

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES
Of the
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

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

Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner
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Vision 42 Proposal

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Eric McClure, Executive Director
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Erin Abrams, Esq.
Via Transportation

William Henderson, Executive Director
Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA
and New York City Transit Riders Council

Steven Buckman

Karen Lisowski (sp?0
French Architect for Light Rail

Bob Diamond, Chairman
Brooklyn Historic Railway Association

Bob Gardner (sic)

2 [sound check, pause]

3 [gavel]

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Good morning and
5 welcome to today's hearing of the New York City
6 Council's Transportation Committee. I'm Ydanis
7 Rodriguez, Chair of this committee. I'm joined by my
8 colleagues Council Members Vacca, Crowley and
9 Reynoso. Last month I along with--with the Rudin
10 Center for Transportation at NYU released a report
11 retaining a 20-year plan for transportation in New
12 York City. A major component of the Next Stop Plan
13 is exactly what we come together to discuss today,
14 alleviating the daily struggles of the many places
15 across our city where access to transit is minimal to
16 none assistance, otherwise know as transit deserts.
17 Communities such as Central and Eastern Queens, the
18 Northeast Bronx, part of Southeast Brooklyn, much of
19 Staten Island and other communities across the five
20 boroughs are minimally connected to our transit
21 system with few bus and subway options available to
22 them. This transit desert can have a significant
23 impact on economic and quality of life on residents.
24 Studies have shown a lack of physical mobility
25 impedes social mobility. According to the NYU Rudin

2 Center for Transportation Policy in Management, the
3 average income for the top 59 transit reached
4 neighborhoods is nearly \$80,000 directly
5 contradicting with the next 16 neighborhoods whose
6 average income is just \$46,000. We have an
7 unemployment rate of 11.7% over double the national
8 average. Transportation inequality is the central
9 factor that is impeding many residents of our city
10 from succeeding. In order to truly combat economic
11 inequality and live, the 87--the 179,000 New Yorkers
12 commute more than one hour each way to work two jobs--
13 --to work two jobs and make less than \$35,000 a year.
14 We must dedicate ourselves to providing the resources
15 they need to succeed. Transportation is an essential
16 tool to build the middle-class and ensure its ability
17 in the future. Today's hearing focuses on how we can
18 plan for the coming decades with the goal of
19 connecting transit deserts to our invaluable transit
20 network. And we will hear legislation directly
21 related--related to--to this important end.

22 The first bill under consideration today
23 is Intro 965, which I introduced. It will require
24 the Department of Transportation to study transit
25 deserts across the city. Specifically at areas where

2 they are--where there are no NTS Subways or bus stops
3 within one-third of a mile from where a majority of
4 residents live as determined by the latest U.S.
5 Census. The study will also include areas where a
6 round trip commute for a majority of residents take
7 over three hours. The study will provide suggestions
8 about how best to connect this community, and will be
9 done every five years as a way to measure our
10 progress in improving the quality of life for those
11 communities. Though the city has begun to collect
12 this data with a study being done concerning bus
13 rapid transit, we must ensure that don't just take a
14 snapshot and put it aside. Rather, we must
15 constantly be evaluating and improving resources and
16 prioritize connecting these communities.

17 The next bill, Intro 964, which I also
18 introduced, will require the DOT to explore the
19 potential for light as innovation of transit option.
20 While numerous light rail projects have been
21 proposed, including Vision 42nd, the Brooklyn Queens
22 Waterfront and between Long Island City and Glendale
23 in Queens, this bill will study the cost, feasibility
24 and potential impact of this project and more. We
25 have seen light rail employed as a sound option in

2 other cities including across the river in Jersey
3 City to a positive re-sectioning and are eager to
4 explore this as another tool in the toolbox along
5 with bus rapid transit, ferries and Bike Share, which
6 can increase connectivity in transit deserts.

7 We will also hear two resolutions related
8 to providing more rail-based options for New Yorkers.
9 The first we will hear is a Resolution 903 introduced
10 by myself calling upon the MTA to study the potential
11 to converge on the underutilized rail rights of way
12 within the New York City into passenger rail. We
13 have tracks in many parts of the city like the
14 Rockaway's Beach line that are either used sparingly
15 by freight or have been abandoned altogether. The
16 potential in--the potential in this access is
17 monumental as many of these rails sit in areas with
18 minimal transit access. Additionally, the cost-
19 savings on developing new passenger services to
20 transit desert when compared to the cost of building
21 new subway lines, a difficult option, which includes
22 land acquisition and numerous community concerns of
23 the construction.

24 Finally, Resolution 670 introduced by
25 colleague Council Member Miller would take an

2 innovative and visual approach to integrating out
3 subway system with community--commuter rail within
4 New York City at a comparable price. This resolution
5 calls upon the MTA to allow passengers or commuter
6 rail including the Metro North and Long Island
7 Railroad to pay the price of a Metro Card fare if
8 commuting within the five boroughs. This will
9 drastically alleviate concerns about rising
10 congestion along their 4, 5, 6 and 7 Subway lines as
11 residents could instead take the Long Island Railroad
12 from Willets Point of Flushing into Penn Station or
13 the Metro North from Woodlawn in the Bronx to Grand
14 Central faster. The MTA has a similar initiative to
15 the--to their City Tickets program, but this idea
16 will increase it's avail--its available--its
17 availability and lower the price to be more visible
18 to a greater number of New Yorkers.

19 With this set of bills, we are eager to
20 move our city in a direction that is inclusive and
21 comprehensive tapping into unrealized potential and
22 envisioning a more accessible and connecting urban
23 center. By increasing transit, we can raise income
24 levels, increase economic activities, make affordable
25 housing developments more attractive to those looking

2 to build and increase safety and efficiency through
3 lowering resident's reliance on cars. This committee
4 is eager to hear from the Administration and our
5 number of partners about the full concerns and ideas
6 to achieve these honorable goals. Before we begin I
7 would like to thank my committee staff Counsel Kelly
8 Taylor, Policy Analysts Jonathan Masserano, Gafar
9 Zaaloff, and Rosa Murphy as well as my Chief of Staff
10 Carmen de la Rosa and my Communication and
11 Legislative Director Lucas Acosta who today is
12 probably is the last hearing since now he's joining
13 Mira, Turner, Consor & Fenser (sic) and good luck to
14 Lucas, and thank you for all his work. Now I offer
15 Council Member Miller an opportunity to speak on Reso
16 670.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Good morning and
18 thank you so much Chairman Rodriguez. Thank you for
19 your leadership, and calling this essential hearing
20 on matters of transportation deserts throughout the
21 city. So allow me to just cut directly to the heart
22 of the issues. Over the past years, we've heard from
23 agencies and special interest alike regarding the
24 solutions to these problems that plague communities
25 throughout the city, those who are stranded in these

2 co-called transportation deserts. We've heard--we've
3 been told of solutions of additional bike lanes and
4 we've been told about ferries and we've been
5 suggested that the answer is commuter vans, and I
6 would suggest that these are not serious solutions to
7 these problems in the transportation deserts. They
8 are solutions, part of a holistic solution, but they
9 are not--certainly not the answer to the whole--these
10 transportation deserts. So New Yorkers on average
11 travel 6 hours and 20 minutes each week in transit,
12 which is the largest commute of any large city in the
13 nation. For residents of Southeast Queens commuting
14 to the city's main business district, that figure
15 almost doubles, more than doubles to 15 hours per
16 week. This is known as an extreme commute by census
17 standards. My colleagues in the North Bronx,
18 Rockaway, the South Shore of Staten Island among
19 others share a similar burden of those relegated
20 transportation deserts in New York City. It is a
21 tale of two cities for sure in much that if we live
22 on one end of the city, there is pretty much no good
23 way to get to the other end. We're gathered here
24 today to address these issues. Our communities
25 deserve a fair share of transportation resources and

2 quite frankly the government has an obligation to
3 provide mass transit equitably throughout the city.
4 Extreme commutes are hurting our health. They are
5 tied to increased depression and anxiety risks.
6 Extreme commutes are hurting our wallets. They are
7 reducing our productivity and increasing costs, and
8 keeping development away from our communities.
9 Extreme commutes are hurting families. They are
10 separating mothers from daughters, and keeping
11 fathers from sons. I thank Chairman Rodriguez from
12 calling this hearing today. It is crucial--such a
13 crucial topic. For this reason, I am proud to
14 sponsor Reso 670 calling on the MTA to allow riders
15 traveling within city limits to pay a fare for
16 commuter rails equal to that of the New York City
17 Transit subways and buses, and to provide a free
18 transfer just as they do for other modes of
19 transportation. This will increase access to more
20 than 40 Long Island Railroad and Metro North Station
21 throughout Manhattan, Bronx and Queens, and a free
22 transfer would promote connectivity with the MTA
23 system. These actions will reduce commute time a
24 top--in top business districts throughout the city by
25 up to 7-1/2 hours a week. And you cannot quantify

2 the value of getting back 5 to 10 hours per person to
3 their families, to their communities and to the city.
4 We are asking for--we are not asking for a \$2 billion
5 new subway we are--that would--perhaps would cost
6 more and require generations of labor. We are merely
7 asking that the MTA, which of its own accounting says
8 that it would cost an investment of \$70 million per
9 year. They create equitable transportation access
10 for communities throughout the city, \$70 million, and
11 this could be done over night. With that, I am
12 looking forward to this hearing today, and I want to
13 again thank the Chair for his responsiveness--for his
14 responsiveness and his leadership on this issue of
15 transportation deserts throughout the city. SO thank
16 you, Mr. Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,
18 Council Member Miller, and I would like to say that
19 the Administration with the leadership of Mayor de
20 Blasio and the DOT Commissioner have been a great
21 partner and--and when it comes to identifying an idea
22 on how to improve transportation especially making
23 transportation safer and more efficient in the city,
24 and whatever idea we have this table I know that
25 we're going to be working very close with the

2 leadership of the Mayor, the Speaker Melissa Mark-
3 Viverito and the DOT Commissioner. Now, we will call
4 the Commissioner Polly Trottenberg to come and
5 testify, and--and now I ask our Committee counsel to
6 administer the affirmation, and then we will hear
7 from the DOT.

8 LEGAL COUNSEL: Would you please raise
9 your right hands. Do you affirm to tell the truth,
10 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your
11 testimony before the committee today, and to respond
12 honestly to Council Member questions?

13 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: [off mic]
14 Yes.

15 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

16 [pause, background noise]

17 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Ready.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: You may begin.

19 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Okay. Good

20 morning Chairman Rodriguez and members of the
21 Transportation Committee. I'm Polly Trottenberg,
22 Commissioner of the New York City Department of
23 Transportation. I'm joined today by Assistant
24 Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community
25 Affairs Jeff Lynch, and Senior Director of Transit

2 Development at DOT Eric Beaton. Thank you for
3 inviting us to testify today on behalf of the de
4 Blasio Administration on the important issue of
5 providing better transportation options in New York's
6 underserved area, the so-called transit deserts. We
7 share this committee's strong desire to ensure that
8 New Yorkers at every income level in every
9 neighborhood have access to safe, efficient, and
10 affordable transportation choices. And Mr. Chairman,
11 we thank you for your vision and leadership on this
12 important issue.

