and historic Union Station. Which has positively elevated the perception of intercity bus travel, and provides our customers with a level of service they desire.

We are proud to serve the New York market, which is the largest in our network. We service from the Port Authority thousands of

destinations across North America. Greyhound has been part of the Port Authority for more than 48 years, with more than 3.5 million of our customers passing through the facility each year. We believe that while the Port Authority is functional, and it has served Greyhound well, it is time to explore improvements to the facility. Greyhound is, therefore, seeking funds for enhancements that we think our customers would like as well as address the operational issues.

I invite all representatives of this Council and Community Board members to take tour-- take a tour of the Port Authority so you can see our operation as it is today. We hope that you will see that there is a need to invest in improvements to the existing infrastructure to support the needs of intercity bus operators and customers who travel through the facility everyday. It also ensures that we can get ahead of what is becoming an increasing growing market of intercity bus travel here and in the New York City area. I believe my time is up. So I would invite the Council to read the rest of Bill Blankenship's statements where he goes into curbside

carriers, and also permit process enforcement.

Thank you for the privilege to comment.

JANNA CHERNETZ: Thank you Chairman.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today

on the renovations of the two bus terminals. My name

Janna Chernetz. I am the Senior New Jersey Policy

Analyst for Tri-State Transportation Campaign. I'd

like to share a few statistics with you, which will

illustrate the misguided capital planning and capital

investments of the Port Authority. According to

MinTick [sp?] every weekday, 373,000 people enter and

leave the New York City hub for New Jersey on bus

through Lincoln and Holland Tunnels, a number

equivalent to 79% of Staten Island's population.

Annually, this equates to nearly 2.6 million buses

carrying 90 million passengers into the Port

Authority Bus Terminal and the GWB Bus Terminal every

year. Yet, the Port Authority has allocated a mere

sliver or even a morsel, I think sort of would be a

euphemism for that they allocated in terms of its

\$27.6 Billion Capital Program to improve bus

facilities. Instead, a majority of their capital

dollars are going to rail.

In one particular project, the \$1.5 billion PATH extension, which would provide more direct service via rail to the airport, that project--that money, that \$1.5 billion would be better spent right now invested in bus facilities. Five years ago, the Port Authority postponed a bus garage. And once again, the bus garage is being put on hold when the Port Authority has not received the funding for Galvin. This is a severe problem for the local communities as well as the commuters because they've been denied this grant. And it is not even in the capital program. There's been no word from the Port Authority commissioners how this project will be incorporated. Although there was acknowledgement in August that if this grant did not go through they would and will have to figure out how to fund this much needed project.

But because of this--this--the benefit of Galvin would have eased the parking situation that has caused the delays that a number of people have discussed today. And you will probably continue to hear throughout this afternoon. The massive queuing and the quality of life concerns for residents living around the bus stations. There was a \$1.4 billion

Lincoln Tunnel Helix reconstruction, which Tri-State agrees that does deliver significant benefits to bus commuters. But it is not the type of dedicated capital budget programs that need to be completed by the Port Authority. And neither is the \$90 million quality of commute program. That commute program is merely cosmetic. It does not address the issues that Port Authority is really facing, and that is capacity.

And I've been attending the Port Authority board meetings for over a year now, and I'll tell you that when the Port Authority Capital Program was being reviewed in August there was an opportunity, a very limited opportunity, for public input. And some of the comments on especially the Port Authority Bus Terminal was that it was in the Capital Program. The commissioners acknowledge that, but they did nothing in August. It took an actual visit by the commissioners. You have no transportation experience between all of them. A field trip, if you will, to the bus--Port Authority Bus Terminal to actually see what's going on there. And that's how the \$90 Million Quality of Commute

Program started. But again, that is not going to address the most pressing needs.

It was promised in October there would be a bus master plan. That master plan was promised in February with announcements between October and February about that bus master plan. As I testified last week, that plan was not on the agenda. I was told that we would now need to be waiting until March. And as I've listened today about some of the community concerns about the community involvement that raises another issue, the lack of transparency. The lack of transparency and the continued thwarting of signing legislation, which would improve that transparency is a big concern. So whether it's the community engagement on some of the renovations that's going on, and whether there is community engagement on the bus master plan. Without the transparency, we're not going to have something that meets the region's needs.