13 In April, Mayor de Blasio released One
14 New York, which identified and analyzed a list of
15 priority co--priority communities where transit
16 access is comparatively poor, and where residents
17 have median incomes below the citywide average. A
18 few examples of these neighborhoods include Hunts
19 Point in the Bronx, Glendale and Queens, East
20 Flatbush in Brooklyn, and Mariner's Harbor on Staten
21 Island. These are neighborhoods where low-income
22 residents have long commutes and difficulty accessing
23 a broad range of employment opportunities. One New
24 York laid out a range of strategies from Select Bus
25 Services expansion to potential subway extensions to

2 address transportation needs in these underserved
3 areas. We are now aggressively implementing these
4 strategies, working closely with local communities
5 and in partnership with many of you on the Council.
6 We're continuing to expand Select Bus Services, which
7 now includes eight routes throughout the five
8 boroughs. With SBS our goal is to extend the reach
9 of the transit network, not to duplicate existing
10 rail lines. This is true with the first SBS route on
11 Fordham Road and Pellham Parkway, connecting across
12 the Bronx for 48,000 daily riders. It will be true
13 for the city's next upcoming SBS route connecting the
14 Bronx to Flushing and Jamaica, Queens. This upcoming
15 Bronx-Flushing-Jamaica SBS line will improve service
16 for over 42,000 daily riders by reducing their
17 commute times and better connecting them to the 2, 5,
18 6, 7 EFJ and Z Subway lines. We're also working to
19 implement SBS on the B46 route on Utica Avenue in the
20 Flatlands Neighborhood of Brooklyn. The B46 carries
21 49,000 daily riders on the North/South Connection to
22 employment hubs and to the subway system. Currently,
23 a resident of Flatlands can only access about 70,000
24 jobs in 45-minute transit trip compared to a
25 neighborhood like Long Island City where residents

2 can access 2.3 million jobs within a comparable
3 commuting time. SBS will make an enormous difference
4 to people's livelihood and quality of life in the
5 Flatlands neighborhood. The de Blasio Administration
6 is also providing a new affordable way to travel
7 between waterfront communities throughout New York
8 City from the Rockaways to Soundview with citywide
9 ferry service set to launch in 2017. Led by EDC, the
10 service will include five new ferry routes in
11 addition to the existing East River Ferry Service for
12 a comparable fare to the subway of \$2.75. When the
13 citywide ferry service is fully operational in 2018,
14 it will carry an estimated 4.6 million trips per
15 year. In addition to public transit, cycling is an
16 inexpensive, efficient way to connect New Yorkers to
17 their closest subway stop or other destinations. The
18 city now boasts a bike network of over 1,000 miles
19 that continues to grow making cycling safer and more
20 convenient throughout the city. In Carnarsie we're
21 extending the protected bike path from Carnarsie
22 Circle to Flatlands Avenue, which will safely connect
23 residents to Carnarsie Pier and the surrounding
24 neighborhood. Our Citibike system is also filling
25 gaps in the transit network, and will expand to even

2 more neighborhoods this coming spring including
3 Harlem and Red Hook in Brooklyn.

4 The City has also made an unprecedented
5 commitment of \$2.5 billion to the MTA's current Five-
6 Year Capital Plan to ensure the continued safety and
7 good repair of our subway and bus system, which now
8 regularly carries well over eight million riders
9 daily. That capital plan also includes funding for
10 key system expansions including the second phase of
11 the Second Avenue Subway bringing Metro North to Penn
12 Station with four new Bronx stations in Hunts Point,
13 Parkchester, Morris Park and Co-Op City, and the
14 environmental work for the State Island North Shore
15 BRT. As part of its contribution, the city was also
16 able to secure some of the transit priorities
17 outright in One New York. This includes over \$300
18 million for projects that support our affordable
19 housing and economic development strategy, including
20 the Livonia Avenue, Junius Street Station Connector
21 in Brownsville, and critical subway stations access
22 improvements throughout the city as well as studies
23 on extending the Eastern Parkway Line south along
24 Utica Avenue, and a bus facility in Flushing, Queens.
25 But it is clear that even as both the city and the

2 state have made unprecedented commitments to
3 investing in the city's transportation network, our
4 needs continue to grow. The city now boasts its
5 larger pop--its largest population ever, 8.5 million,
6 and our subway ridership is setting new records each
7 year with over 1.7 billion rides in 2014. Our
8 transportation system is bursting at the seams.
9 Meanwhile, due to resource constraints at all level
10 of government, especially at the federal level, we've
11 seen only modest efforts to expand the system in the
12 last few decades. Before the Hudson Yard Station was
13 added to the Number 7 line this September, New York
14 City had not seen a new subway station in 25 years,
15 and the Hudson Yards project took 13 years to
16 complete and cost \$2.4 billion. Given this reality,
17 the challenge we face at this moment is how do we
18 best serve the transportation needs of our city
19 equitably and efficiently given today's fiscal
20 realities. In transit, there's a spectrum of options
21 that scale up rapidly in terms of cost and complexity
22 starting with regular bus service and then onto bus
23 rapid transit, streetcars, light rail and finally
24 grade separated subway or commuter rail. There is no
25 one size fits all for any given corridor. Instead,

2 we should choose the mode that makes the most sense
3 for each community and is technically and
4 economically feasible. Any new mode also needs to fit
5 in with and complement the rest of our transit
6 system. As such, DOT would like to suggest that the
7 two bills that are the topic of today's hearing Intro
8 965 relating to transit deserts and Intro 964
9 relating to the feasibility of light rail be
10 integrated with the upcoming BRT study, which the
11 Council Mandated earlier this year. Council Member
12 Lander championed this bill, and the resulting plan
13 will consider areas of the city in need of additional
14 rapid transit options, transit deserts, strategies
15 for serving growing neighborhoods and integration
16 with current transit roads. There is significant
17 overlap in the DRT study and the two studies proposed
18 today. Each study requires DOT to observe areas in
19 the city poorly served by public transit and to offer
20 recommendations to improve transportation options.
21 Therefore, we think a comprehensive citywide study
22 examining the best mode for each area of the city
23 will be the most effective way to analyze the problem
24 of transportation desert, and propose solutions. And
25 we hope we can work with you, Mr. Chairman and the

2 members of the committee and the Council to craft an
3 integrated approach that will work for us all.

4 Let me now return--let me now turn to
5 Resolution 670, Council Member Miller's proposal to
6 expand the City Ticket program to allow New York City
7 residents to pay lower fares to access to commuter
8 railroads. This proposal could dramatically improve
9 commute times and lower transportation costs for New
10 Yorkers in underserved areas. Many parts of the city
11 with the longest commutes into Manhattan like Eastern
12 Queens and the Northern Bronx have commuter railroads
13 running through them. However, lower-income city
14 residents often choose express bus or far away subway
15 service to the very high ticket prices for the Long
16 Island Railroad and Metro North. To give an example,
17 a trip from Rosedale in Queens to Midtown takes 83
18 minutes on an express bus, but only 32 minutes on the
19 Long Island Railroad. But those Long Island Railroad
20 trips are discouraged by a \$10 fare compared to \$6.50
21 for an express bus or \$2.75 for the local bus and
22 subway. To meet the needs of those residents, the de
23 Blasio Administration strongly supports expanding
24 City Ticket. But we do recognize that the MTA has
25 indicated an expansion that could entail significant

2 revenue loss. As a result, the City and the MTA have
3 agreed to explore in the coming months, the
4 possibility of expanding City Ticket to better serve
5 New York residents while ensuring that it is also
6 fiscally and operationally feasible for the MTA. And
7 we look forward to working with Council Member Miller
8 and other stakeholders as well to make sure that we
9 can come up with a City Ticket plan that's going to
10 work well for underserved New Yorkers.

11 In conclusion, on behalf of the de Blasio
12 Administration I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman and
13 members of the Committee for your leadership and
14 steadfast commitment to our shared goal of ensuring
15 all New Yorkers have access to safe, affordable and
16 efficient transportation choices that connect them to
17 jobs, education and opportunity. In doing so,
18 together we will help create a more equitable city
19 for all. Thank you and I'm happy to take your
20 questions.

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,
22 Commissioner and thank you for your leadership at
23 the--at the agency. When you became the Commissioner
24 of DOT, did you find a plan from the previous
25

2 administration on how to address the improving of
3 transportation in their search area?

4 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well, I think
5 the previously administration certainly got the SBS
6 program rolling and got many of the routes up in the
7 city, and I think just as the de Blasio
8 Administration is doing, they had--they had planned
9 to consider, you know, the continued expansion of
10 SBS. And they were able to do the extension of the
11 Number 7 Line, but as I've--I've indicated in my
12 testimony I think the--the struggle the last
13 administration had and--and we face it today, there
14 is also certainly a resource question. And, you
15 know, as we are in the position now of having the
16 next Capital Plan go up to Albany and having that
17 debate about what kind of resources we need for the
18 MTA, I think that gives us a fresh opportunity to
19 really tackle that question.

20 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: But, as you know,
21 if we look at the MTA as a role model--by the way
22 they were invited to be here today, and even though
23 there are two resolutions addressing the MTA, they
24 refused not to come. I hope that in the near future,
25 they should be more responsible, and understand that

2 the Council has a right to oversight the MTA, and we
3 contribute so much to the MTA for them not to come to
4 the hearing today. But, when we look at the MTA, the
5 MTA, you know, the big project that the MTA first go
6 through the study. You know, and again sometimes you
7 do the study for the project, that probably the
8 future generation will be the one seeing it. So, my
9 thing is I believe that we need to have a plan at
10 least a study understanding that that information how
11 much it takes. I mean even if we're saying that in
12 five years we a looking to address it and make this
13 improvement, knowing that that program will take ten
14 years to continue adding more buses, more ferry
15 transportation, more subways. So, yes, the previous,
16 you know, we were seeing some SBS. But my question
17 is does the city--did you inherit a plan at DOT where
18 you can say there's a fact that there's a million New
19 Yorkers who live in the five borough, who live in a
20 transportation desert that they are not connected
21 with mass transportation. And we as a city has a
22 plan, a comprehensive plan on how to address it for
23 the next 10 or 20 years?

24 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I--I think
25 we've--the de Blasio Administration has started with

2 One New York where I think we laid out a lot of the
3 principles that--that you're getting at today, but
4 look, I think at DOT we look forward to working with
5 you all to create what I think you have in mind.

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No, I know that
7 you--I know, I--I give credit, and I know that you
8 have it right now. My question is did you inherit a
9 plan when you became the Commission? Is there a true
10 final plan in DOT that you can say there's a plan
11 there that I know that I can look at it, that I can
12 change it if I want it, but the city has a 10 or 20-
13 year plan on how to address the lack of
14 transportation to one million New Yorkers that they
15 are not connected with ferry, buses, bicycles, or
16 train?

17 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Yeah, I--I
18 would say that I think the--the, you know, the
19 Bloomberg Administration's previous iteration of One
20 New York, which is PlaNYC had some of that. But I
21 don't think we have in hand right now what you're
22 asking about, Mr. Chairman, which is basically the
23 com, you know, the comprehensive blueprint for New
24 York City for the next 30 years particularly tackling
25 the transit desert question. Although I think again,

2 PlaNYC and One New York certainly both have a lot of
3 both elements.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Correct. And
5 gain, that's the direction that I want to go in, and
6 I know that I am optimistic that we will get there
7 because I know that the Mayor and yourself and the
8 Speaker and other we are so committed to work with
9 the leadership of the Council(sic) in Flushing,
10 Queens and Brooklyn who are so committed to improve
11 transportation. So far, what are the many obstacles
12 that you have found in many studies that or that
13 information that you have been able to analyze when
14 it comes to addressing the connectivity of mass
15 transportation to those areas that are so isolated,
16 and it takes so long for them to be able to come to
17 an account. (sic)

18 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I'm I'll give
19 you an example of one that was--that--that my agency
20 previously did, and I think it's the type of in-depth
21 study that we would want to do in some parts of the
22 city. We looked, for example, at connecting Red Hook
23 to Downtown Brooklyn via the RTD and streetcar, and
24 we looked at it in great detail. And what we
25 discovered, and I think that we'll be discovering

2 some of that in the study we're envisioning here,
3 thinks like light rail can or streetcars can bring
4 tremendous benefits. But you often have to look very
5 carefully at the technical feasibility. We have some
6 challenges in New York where we have narrow streets.
7 We have a lot of infrastructure on our streets, and
8 looking at costs and determining, you know, what is
9 going to be the most cost effective and sensible
10 solution given the, you know, given the physical
11 realities we face at the moment.

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Great. I know my
13 colleagues has other questions. I'm going to be
14 calling on them, and then we can get back on other
15 questions. Council Member Miller.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Good morning,
17 Commissioner. Thank you again for coming out, and I
18 am delighted to see that you are in support of 670,
19 and I personally think that is a great idea. We've
20 had conversations personally as well as the committee
21 here, and we were trying to look at real solutions
22 that did not require decades of labor and--and--
23 around infrastructure and--and billions in capital
24 dollars. So we want to be more efficient in the uses
25 of our current resources, and I think that certainly

2 that is a real way to go about it, but one of the
3 things that was mentioned here also, and I know that
4 we--it was mentioned in testimony, not a bill here
5 today, but that is the Express Bus Services. And I
6 do recognize that there is a--a--a, um, price
7 associated with the subsidies in that, but we have to
8 look at areas where the ridership could really
9 support that and does support that. And--and I think
10 one of the things that we talked about, and I'd like
11 to get your opinion on how we could be more
12 efficient in using those services when two-thirds of
13 the Express Bus Service don't go beyond 23rd Street.
14 And the majority of the ridership that are using
15 those business districts are either in Downtown
16 Brooklyn or 23rd Street. And so, where--like we can
17 get into the city from Rosedale, and, um, down here
18 in a little more than an hour and 15 minutes, which
19 sounds great.

20 COMMISSIONER TROTTENBERG: [interposing]
21 It's a long trip.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: About 58 minutes
23 will get us into the city, but it is--they were
24 putting us onto another subway. So have we reviewed
25 the capacity to come down--and this is also from--

2 coming down from Northern Bronx and--and Co-Op Cities
3 and places like that as well that come in and they
4 travel well beyond an hour to get into the city, and
5 then they have to get off and--and take a train.
6 Have we looked at a more efficient use or rerouting
7 these buses considering that most of the buses are
8 running on old--old trolley line routes. Or, in
9 Queens they have the old North Shore routes as well
10 that we have not planned new bus routes in probably
11 half a century. So, is this something that we have
12 considered or that we will be able to--that you are
13 taking a look at in the future?

14 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Yes, and I
15 think one thing I would just want to mention is I
16 think one of the things that the city was able to get
17 in exchange again for a really unprecedented new
18 commitment of resources to the MTA is an agreement
19 from the MTA that we could work more closely with
20 them, that we would have more input on projects and
21 services that happen within the city borders. And
22 so--and I think the MTA is making good on that word.
23 And again, one of the first things that they have
24 agreed to do is sit down and really talk to us in
25 earnest about City Ticket, and what we might do. So

2 I think we're happy to bring to them--I know you and
3 I have discussed some of these bus questions. So I
4 think their ears are open, and we certainly want to
5 work with you and bring some of these issues to them
6 and get some real good analysis. And think they're
7 going to be good partners on some of this.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I hope so. I, you
9 know, I--I--I think I've spend about three decades in
10 that agency, and they've come a long way, and we
11 certainly have a long way to go. And I know during
12 the '90s and 2000s and we were on the whole
13 intermodal transportation, and it seems that we have
14 gotten away from that connectivity throughout the
15 region, and are--have been looking at specific areas,
16 emerging communities that we have left. For
17 instance, there has been major investment in the
18 extension of the Number 7. Through the MTA's own
19 admission we have about 6,000 folks using that
20 additional station per day, and we have about far
21 more than--hundreds of thousands of--of commuters
22 that could gain access to some of the--this
23 legislation--by this legislation here. So I would
24 hope that we put the same emphasis on that. I think
25 that aside from addressing the, um, the

2 transportation deserts, which is why we are here
3 today, we wanted to make sure that the services are
4 being provided equitably. And I think right now
5 they--they are not, um, and I don't want to have you
6 have to justify the MTA's budget or their reason for
7 not being on board here. But certainly, I think it's
8 something that collectively considering the majority
9 of the resources and revenue are generated right here
10 in this city. It's certainly something that we can
11 address collectively as well as by their own
12 admission they will be generating up to 50% new
13 capacity through the Penn Access and the East Side
14 Access, and if you're generating new capacity,
15 certainly the people right here in the city who's
16 paying for it should be able to access it so--

17 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Yes--No, I--I-
18 -look, I will just say again, Council Member Miller,
19 in the de Blasio Administration we very much share
20 your desire to work with the MTA, and now, frankly,
21 you know, exert some of the pressure that I think we
22 can given the resources we're not committing. To see
23 that they're equitably serving the parts of the city
24 that have traditionally been so underserved. That is
25 very high on our agenda.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you,
3 Chairman.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [off mic] I like
5 [on mic] to welcome also Assembly Member Philip
6 Goldfeder and also the great national leader in
7 transportation and also Congressman Nadler who also
8 later on they also will testify after we hear from
9 the DOT, but thank you for being here. Council
10 Member Vacca, and I will put the clock on five
11 minutes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Thank you, Mr.
13 Chair and I, too, wanted to comment on the Intros
14 before us today. I don't know if light rail is an
15 option because of connections that will be needed
16 from the light rail to mass transit. And many of
17 those concerns I'm sure will be part of a study. My
18 interest is in getting people to the core city
19 quicker from areas like mine. Most people in my
20 district have to take a car to the train, and they--
21 when they get on the train it's one hour. I'm a
22 straphanger. It took me one hour to get here today
23 from train to train--train stop to Brooklyn Bridge
24 Station, and something must be done. I do think that
25 ferry service represents a way to address many of

2 these issues. We have a vast unutilized waterfront
3 in the Bronx, and I'm very disappointed in EDC
4 because they have basically over the course of
5 several years now left the Bronx out of ferry
6 discussions. We are slated to get one stop in the
7 entire borough in Soundview while other boroughs, who
8 have excellent access to Manhattan who are in the--in
9 the core transportation hub of Manhattan in Brooklyn
10 and Manhattan have gotten ferry service. So we're
11 getting one stop in the entire borough. So the
12 waterfront we have in the Bronx is vastly unused, and
13 that one stop in the borough will be tugboat like.
14 It's going to not meet the needs at all. It's going
15 to be like providing a band--a band-aid on a serious
16 wound, and it's totally unacceptable. I also support
17 the SBS, and what you've done with SBS, and we have
18 to do more. I think that's proven very successful.
19 But lastly, I wanted to state that express buses have
20 to be express buses. They are not. They are non-
21 express buses. They sit in the same traffic as
22 everyone else. Yet, they want us to pay more for the
23 express bus, but you sit in the same mess if you come
24 from the outer boroughs. So my question is express
25 buses were supposed to be an option for people. Yet,

2 for many people they're not because of this nightmare
3 that they sit in, which is the same nightmare that a
4 driver would sit in if he ever chose to drove--to
5 drive to Manhattan. So what can we do, or what are
6 we doing soon because this has been on the table for
7 a long time. What are we doing soon to get express
8 buses seriously part of the transportation network
9 and as an option for people to leave their cars at
10 home, and come to work?

11 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I have to say
12 I'm--I'm very familiar with a commuter from your
13 neighborhood, and he's given me a lot of his own
14 views on the matter, and it's a very good question.
15 And look, we do spend a lot of time, Eric and his
16 team, talking to the MTA about what we can do to
17 improve bus service. And one of the things we did
18 for example this summer when we announced that we
19 were closing part of Central Park permanently to
20 regular vehicles we also announced that we were
21 basically clearing a bus lane much further north of
22 5th Avenue, which should help particularly some of
23 the express buses that come from the Bronx. We're
24 also continuing to work with the MTA on what's called
25 Transit Signal Prioritization, which is actually

2 letting the buses when they come get through the
3 signals quicker. I mean those are the two main
4 things we can do to speed up buses, and we are
5 working on that aggressively. I'm not going to--I'm
6 not going to pretend that it's not a big challenge.
7 It certainly is.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: What are you doing
9 on 5th Avenue? Go into that. When--when is that
10 happening or how is that.

11 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I'll let Eric
12 say what's happening.

13 ERIC BEATON: Sure so this past summer I
14 think at the--the first week of September, we
15 extended the bus lane, which had previously began at
16 86th Street. It was extended to start at 110th
17 Street instead. So adding over a mile of additional
18 bus lane in front of some areas that were very
19 heavily congested in front of Mount Sinai Hospital
20 where there was a lot of double parking, and other
21 things going on. So that's a very new thing that
22 just went in. We're going to do some evaluation and
23 see how much it helped, but we think particularly in
24 the morning when all the express buses are coming in,
25 that it will have made a difference there.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: But there were
3 plans to do more in Midtown. We--we had discussions
4 with DOT even prior to your coming, Commissioner,
5 about doing more in Midtown to get these express
6 buses through the city, establishing lanes. And I--I
7 don't know where those discussions ever went?

8 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Eric.