So I'm saying that with the pressure of the New York City Council, which I hope you will continue to put on the Port Authority, and the pressure from other local elective on both sides of the river, I think that we can push the Port

Authority into doing the projects that will benefit the region most. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

CHRISTINE BERTHET: Thank you, Chairman, for the choosing to discuss-- The only thing that I can say is that I wish the Vice President has arrived by bus to New York and we would be in better shape now. My name is Christine Berthet. I'm the Chair of Manhattan Community Board 4, where the Port Authority Bus Terminal is located, the 42nd Street one where the Lincoln Tunnel terminates. And I'm also the co-founder of the Pedestrian and Safety Advocacy on the west side. I want to say in the last two years there has been an enormous change in the Port Authority attitude and relationship with the community, and it has improved dramatically at least on 42nd Street. It has not been without pain to get to that point, but it seems that there is--we are in a better place now.

You have heard the numbers everyday. There are over 8,000 bus arrivals and departures in our residential neighborhood. While the majority of those buses use the ramps to access the terminal, a good proportion of those do use the streets to access

those gates, which are located at the ground level.

The buses backed into sections of pedestrian crossing and they are backed up on 40th Street to the terminal on 41st Street, as they are backed up by the traffic. We have been unable to obtain Port Authority traffic agents to manage those new sections, as we asked.

The Jitney company are a massive problem. There are three companies leaving and arriving every ten minutes in the neighborhood. And airport buses have been allowed by DOT to pick up at curbside, and permanently obstructing the cross-town 42 MTA bus, which has the Pokey Award. And so, luggage and block long queues of pedestrians block the sidewalk with an assortment of vendors. And those very old buses I know go 12-hours a day and non-stop in front of a Pre-K school. Three buses leave every 10 minute, but up to 20 Jitneys circle the neighborhood using residential streets to try to find an illegal layover because they are waiting for their next departure.

On Eighth Avenue, the volume of commuters who come and up to the terminals is so large that thousands of pedestrians walk in the roadway and on the bike lane from 47th Street to 34th Street everyday. We asked you, too, for a widening of



sidewalks ahead of the bike lane installation, but we didn't obtain it. Cars making left turns to the Lincoln Tunnel compete with pedestrians crossing the street, and injuries are common. The intersection of 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue was ranked the most dangerous intersection in the city for the five years preceding ending in 2010. But no safety improvement had been installed by DOT. Every evening there is an eleven-miles [sic] queue of buses coming into the parking lots from New Jersey, to pick up commuters and bring them back to New Jersey due to the lack of bus storage. This queue utilizes 50% of the incoming capacity of the tunnel. The Port Authority is due, we hope, next month with a plan for the garage. It is clear that the Bus Terminal has exceeded its capacity inside and outside the location at the intersection of Times Square and the residential neighborhood, which is a questionable location. Is it the right place. While the Port Authority should be encouraged to invest in bold long-term solutions to absorb the crime volume and expected growth, many simple and trend solutions should be applied by DOT and the Port Authority with a high sense of urgency, and we appreciate your help in that.

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you and we  
3 will continue working. I have one question to  
4 Greyhound. What does it take for Greyhound to expand  
5 services from GW bus service?

6 MIKE FLEISCHHAUER: [coughs] Councilman,  
7 I have been--made two visits to George Washington  
8 Bridge, and obviously now it's under construction,  
9 and we are always looking for opportunities. And  
10 we're actually requesting for a meeting with yourself  
11 to discuss the matter.

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Thank you.

13 [background comments, pause]

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Quena Abreu from  
15 the New York Woman's Chamber of Commerce and Mildred  
16 Ortega a GWBE small business owner, or future.

17 [pause]

18 QUENA ABREU: Yes. Good afternoon,  
19 everyone, and my testimony said good morning, but  
20 good afternoon, Mr. Chair, Ydanis Rodriguez and  
21 members of the committee. My name is Quena Abreu,  
22 and I'm the President of the New York Women's Chamber  
23 of Commerce. And I thank you for the opportunity to  
24 testify today. Since first being proposed in 2008,  
25 the George Washington Bridge was stated as a

renovation project presenting an opportunity for jobs and overall economic development for the Washington Heights and the Northern Manhattan community. The Economic Downturn and a change in the private partner delayed the start of the construction project. But on June 2011, the Board approved \$183.2 million of renovation planned for the George Washington Bus Station. When a project of this magnitude comes into a community especially if it's being subsidized by taxpayer's dollars, which is the case of this project, it is expect that such project would bring certain benefits to the community. These benefits include opportunities for Minority and Women Business Enterprises, MWBEs; opportunities for Local Business Enterprises, LBEs; employment opportunities for local residents; free community space; and affordable retail space for local business owners.