9 ERIC BEATON: Yeah, so it's--it's
10 definitely something that we're looking at. You know
11 that 5th Avenue particularly south of 59th or 6th
12 Street there is a bus lane there, but it's not
13 perhaps as effective as it could be because there are
14 so many buses that need to stop there. Traffic in
15 Midtown is also a real challenge, and we're trying to
16 figure out what we can do that [bell] that sort of
17 balances everything happening there.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Well, we have to--
19 I'm sorry, we have to prioritize this, and we have to
20 move quickly on this because this has been discussed
21 for years, and I hope it's not one of those
22 discussions that just goes on and on. People in my
23 district and people in the Bronx are asking for
24 relief. This is an unbearable situation, and it--
25 we'll--we--we--we--we really need help on this--on

2 this item. We have to address transportation
3 deserts, and I'm glad that there's this--there is
4 discussion, but now that we're having this
5 discussion, we can't wait for long-term plans. We
6 have to do what we can do now, and I think that this
7 is an option that we should proceed on as soon as we
8 can. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council Member
10 Richards.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Good morning,
12 Commissioner, and thank you Chairman and Council
13 Member Miller. I was rushing here and just getting
14 off the LI double RR two days in a row, and the \$50,
15 you know, out of my pocket. Um, \$25 or nearly \$26
16 will come out today. Um, so I wanted to start off
17 obviously with the--and I want to commend Council
18 Member for this because we, you know, our districts
19 outside of Staten Island I think and no offense to
20 anyone else--you know where to post a charge for--you
21 know what you would consider a transportation desert.
22 So I wanted to touch base on city tickets really
23 quick, and wanted to bring something to your
24 attention that we've been fighting the MTA on for--I
25 mean I don't want to show my age, but over a decade

2 now in the Rockaways. So City Tickets exist in every
3 part of New York City except one place in the world
4 in New York City taxpayers, and that is Far Rockaway,
5 and I'm interested in knowing if--if you are having
6 conversations with them in particular on this issue.
7 And their argument is always that we're--we're
8 worried that individuals from Nassau County are going
9 to ride over to Far Rockaway and get on the train.
10 To be quite frank, that's happening all over the city
11 in the first place. Wherever--if you're on the
12 border of Long Island whether it's Rosedale and, of
13 course, I don't want Rosedale snatched from City
14 Tickets. But any other place in St. Albans, as well
15 people are driving in their cars and parking and
16 getting on the train and using City Tickets. So I'm
17 interested to know if you're having conversations
18 with them on this topic.

19 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: We--we have.
20 We are aware of this issue with the Rockaways, and
21 City Ticket and the MTA has certainly acknowledged
22 it's a problem. I mean I think the issue in general
23 and I think again we're going to have to work through
24 this with them. It's they do have a concern, and I
25 don't know enough to know how--how--how, you know,

2 how real it is that right--that Long Island residents
3 are going to come to the city and take advantage of
4 something like this. I think--I'm sure we can find
5 ways to address their concerns, and--and come up with
6 a solution, and we want to do something overall, but
7 I think right away we certainly want to see what we
8 can do to fix that--that Rockaways.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: So we're going
10 to fix that one very fast?

11 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well, we're
12 going to try. Again, I have to work with the MTA on
13 it. It's not--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: [interposing]
15 Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: --in our
17 control. But again and I--I certainly am hoping you
18 all will be part of those discussions with us, and
19 help make the case. But this one they're certainly
20 aware of, and acknowledge, you know, what there would
21 be a lot of frustration in it.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay, and then
23 I'm very--obviously very happy about the Tiger Grant
24 that's coming into the east end portion of the
25 Rockaways. I think that's going to be very helpful

2 in basically telling the story that all of us live in
3 and know, and I understand. I wanted to know where
4 we're at on Bus Rapid Transit in particular and on
5 its expansion in particular from the western end of
6 the peninsula towards the east end, and has the MTA
7 sort of commented? I know they were doing a study
8 and wanted to know if in particular you are getting
9 close to bringing the bus line down a little bit
10 more.

11 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Yeah. I'm
12 actually--I'm going to turn this one over to Eric for
13 the latest details.

14 ERIC BEATON: Sure, and we've certainly
15 heard--had some very good conversations with you and
16 with other stakeholders in the Rockaways about
17 particularly extending the Q52 Rail farther to the
18 east to serve communities that aren't well served,
19 and the status is that the MTA is still looking at
20 that. I think we all agree that there is a--a need
21 there, and it's more about trying to figure out what
22 the--what the right combination of things we can do
23 in the fiscal environment is possible. So I think
24 we've heard loud and clear that it's an issue. I
25 think we agree there's something real there, and

2 we're working with the MTA to try to come up with a
3 plan.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: So also and I
5 want you to take a look at something else, too, and I
6 know JFK is a major, obviously, economic engine for
7 our communities in particular, and it's very
8 difficult to get there. I mean from the Rockaways
9 you would have to take the bus for like an hour and
10 transfer somewhere else. And even within the
11 outskirts of Southeast Queens whether you're in St.
12 Albans, whether you're in my district, we should be
13 figuring a way to make sure that the bus lines over
14 there are making it easier to get into JFK because
15 that is a major employer in the city. So I'm not
16 sure if there's some sort of culmination--culmination
17 of BRT routes or some creative things we can do to
18 link residents in transportation with the airport,
19 which would create a better opportunity for residents
20 in terms of jobs and connectivity.

21 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I want--I
22 definitely want Eric to speak to that one because it
23 has been a big area of focus for us to try and work
24 with both the MTA and the Port Authority to see what
25

2 we can do to improve bus connections for both the
3 airports. But I know Eric has been working on that.

4 ERIC BEATON: Right. So again it
5 involves [bell] an agency that we need to work with
6 as a partner at the Port Authority, and we've done a
7 lot of work at La Guardia Airport, and we've brought
8 new services there, and I think we've found some ways
9 that they--that the Port Authority has been able to
10 come to the table at that airport. I think, you
11 know, we've started to have some of those
12 conversations at JFK, and you know, the transit
13 situation particularly on the bus side is much less
14 good. All of the buses go to sort of a central point
15 where--where there isn't even active--active
16 terminals. So we--we really need to engage with them
17 on both how to serve the terminals and how to serve
18 the cargo areas where so much of that employment
19 happens. So it's sort of that three party. It's us
20 but it's really the MTA and the Port Authority and
21 trying to get them to do the right thing.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: All righty,
23 well, thank you so much. I look forward to
24 continuing these conversations and, um, I want to

2 thank the Chairman and Council Member Miller who's
3 been phenomenal on these issues as well. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Have--have any
5 project being discussed related to the light rail?
6 As you know, there have been some ideas or vision for
7 accessing the Brooklyn Waterfront Plan. Have DOT
8 conduct any study so far or shown any interest to it?

9 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well, as I
10 mentioned, we had done a few years ago a study
11 looking particularly at connecting Red Hook to
12 Downtown Brooklyn, and there is certainly--as you
13 know, there's been a lot of discussion around the
14 city about what could be done to have a greater
15 connection along the Brooklyn-Queens Waterfront.
16 We've only studied that Red Hook to Downtown Brooklyn
17 pieced of it so far, but there's certainly been a lot
18 of discussion about looking at other parts of the--of
19 the East River Waterfront.

20 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Great. Council
21 Member Crowley.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Well, thank you
23 to Chair [bell] Rodriguez. Good morning Commissioner
24 and the Department of Transportation folks here
25 today. I live in a transportation desert, but I

2 touch water that touches Manhattan. I have Newtown
3 Creek in my district, and I am Western Queens. When
4 you look at how close I am to the core of the city,
5 you wouldn't believe that it takes many of my
6 residents well over an hour on public transportation
7 to get to work. And there's a growing industry in
8 Queens and Brooklyn of jobs, and that's good for my
9 constituents because it does decrease the amount of
10 the time that they're traveling to work, but still
11 even just getting a mile or two you could do better
12 walking. Um, because our buses are needed to get to
13 the train, to get in and around my parts of Queens
14 and into the outer boroughs. And the buses or most
15 of my busy corridors cannot have the right-of-way
16 because they're so narrow. It's only one lane, and
17 I've got like three bus lines on these narrow
18 streets. It takes 20 minutes to move a mile or more.
19 It's really frustrating. You need 20 minutes to
20 just move a couple of blocks. Yet, I have the right-
21 of-way in my district that could allow for commuters
22 to get quickly into the core of the city if it was
23 just tacked. I have the Long Island Railroad, which
24 has a line that runs through--right through my
25 district. It runs from Jamaica to Long Island City

2 and could possibly go into Manhattan. It could take
3 constituents of mine from Long Island City in five
4 minutes and possibly Manhattan in under 20. People
5 who live in Forest Hills are able to take the Long
6 Island Railroad, and they're able to get quickly into
7 Manhattan in under 20 minutes. But they also have
8 the MTA there. So they're lucky that they have the
9 E-Train, and the E-Train is the most utilized line
10 after the Lexington Avenue line--the Lexington Avenue
11 Line. When we look at all the lines in Queens, too,
12 we see that whether it was the 7-Train or the E-Train
13 at rush hour forget about getting on that platform
14 and into that train in a way that you're not getting
15 pushed around because they're just isn't enough room.
16 We don't have enough capacity to move the growing
17 people in Queens into the City. We're the fastest
18 growing borough in the city, and it looks like we're
19 the fastest growing borough in the state as well.
20 And more and more people are moving here congesting
21 our streets even further, and because of the cheap
22 cost of gas, most of--and the long commute times,
23 many more people are just taking cars instead of the
24 bus to get to the train. So I have this Long Island
25 Railroad line, and I proposed in the summer through

2 an ad that I did in a local Queens newspaper and it--
3 it's gained some attention or attraction. Why can't
4 we just use this line that is pretty much in active?
5 It's only used for freight trains for a few hours,
6 and I would really like to see people tap that line
7 as well as other Long Island Railroad lines. It
8 seems as if the railroad just uses Queens as a door
9 mat on its way into Manhattan. And all of our
10 constituents in Queens that have these lines next to
11 them, either we don't have access to them, or it's
12 too expensive to access these lines, and that makes it
13 cost-prohibitive. What--what could we do to work
14 with the MTA, as you sit on the MTA, to make those
15 railroad lines fairer to the people who have to live
16 in and around them?

17 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well, I think
18 certainly it's--it's a two-pronged approach and I
19 think as Council Member Miller has pointed out,
20 something we can do quickly at least for folks who
21 live near Long Island Railroad where it's just a
22 matter of the price of the ticket, that's something
23 we can tackle that it's a--it's a fiscal matter, but
24 it's not a--again, it doesn't take years of
25 complicated study and planning. To reactive some of

2 the lines--I know the one we've talked--you and I
3 have talked about the one that--that you're familiar
4 with, that is a more challenging proposition. It
5 does require a good amount of study and it requires
6 to have, you know, some commitment on the funding. I
7 know that's--that's frustrating, but that's--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]
9 Well, to me I did the research. Like a bus costs a
10 million dollars, right. How much does a New York
11 City bus about?

12 COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: Yeah.

13 ERIC BEATON: [off mic] Three-quarters
14 of a million. (sic)

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: So one of these
16 light rail trains could be twice the size of a bus or
17 three times the size of a bus, and it's same price.
18 It's about \$3 million for a light rail train. I have
19 this line that's been used. It's getting used right
20 now, but the Federal Rail Administration says the
21 tracks are in excellent shape. The state owns the
22 right-of-way. You know, it's not like dealing with
23 traffic. You could potentially move my constituents
24 and people who live in and around the line that is in
25 good shape [bell] a free right-of-way by just putting

2 these types of light rails on them. Just put the
3 light rail on the track. The Federal Rail
4 Administration has allowed for towns in New Jersey to
5 have both freight and commuter rail on the same line.
6 These rail--these--we don't need an environmental
7 impact statement because it's already being, and it's
8 allowed for rail use to move commuters. So what
9 study is it other than getting the equipment and
10 putting it on the track? It's just like a bus.

11 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I think in
12 the--I think in the case of your line it's also
13 looking at the platforms.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: No, a light rail
15 is like a bus. It's--it's hardly an expense for a
16 platform. That's the good thing about light rail.
17 It's like running a bus on a road, but you just have
18 a designated track to run it on.

19 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: You're saying
20 you want to run the light rail on the Long Island
21 Railroad?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: On the one
23 that's in my district, yes. You could do that. I
24 visited New Jersey and I saw how they have, um, the
25 Hudson Bergen County Line and--and how they run their

2 light rail on these tracks, and then--and then how
3 parts of New Jersey use the same tracks that, um,
4 freight trains are using.

5 COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well, I think--
6 -Look, I think part of the study is going to look at
7 the possibility of light rail. One thing just to
8 sort of put on the table here in New York is we don't
9 have it. So it's not just a matter of buying the
10 cars. You have to create an operating system
11 integrated into our existing system. Have places to
12 service the cars, people to drive. I mean it's--it
13 is essentially a new--it would be a new mode. It's
14 not just filled in on subways or commuter rail.
15 Light rail is its own mode with its own vehicles, its
16 own specs, et cetera. And again, I think that's part
17 of what this study is going to look at, which is
18 where can we do it in a way that's really going to
19 make sense. But there are a lot of costs associated
20 with adding a new mode to an existing system.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Right. I know.
22 I just get frustrated with studies and studies
23 because so often these studies take a long time, and--
24 -and it's just common sense that if you put this type
25 of vehicle on these tracks you will move people a lot

2 quicker, and a significant amount of congestion off
3 the roads, which is--makes sense environmentally and
4 certainly improves the quality of one's commute in
5 places that I represent and most of Queens as well.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,
8 Council Member and thank you, Commissioner. We know
9 that with Mayor de Blasio and your leadership we have
10 a great partnership, and I know that we are not going
11 to be just waiting for this study to be done in order
12 to continue working with specific initiatives to
13 improve transportation bringing more SBS or
14 identifying an area where we can use water
15 transportation or expanding the Bike Share Program
16 and Citibike to those transportation desert areas.
17 And I really appreciate that, you know, that you
18 always are there committed to work with us and for
19 us. As I have said before, having someone with the
20 level of leadership that you brought when you became
21 the DOT Commissioner is very important for us because
22 you come with a lot of experience. And now, we will--
23 --your part--now we're going to be following with the
24 next panel, which is composed by someone that can
25 share his idea not only on addressing transportation

2 deserts, but improving transportation in the whole
3 region, and that is the great Congressman Nadler So
4 I'm calling Congressman Nadler and also Assemblyman
5 Gerald--I'm sorry, Philip Goldfeder to also come and
6 testify on the next panel, and thank you for taking
7 your time to be here with us, sir, Congressman and
8 Carlos Menchaca who is here, too.

9 [background comments, pause]

10 CONGRESSMAN NADLER: Thank you--thank you
11 very much--thank you to Chair Rodriguez and the
12 Transportation Committee for the opportunity to speak
13 here on this important issue. Transportation has
14 been a passion of mine and a focus of much of my
15 career as a member of both the New York State
16 Assembly and for the last 23 years in the U.S.
17 Congress. I'm currently a senior member of the
18 Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the
19 highest ranking member on that committee from the
20 Northeast. I'm here to testify--I was going to
21 testify about one thing, but having sat through the
22 first part, I'm going to testify about two things.
23 What I was originally going to testify about, and
24 will, is the reactivation of the Rockaway Beach Line,
25 a project that I have long supported. I want to

2 commend my colleague Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder, who
3 has led the recent efforts--I say recent because
4 there were some efforts back in the '60s also and
5 he's too young to have been part of that as am I.
6 The restoration of the Rockaway Beach Line would be a
7 vital transportation improvement to Southern Queens,
8 especially for the Rockaways, the residents of which
9 have one of the longest commuting times in New York
10 City. The restoration of the line would be a
11 tremendous benefit to everyone along that corridor
12 who could use the commuting in the Rockaways. The
13 restoration would also enable a true one-seat ride to
14 JFK Airport from Penn Station and at the completion
15 of the East Side Access Plan also from Grand Central
16 Station, something that we don't truly have today.
17 We don't have a one-seat ride to JFK. We've talked
18 about it, but the Air Train while it is important as
19 an airport circulator, its utility to get to
20 Manhattan is not very--I should say is very limited
21 because all riders must change at Jamaica to a Long
22 Island Railroad train. So it's not a one-seat ride.
23 That is why I continue to urge the MTA to support and
24 fully study the reactivation of the Rockaway Beach
25 Line and include it in the next capital plan. I

2 welcome the support of the Council to get the MTA to
3 study its reactivation. I regard a major mistake as
4 having been made 30 years ago. They should have
5 reactivated the Rockaway Beach Line and either
6 extended a subway system or the Long Island Railroad
7 into the Rockaways, and had a one-seat ride on one or
8 the other system to JFK instead of building the Air
9 Train. We could have gotten all the benefits or the
10 connect--of the air train as a--as a circulator, and
11 you could have also had a one-seat ride to Kennedy,
12 and you could have increased transit for the
13 Rockaways. That mistake was made, but can be
14 rectified, and should be rectified. The second thing
15 I want to say is that I want to very strong oppose
16 proposals that have been made by the Regional
17 Planning Authority--the Regional Planning Association
18 by several other people to--to take some current rail
19 lines, currently off freight line, particularly the
20 Bay Ridge Line or the Montauk Line and try to put
21 passengers on light rail line. The Port Authority,
22 the EDC the MTA and the State Department of
23 Transportation have all concluded that joint use of
24 freight and commuter rail or passenger rail on those
25 lines is incompatible. We must intercity-freight.

2 New York--43% of intercity freight in the United
3 States goes by rail. In New York City, Long Island,
4 Westchester, Putnam it's under 1%. Everything that
5 we get here come by truck. 93% of everything we get
6 in New York City, Long Island and Westchester comes
7 by truck over the George Washington Bridge. If you
8 want to know why we have the highest asthma rates in
9 the world in the South Bronx and Northern Manhattan
10 for that matter, that's the reason. Because all
11 those trucks are coming through, and spewing
12 emissions. Studies have been done at NYU tracking
13 the asthma rates within 500 yards of either side of
14 the--of those truck corridors. The only way that you
15 are ever going to stop that is by reactivating our
16 freight. In 1962, the Bay Ridge Line handled over
17 600,000 rail cars. Last year it handled--real freight
18 cars--last year it handled about 9,000 and that's up
19 from five. We must increase that. The Port
20 Authority is about to release its study, the Tier 1
21 Environment Impact Statement, which will recommend
22 that it should be done in the next--by the end of the
23 year. The study will--the record of decision will be
24 made by the end of the year to do an enhanced rail
25 float system across the harbor initially, and later

2 eventually around a freight tunnel. Either one will
3 greatly increase the--the rail freight usage of the
4 Bay Ride Line. I call the Bay Ridge Line the order
5 of the New York Freight system because everything has
6 to go through it. It is our only option. If we--if
7 we--I just said something I shouldn't say. If we
8 foul up by--by putting incompatible uses like
9 passenger rail on that line or the Montauk Line we
10 will forever foreclose the possibility of rail
11 freight to any extent in New York City because that's
12 the line that connects to everything. And if you
13 just take a couple of projections. I'll give you two
14 projections and I'll be finished. If you assume the
15 economic growth rate annually over the next 20 years
16 to be 2.0%, which historically is very low. If you
17 assume it to be 2.0% and by comparison the economic
18 growth rate in the United States since the Civil War
19 even including the Great Depression is about 3-1/4%.
20 If you assume it to be 2.0%, the amount of freight by
21 volume coming into New York City and Long Island will
22 increase by 37%. That means 37% more 18-wheelers on
23 our highways in New York City and on our streets and
24 roads. You can't build more highways in New York.
25 We overbuilt. So 37% more congestion of 18-wheelers

2 in New York City. If you assume 2.75% economic
3 growth, which is a much more reasonable assumption,
4 then that figure is 80%, not 37%. We will have in 20
5 years an 80% increase in tractor trailers on our
6 streets and roads in New York City if we don't switch
7 much of that to rail freight. And the only way we
8 can do that is by utilization of the Bay Ridge and
9 Montauk lines exclusively for freight because they're
10 incompatible with any other use. And if we preclude
11 that by putting some other use there, we will be
12 doomed to have only--to be totally dependent for--I
13 won't say forever because who knows what that's going
14 to be in 300 years, but for a long time for more and
15 more trucks in New York City. We'll all be attending
16 air pollution and carbon emissions and wear and tear
17 on the highways and so forth. So I very strongly
18 urge that those lines be kept for freight. We're
19 going to need them. The--the traffic on those
20 freight lines is going to increase very substantially
21 once we get the immense (sic) floats into operation,
22 which will be within the next few years, and if we
23 ever build a tunnel hugely. And that will be all for
24 the good of New York City. So in summary, we ought
25 to have a post phase--a real study of the Rockaway

2 Beach Line, which has a tremendous potential for the
3 Rockaways and for a one-seat ride, which is of
4 citywide importance to the airport, which is of
5 citywide importance, and don't eliminate rail
6 freight, the possibility of rail freight in New York
7 City. Thank you.