As a consultant for Port Authority, and the project contracted to assist with the recruitment of MWBEs, local businesses and local workforce since June 2014, I can attest that little has been done by the developer, and the contractor Tutor Perini to engage the participation of the community in this project. With the exception of Ambus Woodlake [sic]

who was hired Tutor Perini in September of last year and has been collaborating with the Women's Chamber in identifying opportunities for local businesses and MWBEs, as well as local construction workforce.

These efforts have yielded very little for the following reasons: In the matter of the MWBEs and local businesses, there are very few to no opportunities for MWBEs in local businesses. These opportunities have been giving out or watered a long time ago, and were never advertised in the community. The community has never got a chance to see these opportunities.

We were told by Tutor Perini that a lot of people lost their jobs because they did not do what was right, referring to their sister company Posavani [sic] which at that time was working on the project. The developer and Tutor Perini claimed to have hired Spectrum, a consulting firm, to engage the participation of the community by doing the outreach to MWBEs, local businesses and local workforce. This never happened. One of them, which even was done at the United Palace that was it. We learned later that was a shell since there were no contracting opportunities left.

By the time the Women's Chamber was hired by the Port Authority, precious time and local opportunities have been lost. We tried to get on the project to ensure the participation of our local businesses are MWBEs making the most attempt to talk to Tutor Perini and the developer. Tutor Perini never answered our emails. The developer met with us, and promised to hire the Women's Chamber to engage the local businesses, but that never happened. When the Women's Chamber came on board, hired by the, Port Authority, again the developer and Tutor Perini ignored the emails sent requesting a list of available opportunities. We began work after Ambus would reach out to us. Before that, both the developer and Tutor Perini ignored all attempts to work together to engage the community in the project. So far, after the report we received from Tutor Perini, less than \$3,000 have been spent in the community through local business purchases.

We are asking that priority be given to local businesses to access any business opportunities available during the construction of the GWB Bus Station. This was not the case with the local businesses including Facility Values, a local

cleaning company that provides employment to more than 200 Washington Heights residents. Facility value is an Hispanic MWBE firm certified by the City, the State and the Port Authority, the perfect candidate for the project. Yet, they were never given the opportunity to be considered. When I asked, I was told Facility Value never responded to the Request for Proposal and they are not union. The truth is they were never contacted by Tutor Perini nor the developer, and they never received a bid or request for proposal. In addition, they did not have to be union because they are not a construction company. They lost the opportunity to do the post-construction cleaning, and the community lost the jobs that came with that contract.

We want to make sure our businesses do not lose the opportunities and that the jobs stay in the community. In the matter of workforce, the Women's Chamber did an event with Tutor Perini for jobs in the construction industry. No locals were hired because the project is a union project. The solution is to engage the community with a public labor agreement, which I believe the project does not have. This will allow for participation of the local

workforce such as the graduates of the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation Construction School Training Program to work under the union for the duration of the project. Perhaps it can be done for the build-out of the retail spaces. Moving forward, we ask that we are provided by Tutor Perini, the developer, the property manager, as well as the businesses moving into the bus station with a listing of all businesses and job opportunities. So we can make efforts to engage the community.

In the matter of the local business relocating and opening new stores at the bus station, in addition to establishing large chains, small local businesses will relocate or open new stores at the bus station creating much needed jobs in the community. The small businesses are being forced to incur a debilitating costs to build other spaces since the developer is not providing the small businesses with the basic built-out or what we call the wide backs, which is the wall, ceiling, floor and pipes. The total build-out cost of the 13 space is \$642,913, which is a very small amount for the developer, but a very big amount when you are a small business owner.

Considering that the small businesses are not buying the space, but renting it and that a small commercial spaces are rented as wide boxes, and that the developer is receiving tax dollars to build this project, and that the community has received no benefit from this project, we are asking the developer to act in good faith and build the wide boxes at no cost. So the small businesses renting spaces at a GWBE station as part of the community benefit package agreement. And I might add that the majority of these small businesses coming in are local businesses.

In the matter of the community space, this is the first time we see a project of this magnitude being built with taxpayers' dollars where no community space is included in the project. We ask for the developer to do the right thing, and give the community the space it deserves at no cost for the life of the GWBE station or 99 years, whatever is longer. We at the New York Women's Chamber or Commerce, a not-for-profit organization located in and serving the Washington Heights community ask that our community be treated with respect and fairness. We ask for the Port Authority and the elected



officials to hold the developer, Tutor Perini, accountable for the benefits due to the Washington Heights community in the matter of the George Washington Bridge Bus Station project. Again, thank you for this opportunity to testify today.

MILDRED ORTEGA: Good afternoon, Chairman Rodriguez and members of the committee. My name is Mildred Ortega. I am the owner of Greg, the Iconic Look and a future tenant of the GWB Plaza. I along with several other small businesses joined the project and will be operating in the GWB Plaza. I am here today. I came here with some of my colleagues to address the committee on behalf of the entire group of small business owners renting space at the GWB Plaza. As a small business owner, we are delighted to hear of the GWB project and the potential benefits it could have in revitalizing the local economy and helping the small businesses thrive while meeting the retail service needs of our own community. As a small business, we recognize the enormous potential that this project represents for the Washington Heights community at large.

While we are excited to be part of this project, we are well aware of the economic challenges

facing small businesses like ours. Some of those challenges are the cost of starting a business including renting and build-out of commercial space. As well as obtaining a fair and favorable lease agreement that will allow for growth, which is why we're here today. As business owners, who have rented commercial space in the past, we have never experienced renting a space where we were financially responsible for building the entire space from the ground up as we are being asked to do so by George Washington Bus Station Development Venture. Previous lenders rented us a WiBox.

We were given a space with walls, floor, ceiling and pipes. The renting of a WiBox lowered the start-up cost, allowing us to have the necessarily cash flow for start-up operation minimizing risk and increasing our possibilities for success. We ask that you put in place economic efforts that will allow small business owners like those of us present here today to succeed. We propose that you, the developer, and rent us the WiBox. And that you assume that natural responsibility for the build-out. We feel that this is a fair request since we are not buying the space,

but rather renting it. If the business did not succeed, the space remains the property of the landlord.

In addition, you have requested for the build-out to be done by union contractors, which is understandable. However, it increased the cost of the build-out, creating a financial hardship for us. Our proposal is not intended to create friction or litigation among the parties involved. But, indeed, to find a solution. We also ask that all negotiations between the landlord, property managers, or other parties involved, and the GWB small business owners be conducted in good faith. And that all these and business agreements are a reflection of the good faith efforts.

We ask that each and all business owners are treated with the same respect and consideration. And that all leases and business agreements contain the same terms and conditions. We have become aware that some of the terms appear to be different in some of the lease agreements. We ask that you rectify this and give the same beneficial terms to all of us in the name of good faith and a fair business environment. Again, we are excited to be part of

such an important project, and look forward to contributing to the economic growth and the recreation of jobs-- Oh, sorry. And the creation of jobs in the community. On behalf of the GWB small business owners, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Well, with that, no doubt that we couldn't come to the best closing of this hearing by having Mildred and Quena. I think that they presented the information very detailed-oriented. Mr. Fernando [sic] I know that you are new in business responsibility. I'm not a lawyer, but listening to many from my whole lawyer team, I think it is a well case that we have made. And I think that this is not about our assumption. This is about fact, and I believe that we can get the things done. But they have to be as what we've all been saying: Good faith from the developer. They should be more to the community, and we would like to count, you know, with the Port Authority as the one that should bring all parties together in this conversation and having a solution. We don't have time to have another meeting going over and over it. Things is clear. From the business perspective the right bus

should be built. They should be host--the developer should hold the small business portfolio, and to be able to operate in a better condition. The 1,600 square feet, the communities space should be a 99-year lease. The station at 178 and Wadsworth, I committed myself, I can put \$1 million to build whatever is a not-for-profit gain. Bring in a new seat [sic] in in, bring a school. Do whatever, but I would like to see something there in that location. And I don't think that you will get from any other places saying someone at the local level not just asking for the Port Authority to develop it to give, but to say, if we can move it in the next couple of days, I can work with the Speaker. I can work with my capital discretionary funding, and I will be committed to put \$1 million to renovate that location 178. The time is running and I know again that you are new in this responsibility. I know that there were so many information, and ideas that we discussed in the past. We trust you. You don't live so far from us. So you live there. You know there is community, and we can with your support also to get these things done. So with that, this committee is adjourned. [gavel]

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

110

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 10, 2015