8 ASSEMBLYMAN GOLDFEDER: My name is Phil
9 Goldfeder. I represent Southern Queens and Rockaway
10 in the New York State Assembly. I apologize in
11 advance. My voice is cutting in and out. I'm humble
12 to be sitting in this room. I appreciate the
13 opportunity to testify, but to be sitting next to
14 literally a transportation icon in Congressman Nadler
15 is really very special. So thank you to him for
16 supporting the line, but allowing me the opportunity
17 to speak, although I'll say it's a tough act to
18 follow. So don't judge me, please. First, let me
19 acknowledge the New York City Council Committee on
20 Transportation for its continued leadership in
21 advocating for improved transportation access for
22 every New York City resident, and its foresight in
23 calling for this hearing and to transportation
24 deserts, an issue that can't be ignored. I'd like to
25 especially thank Chairman Rodriguez, my council

2 colleagues in Southern Queens and Council Member
3 Richards and Council Member Ulrich for their
4 understanding of our unique challenges in Southern
5 Queens especially in Rockaway. And essentially
6 advocating for every transit starved community across
7 New York City. Chairman Rodriguez has been more than
8 just the hearings and his actions in City Hall is
9 literally been on the present all across the city to
10 advocate for various projects. And your continued
11 advocacy is very much appreciated. I come before
12 this committee today to speak not just as an elected
13 official or a transit advocate, but as a lifelong
14 Queens resident who knows first hand what it means
15 to live, work and raise a family in a community with
16 limited transportation access. I was born and raised
17 in Rockaway. Now, I'm very proud to be raising my
18 own two children here. Throughout Southern Queens,
19 our families are forced to endure some of the longest
20 commutes in the entire city only second to the South
21 Shore of Staten Island. On normal days, a morning
22 commute by train to Midtown can easily take an hour
23 and a half. By car, commuters face deteriorating
24 (sic) roadways, unbearable gridlock on the Bell
25 Parkway, Van Wyck along Cross Bay and Woodhaven

2 Boulevards. This may--this means for all of us less
3 time spent at home with our kids or less time in the
4 workplace. It wasn't always this way. From the late
5 19th Century until the mid-20th Century, a branch of
6 the Long Island Railroad connected the Rockaway
7 Peninsula to Central Queens via an elevated train
8 line through Ozone Park, Woodhaven and Rego Park.
9 The Rockaway Beach Rail Line, also known as the White
10 Pod Junction, provided a 30-minute single seat ride
11 to Midtown Manhattan. To this day many of my older
12 constituents when I see them at civic meetings or at
13 rallies will come up to me and tell me stories of
14 their childhood and how they remember utilizing that
15 line. Over the years, decreased ridership and
16 frequent track fires on the old wooden trestles led
17 for the line to be sold to the city, and eventually
18 decommissioned in 1962. This section of the line
19 running from--running south from Liberty Avenue and
20 Ozone Park to Broad Channel in the Rockaway was
21 integrated into the present day A-Train and shuttle
22 subway lines. Everything to the north remains
23 untouched. Since service ended in the Rockaway Beach
24 Rail Line, we have seen incredible changes in Queens
25 and throughout the city. During this time, the

2 population of both Rockaway and Queens as a whole
3 have doubled. Between 2000 and 2030 the population
4 of our borough is expected to grow another 15%.
5 Business districts from Jamaica to Forest Hills to
6 Long Island City are growing at record paces. This
7 past summer nearly eight million beach goers came to
8 Rockaway. More than double last year's number and a
9 true milestone in our city's Sandy recovery. We all
10 questioned whether we'd all be coming back, and this
11 summer was another testament that just not Rockaway
12 but our entire city is growing, becoming stronger and
13 coming back from the devastation of a natural
14 disaster. Queens is fast become a world class
15 destination. Sadly, our local communities do not yet
16 have the world class transportation to match. This
17 is largely due to the fact that our current
18 transportation system is not designed to handle the
19 tremendous growth we've seen. Of the 26 subway
20 routes we now have in this city, all but two converge
21 in Manhattan. Even though more than half of Queens
22 residents do not work there, those who do have to
23 fight over-crowded trains frequent delays, and as we
24 saw during Sandy, major infrastructure uncertainties.
25 Queens residents overwhelmingly agree, and support

2 the reactivation of the Rockaway Beach Rail Line
3 because they know it would solve many of these
4 problems. I have advocated for the reactivation of
5 the Rockaway Beach Rail Line because it is the best
6 and most cost-efficient way to create true
7 north/south subway corridors in Queens, and provide
8 access to JFK Airport from Midtown Manhattan. With
9 the right-of-way still in government hands, we can do
10 this without the high land acquisition and
11 infrastructure costs associated with other projects.
12 For example, phase 1 of the Second Avenue Subway
13 Project will cost \$4-1/2 billion to build less than
14 two miles of track. By contrast, reactive--
15 reactivating the Rockaway Beach Rail Line could cost
16 as little as \$1 billion and create 3.5 million miles-
17 -3.5 miles of new train lines on existing right-of-
18 way. A recent study by Queens College Urban Studies
19 Department found this could generate up to a half a
20 million trips per day. Investments in transportation
21 is not only about transportation. Let's be very,
22 very clear. Investments in transportation is about
23 economic development and jobs for our struggling
24 families. In a 20-year need--capital needs
25 assessment, the MTA called for the reutilization of

2 the Rockaway Beach Rail Line and other abandoned
3 rights-of-way to expand the network capacity and help
4 reduce land acquisition and construction cost.
5 Controller DiNapoli agreed and took it a step farther
6 saying that restoring the Rockaway Beach Rail Line
7 would be a less costly way to speed commutes between
8 Queens and Manhattan, improve travel within the
9 borough, and promote economic growth. The MTA
10 Reinvention Commission further agreed. This was a
11 commission convened by Governor Cuomo and made up of
12 transit experts from not only New York City, not only
13 New York State, but from across the world who agreed
14 that if we utilize existing right-of-way, it would be
15 the most efficient option to increase transit
16 capacity to currently underserved communities in
17 transit deserts. Support for the plan has gained
18 traction among local civic organizations, unions and
19 many, many elected officials including Congressman
20 Nadler and his colleagues Congressman Meeks and
21 Congressman Jeffries. I'm proud that--that we have
22 continued to grow our coalition, and we will continue
23 to work until we get this train line restored.
24 Earlier this year a majority of the New York State
25 Assembly Queens Delegation signed a letter urging the

2 State to allocate money to at least at this point do
3 a full comprehensive study to find out what our next
4 possible steps can be. There's no greater asset to
5 our transit networks than existing rights-of-way.
6 With the Rockaway Beach Rail Line and other
7 underutilized rights-of-way throughout the city, we
8 have a once in a lifetime opportunity to make lasting
9 improvements to our transportation network and meet
10 the demands our growing population. I fully support
11 the proposed Council resolution calling on the MTA to
12 study the potential use of these vital assets, and
13 urge the City Council to continue its advocacy on
14 behalf of our family as we work to end transportation
15 deserts, and create the equal asset--access to
16 transit options we deserve. As Queens residents, as
17 families trying to raise our--as families trying to
18 raise our children, we're not asking for more than
19 others, only for our fair share. To give all of our
20 neighborhoods the opportunity to thrive and go--grow.
21 Thank you again to Chairman Rodriguez and to the City
22 Council for your advocacy.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I have a few
24 questions. One is, Congressman, we know that you
25 know your leadership is very important. As I said,

2 not only in your district, but also in the New York
3 City delegation.

4 CONGRESSMAN NADLER: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And--and, of
6 course, on transportation no doubt that your voice is
7 very respected in the state and in the city, the
8 state and nation, too. On--you work together with
9 Senator Schumer, the DOT Commissioner and Mayor de
10 Blasio so you have seen together a large number of
11 mayors throughout the nation advocated for grow New
12 York, grow America. And a different plan--a bill was
13 Grow America did not go through, right? So there was
14 a different bill that passed our Congress. So do you
15 think that the new bill knowing that again that we
16 don't have the control of the Congress. But do you
17 think that the new bill if it goes through will
18 reduce the contribution of the federal government to
19 transportation.

20 CONGRESSMAN NADLER: Well, firstly, the
21 bill hasn't passed Congress. It passed the House. A
22 separate bill passed the Senate. There will be a
23 Conference Committee. I've been appointed to the
24 Conference Committee, and it's--the bill--the bill
25 his flat lined. It is wholly inadequate in that

2 sense, in that it essentially takes the current level
3 of expenditure, makes an inflation adjustment and
4 continues it for six years. The current level of
5 expenditures, and makes a--an inflation adjustment
6 and continues it for six years. The current level of
7 expenditures is grossly inadequate. The President
8 proposed \$487 billion for the next--well, for the
9 next ten years, the next six years rather. This bill
10 is \$325 billion. That's a basic political. Give the
11 Republican control that has the senate, this is
12 probably the best we can do in the long term. Even
13 this amount is only funded for three to six years,
14 and we haven't come up with funding thy absolutely--
15 what we should do is increase the gasoline tax. It
16 hasn't been increased in--in 20--this is 1993. Um,
17 it's 18 cents a gallon but you pay \$4.50 a gallon or
18 \$2.50 a gallon, it's still 18 cents a gallon. It's
19 not a sales tax. It's not a percent. 18 cents today
20 will buy you less concrete or anything else than 23
21 years ago, number one. And number two, it's a gallon
22 use tax. (sic) Our entire public policy is use fewer
23 gallons. Make sure the cars are more gasoline
24 efficient, which means that we are using fewer
25 gallons. So we're cutting this at both ends. And so

2 the gasoline tax brings in less revenue because of
3 inflation, but also less revenue in actual terms
4 because we're using less gasoline, which is a good
5 thing for other reasons, but we can't depend on that.
6 We ought to increase the gasoline tax or bring in new
7 revenue resources. The Republicans refused to do
8 either one. We are quietly funding 30% of the
9 highway and transit program from the general
10 revenues, which we never used to do. We don't really
11 admit that, but it's clear we're doing that. But to
12 get a real increase would necessitate some very
13 upfront actions on revenues, which we ought that to
14 do, and that perhaps will be a campaign issue in next
15 year's campaign, but it's not going to happen now.
16 Now, the other question is on some of other features
17 there are some very good provisions in the bill, and
18 there are some not good provision in the bill. One of
19 them passed on a voice vote and some people were
20 upset that we let it go on a voice vote, which we did
21 because we thought we would lose a contested vote.
22 It would be easier to take it out in conference if it
23 wasn't a--a recorded vote, which would cost New York
24 State and City change of authorities for the state as
25 a whole, \$140 million over six years. A large part

2 of that coming from TA because it's high impact. I
3 think we have a fair chance of restoring that in
4 conference. We made the judgment that--that we're
5 better off in terms of being able to restore it in
6 conference if we didn't force a vote on the floor
7 that if we did--and that's debatable. That was the
8 judgment that was made. So we were going to try to
9 restore that in conference in the next week or two.
10 That's where we are on the transportation bill.

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Well, you know,
12 we rely on those dollars, every single dollar that we
13 can bring from DC is very important, and the formulas
14 that we use in other cities contribute a lot to the
15 state and to the fed, but we, you know, I know that
16 you've been there 20% or more. (sic)

17 CONGRESSMAN NADLER: We--we--we--if it
18 will make you feel better, there were quite a few
19 amendments in committee that would have really hurt
20 New York and hurt the transit. We defeated those
21 amendments.

22 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay, and--and
23 many of projects, you know, from expanding are
24 accomplishing the goal of 1,000 bike miles for the
25 Citibike through the LDS, you know, this--some of

2 those monies were also were money that we were able
3 to get from the federal government. And we also by,
4 you know, moving forward with your later saving (sic)
5 and again like the later saving (sic) and with the
6 Commissioner and everyone that, you know, the city
7 continues being a top priority. You know what we are
8 addressing today besides looking at transportation
9 from the regional perspective is knowing that there's
10 close to one million New Yorkers that that it will
11 take them close to three hours to go back and forth
12 to the jobs who are--who doesn't have any access to
13 mass transportation. So, that funding that we can
14 bring from the--from the federal level is very
15 important.

16 CONGRESSMAN NADLER: Believe me, I'm well
17 aware of that. I was chairman of the Relevant
18 Committee in the State Assembly, and I was Chairman
19 of the Mass Transit Subcommittee in the State
20 Assembly before that, and I've been fighting for this
21 funding for a long time.

22 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: What about in
23 Queens. Like how is it--which is the area that you
24 can say is the most desert transportation area that
25 we should be aware, even though we know like those

2 areas. Which is the one that you think that is the
3 one that should be the first one that we pay more
4 attention that we bring every dollar we can to
5 connect mass transportation to those New Yorkers
6 today?

7 ASSEMBLYMAN GOLDFEDER: Well, I think
8 that the answer to that question is it depends on
9 which Assemblyman and which Councilman you're talking
10 to because we all represent the assembly?

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: In your assembly?

12 ASSEMBLYMAN GOLDFEDER: Okay, I represent
13 the farthest you can go in New York City and still be
14 in New York City. I live literally on the Nassau
15 County border. There's--there's no way--no mechanism
16 utilizing public transportation to get to Midtown
17 Manhattan. I recall commuting before I was elected--
18 commuting to the town. It was a hour and 45 minutes
19 door to door. That's an hour and 45 minutes less
20 with my children, an hour and 45 minutes less at
21 work. The question I think is, is when should we
22 make the investment. If we wake up in 20 years from
23 now, we've already missed the boat. It's too late.
24 We've already failed. We've got to start thinking
25 now for real investments in the next 15 years,

2 because if we don't do it now, by the time we need
3 it, by the time it becomes critical for our lives and
4 our continued living in this great city it's going to
5 be way too late. So I think, you know, investing in
6 a Rockaway Beach Rail Line would do three fundamental
7 things, and that's why I think it's such a great
8 investment. It's the most efficient way to improve
9 our transit access and it would do three things.
10 Number one, it would provide intra-borough
11 connectivity. It would connect people in Queens to
12 businesses and districts other areas within Queens.
13 So encourage economic development within the
14 neighborhood. Number two, it would provide a one-
15 seat ride from Midtown Manhattan to JFK Airport and
16 solve a lot of the airport connectivity hopefully
17 taking some of those cars off of our highways. And
18 number three, it would provide real access and
19 transportation options for everybody in Southern
20 Queens to Manhattan. You know, studies show that
21 people work where they can get to and where they can
22 travel to, and many people in Rockaway work in
23 Southern Brooklyn. They only have the option of
24 working in Southern Brooklyn because that's the only
25 way, it's the only mechanism they have of

2 transportation utilizing the slow and broken down A-
3 Train. If we provide access, if we provide options,
4 it will give people a chance to commute, but also a
5 chance to access jobs.

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Council
7 Member Miller.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you,
9 Chairman, and thank you so much Congressman and
10 Assembly Member for coming here and sharing your
11 insight. Assembly Member, you really spoke so
12 eloquently about the disadvantages of the
13 transportation desert, but can you speak to--I guess
14 a little more the--the economic disadvantages that--
15 that are encountered by such communities because of
16 the lack of transportation?

17 ASSEMBLYMAN GOLDFEDER: There are
18 countless studies that were done that proved that
19 investment in transportation is worth more than
20 investment in economic development. You can give a
21 million dollars to a business corridor, a business
22 improvement district, and they'll be able to generate
23 X amount of jobs. You take that same million dollars
24 and you invest--invest in transportation and you're
25 going to provide way more opportunities for people to

2 get out of economic poverty. I represent some of the
3 poorest areas in New York City as well, and quite
4 frankly they want to work. They want access to jobs,
5 and they can't do that because they don't have a
6 means of travel. I--I'd be remiss if I didn't talk
7 about sort of what happened during Hurricane Sandy,
8 and the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy is that the few
9 options that we do have were wiped out. We--we talk
10 about resiliency. We talk about building strong. We
11 talk about creating options. We actually have to put
12 those things into place. So it's not just about
13 transportation. I think transportation is only
14 important because it gives us access to jobs. It
15 gives us access to healthcare. It gives us access to
16 so many other things that our families desperately
17 need.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Congressman, and
19 again, thank you for your leaders over the years
20 specifically, but I'd like to talk again a little bit
21 about the Transportation Trust Fund or the lack
22 thereof, and those within the industry have kind of
23 viewed this as an assault on urban America over the
24 years, the 80/20 formula and some of the other things
25 that you mentioned in terms of amendments. What are

2 some of the things that you have worked on, or that
3 you see that we could collectively address that we
4 could--as we approach this thing holistically from
5 the federal government's perspective in terms of
6 bringing resources, how could we be helpful?

7 CONGRESSMAN NADLER: Well, we have been
8 subject--every time we have a transportation bill,
9 we're subject to assault on several grounds. Number
10 one, we have the so-called equity bonus formula, and
11 we've been fighting a real battle on that, and losing
12 gradually. And what this is, is that they say to us
13 that the Highway Trust Fund--20% of the Highway Trust
14 Fund by law goes to mass transit, 80% to highways.
15 And it's all collected from--until recently it was
16 all collected from the highway--from the gasoline
17 tax, and now we're putting general funds into it in
18 the last couple years, but traditionally, it's the
19 highway tax, it's the gasoline tax. And so every
20 year they come--every year--every time we have a
21 bill, they come and tell us well, you know, it's
22 unfair. My state is a donor--is a donor state in
23 that more money is collected from the highway tax in
24 my--from the gasoline tax in my state that we get
25 back in highway aid. And New York gets \$1.26 back

2 from every dollar that's collected in highway--in the
3 gasoline taxes, and New York is therefore a done
4 state. It's a beneficiary state, along with a number
5 of other states, and New York is the biggest. That
6 \$1.26 figure is a few years old. It's from the last
7 debate, but I don't know what it is now. And so
8 every year they come up and they say, all right, at
9 least 90%, 92%, 95%--each state must get back at
10 least 95 cents on the dollar to what it pays in. We
11 point out that number one, that doesn't make any
12 sense because in the federal government you should
13 collect taxes where it's most efficient and equitable
14 to do so depending on what those considerations are,
15 and spend money where it's most efficient and
16 necessary to do so, and the two don't generally
17 match. And New York paid for a large part of
18 Tennessee Valley Authority and all dams and so forth,
19 and we don't demand the money back. And number two,
20 if you're looking at a general thing, we a balance of
21 payments deficit with the federal government of \$19
22 billion a year. In general, New York pays \$19
23 billion more in taxes collected than we get back in
24 federal aid. Senator Montgomery(sic) used to put out
25 an annual survey of that, and it's unfair to pick up-

2 -to pick out the one account where we're
3 beneficiaries. We have lost that argument, but at
4 least until the current bill, there was always more
5 money. So even though we got a slightly smaller
6 percentage of the money, we got an increase, and we
7 managed to do fairly nicely. In the current bill
8 there is no increases. It's flatlined, but there
9 also is no change in this formula, and we've managed
10 to stop that. There was an attempt a few years ago
11 to eliminate the 20% mass transit. I did the
12 amendment, which stopped that. We tried it again
13 this year. We tried it again this year quietly. We
14 squelched that. They're always looking at New York
15 and they say, we get too much money. Now, obviously,
16 going forward to have to continue to--and as I said
17 there's one--one piece, a little piece of the formula
18 that was amended. on the floor, which we are going to
19 try to take out in the Conference Committee. I think
20 we charted that. Looking forward, obviously we have
21 to continue to defend ourselves, but second of all,
22 the whole transportation system has a crisis in
23 funding. I mean everybody says, you know, we have an
24 American Association of Civil Engineers or whatever,
25 the A--Triple E. We have a \$2 trillion deficit in

2 repairs and infrastructure repairs. All our systems
3 are rated as Ds. We got 200 and some old thousand
4 deficient bridges in the country, et cetera, et
5 cetera. We have to have more transportation funding,
6 which means either you have to increase the gasoline
7 tax, which we certainly should, or--and/or, and/or
8 bring another source bring another sources. There
9 have been any number of other sources of revenue
10 suggested. The one that's been suggested that
11 Senator Schumer supports that I do not support is
12 this repatriation business that we should give the
13 corporations who have evaded taxes on earnings
14 abroad, give them a one-shot deal to bring their
15 money back, and pay a much lower rate of taxes. And
16 we could dedicated that. That for reasons that have
17 nothing to do with transportation there a lot of
18 problems with that. I am generally opposed to that,
19 but there--there are any number--there are no
20 shortage of ideas of where to get new revenue. The
21 problem is we have--it's--the City Council, the City
22 Administration could--to the extent it could be
23 helpful and vocal in saying we need more revenue.
24 The size of the program has to be increased is the
25 best thing they could be doing.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you so
3 much. Thank you so much, Congressman and Assembly
4 Member for coming out.

5 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I would like to
6 acknowledge also my colleague Council Member
7 Greenfield, Garodnick and Rosen--Helen Rosenthal and
8 Council Member Rose. What do you think about the
9 proposal to--the other idea to equalizing the--the
10 fare of Long Island Railroad and Metro North so that
11 New Yorkers who need those services to commute among--
12 --from the--out in the five borough should be able to
13 pay the same fare?

14 CONGRESSMAN NADLER: I have not studied
15 it. As a general matter for equity it makes sense.
16 Since why should one pay higher than the other. What
17 the fiscal impacts are and how do that I have no idea
18 since I have not looked into the idea. As a general
19 matter, yes. I mean as a general equity matter it
20 makes sense. The different fare structures are a
21 residue of the days when they were totally separate
22 systems, and now both part of the MTA and over time,
23 yeah, it--it makes sense as a general in both equity
24 and efficiency, but how you do that and what the
25 practical effects would be. And I suppose some fares

2 would have to go up, and some would go no you have to
3 go down. It would have a lot of political
4 repercussions I imagine. I don't know that.

5 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [off mic] Well,
6 I know [on mic] knowing that the Mayor and his
7 administration is on board to--open on this idea to
8 conduct a study on transportation deserts. We
9 definitely will be getting in touch with your staff
10 and your office because I know that your ideas can be
11 very important also--

12 CONGRESSMAN NADLER: [interposing] Right.

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --as we know.

14 CONGRESSMAN NADLER: Thank you. If you
15 had asked the question whether equalizing the fares
16 in the two systems should be studied, absolutely. It
17 makes sense.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Right. I want to
19 end also inviting you two to be part of this great
20 idea or this suggestion that I have, which is to make
21 Earth Day, February 22nd 2016 a car-free day in New
22 York City. The idea is to encourage New Yorkers not
23 to use their car that day. As the city also owns
24 20,000 vehicles, we are in conversation with the
25 Administration, and they are very open to discuss the

2 idea to reduce the number of city vehicles that
3 particular day so that we can pay more attention on
4 the need to invest more on mass transportation. But
5 we also know that in order to accomplish that goal,
6 we seriously need to reduce from 1.5 car, the number
7 that we have today to one million 2030. We need to
8 improve mass transportation especially to those on
9 million New Yorkers who live in communities and they
10 don't have access to buses, train, ferry or bicycle.
11 Thank you.

12 CONGRESSMAN NADLER: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thanks. The next
14 panel Alex from Plan Move New York, Julia from
15 Transportation Alternatives, Pierina from Regional
16 Plan Association, and Marsha from Riders Alliance.
17 [background comments, pause] So each panel you will
18 have five minutes each. So, you know, work around
19 the time so that you can summarize. [background
20 comments, pause]

21 ALEX MATHESON: Okay. Hello, Chairman
22 Rodriguez and esteemed members of the City Council.
23 My name is Alex Mathieson, the Director of the Move
24 New York Campaign. Thank you for inviting me to
25 testify today. The subject of today's hearing is a

2 critically important one, and indeed the raise on
3 debut of the Move New York Fare Plan and campaign.
4 In addition to filling the hole in the MTA's capital
5 plan and budget, slashing traffic inside and out of
6 the central business district and bringing toll
7 equity to New York's drivers, the Move New York Fare
8 Plan is an ambitious and overdue scheme that will
9 provide new transit options for those communities
10 particularly in the far reaches of our city who have
11 been underserved for too long, where transit service
12 is scarce, expensive and unreliable. The bills under
13 consideration today touched on many of the proposals
14 included in the Move New York Fare Plan. Before I
15 discuss those synergies, let's take a look at just
16 how serious this problem is.

17 In the first slide you'll see that all of
18 the white areas on this map, and it's a bit of a hard
19 map to see, but what you can see are the outlines of
20 the five boroughs in New York City, and much of those
21 five boroughs are experiencing transit gaps. On this
22 map show areas of the city where the average distance
23 to a subway stop is more than a quarter of a mile or
24 a 7 to 8-minute walk. These are huge areas, and
25 they're concentrated in Staten Island, Eastern

2 Queens, South Brooklyn and the Bronx. Unfortunately,
3 except for where we already have rights-of-way the
4 days of quick subway expansion are long past us.
5 That's why it's crucial to explore areas to
6 reactivate underused rail rights-of-way in the city.
7 The Move New York Fare Plan to through the creation
8 of the Transit Gap Investment Fund, which is a \$4
9 plus billion fund that goes beyond just filling the
10 MTA budget gap. It proposes many options doing so.
11 Examples include connecting South Brooklyn, Central
12 Queens and the Bronx through Tri-Borough RX,
13 converting the Atlantic Avenue Long Island Railroad
14 Line to a subway route, and studying the different
15 options including reactivation for the Rockaway Beach
16 Rail Line right-of-way. And, I should just add as a
17 footnote, despite our enormous regard for Congressman
18 Nadler, we are persuaded by the RPA Study and others
19 that both the passenger and freight trains can use
20 and co-exist on that right-of-way so that freight can
21 thrive and we can increase the amount of freight
22 going through and get trucks off our highways and
23 bridges. But also, there's enough room for a
24 passenger line, too, which would be only the second
25 line in the MTA system other than the G that would

2 connect three boroughs without having to go through
3 Manhattan, which adds a lot of time for out-of-
4 borough commuters. Those projects will take a number
5 of years to complete even if we start today. That's
6 why Move New York proposes a number of solutions in
7 the interim that can be implemented immediately
8 without any capital construction. For example, we
9 propose to bring back some of the bus routes that
10 were cut in 2010. The MTA is doing a good job of
11 bringing back and restoring some of those lines, but
12 there is more work to be done. Expand bus rapid
13 transit. Again, the Mayor and the City Council have
14 a terrific and ambitious plan to add 20 routes, but
15 again, there's a question of funding, particularly in
16 the non-Manhattan boroughs. And we would increase
17 express bus service in use by adding new routes and
18 dropping the fare by a dollar citywide. Thus,
19 closing the gap between express buses and subway and
20 bus fare.

21 Slide 4. Further echoing Resolution 670,
22 which proposes to slash fares for commute rail in the
23 city making City Ticket, which offers discounted
24 rates on the weekends a week long program, and
25 further dropping the price at off peak hours.

2 Moreover, we propose to finally include in that
3 program a handful of Metro North and Long Island
4 Railroad stations that are currently excluded. This
5 will drop commuter rail fares in some neighborhoods
6 by as much as 48% at peak hours. By making the
7 commuter trains more affordable, we can make them
8 more accessible, thus providing a new high speed
9 transit option for those who don't live near a
10 subway. You can see on these maps the areas in the
11 Bronx and Queens that will benefit from newly reduce
12 Metro North and Long Island fares. As you can see,
13 they match up well with the map of transit deserts we
14 saw a minute ago.

15 Slide 5. In slide 5 you'll finally see
16 how the Move New York Transit Gap Investment Fund,
17 which includes a \$1 billion community transit fund
18 will create the opportunity to expand the transit
19 network to places where it's currently lacking.
20 Here's a map that summarizes the new service options
21 I outline--outlined earlier. Again, the routes
22 overlay nicely with the city's transit deserts. In
23 closing, we've heard a lot of great ideas today about
24 how to address these deserts, and in many cases to do
25 it quickly. The only real obstacle in most cases is

2 funding. Yet, Move New York continues to be the only
3 viable option on the table and our experience is that
4 once people understand the details, they tend to
5 support it. We firmly believe that adopting the Move
6 New York Fare Plan will transform the city's
7 transportation system, by providing a new sustainable
8 source of revenue to fund not just our transit
9 network, but our roads and bridges. Expanding
10 transit access to underserved neighborhoods and
11 improving economic opportunity for New Yorkers of all
12 stripes for generations to come. We applaud Chairman
13 Rodriguez and your committee colleagues for taking
14 the issue of transit deserts so seriously. And we
15 are glad that our strategies to alleviate them align
16 so nicely with those proposed today. Thank you for
17 your time, and I am happy to answer any questions you
18 may have.

19 Hello. Thank you, Chair Rodriguez and
20 the members of the Committee on Transportation for
21 convening this hearing. I am Julia Kite, Policy and
22 Research Manager at Transportation Alternatives.
23 We're a 42-year-old non-profit with more than 150,000
24 activists in our network dedicated to improving the
25 safety of New York City's street. We are here to

2 lend support to Intro 965. We have a motto: One
3 Less Car. We urge New Yorkers to walk, bike or use
4 public transportation whenever possible, and we're
5 very concerned by the number of New York City
6 residents who find themselves poorly served by the
7 subway and buses by virtue of where they live. These
8 New Yorkers have two realistic options, neither of
9 them ideal. They can either use a car and contribute
10 to the worsening congestion in our city, or spend
11 mind boggling amounts of time traveling on multiple
12 local buses and trains. There needs to be something
13 better, and we can start exploring options once we
14 have clearer details about the situation. Therefore,
15 we strongly support Intro 965, which will provide
16 data, which can be used to better plan expansion of
17 the public transit network and improve services to
18 the residents of these communities. Congestion is a
19 fact of life in New York, but it is made worse when
20 more vehicles are added to our roads. The best
21 solution is safe, reliable, fast public
22 transportation that can accommodate large numbers of
23 New Yorkers regardless of age or physical ability.
24 New York residents have the longest commutes of any
25 major city in the country with an average of 6 hours

2 and 18 minutes spend traveling to and from work last-
3 -I'm sorry--work each week. That's about 38 minutes
4 for each trip compared to an average of 25 minutes
5 nationwide. In some parts of the outer boroughs, the
6 average commute time exceeds 45 minutes in each
7 direction. For example, in St. Albans, Queens the
8 average commute takes 50 minutes each way, and that's
9 double the national average. The closest subway
10 station, Jamaica Center, is far beyond walking
11 distance. Comptroller Scott Stringer released a
12 study this past March showing that the average weekly
13 commute time for New Yorkers is nearly one hour
14 longer than for workers in the city with the second
15 longest time, San Francisco. And it's not just
16 commutes that take a long time. People living in
17 transportation deserts may experience difficulty
18 access other necessities, and when every trip is an
19 inconvenience life becomes stressful and potentially
20 isolating. This is time taken away from learning new
21 skills, gaining new educational qualification, taking
22 part in volunteer work or simply enjoying leisure
23 time. And, for the majority of New York City
24 residents this is also sedentary time, which has an
25 adverse impact on health.

2 We would like to propose an addition to
3 Section (b) (3) of Intro 965. As it stands in this
4 bill, the threshold for an intolerably long commute
5 is a three-hour round trip or an hour and a half each
6 way for the majority of residents in the census
7 tracked. But we think that commuting more than one
8 hour in each direction should also be considered
9 cause for concern. Thus, we recommend that you also
10 look at census tracks in which the average daily
11 round trip commute for a majority of residents takes
12 more than two hours or an hour each way. In
13 addition, we urge you to consider active--adding
14 active transportation to the study. An increasing
15 number of New Yorkers are finding that bicycles are
16 an excellent and convenient means of transportation
17 in particular for short trips. The number of bicycle
18 commuters has increased steadily over the past
19 several years. Bicycles are also useful for bridging
20 gaps between subway stations and homes or
21 destinations. The defective standard for a station's
22 catchment area based on how far a person will walk to
23 get there is at a maximum a half mile radius.
24 Although, as we saw in the maps shown by Move New
25 York, we can also change the threshold to a quarter

2 mile if you think of where people will realistically
3 walk. Having a bicycle extends that radius by
4 allowing a rider to get to and from stations much
5 faster than walking. Bicycles can thus shrink the
6 transportation desert by essentially bringing transit
7 stations closer to home. The way to encourage
8 cycling is to make sure it is as safe and affordable
9 as possible, and we know that having protective bike
10 lanes is crucial for this. Unfortunately, many areas
11 that qualify as transportation deserts are also
12 cycling deserts with few protective bike lanes and no
13 access to Citibike in the foreseeable future.
14 Therefore, we urge you to add a further criterion to
15 your evaluation; identifying census tracts that are
16 located more than one-third of a mile from a
17 protected bike lane, and including recommendations
18 related to improving access to the bike network in
19 such areas. Thank you. [siren]

20 MASHA BURINA: Good morning and now
21 almost afternoon. My name is Masha Burina an
22 organizer with the Riders Alliance. We're New York's
23 grassroots organization of subway and bus riders
24 pushing for better service, affordable fares, and
25 more public investment in our mass transit system.

2 We'd like to thank Chairman Rodriguez and the
3 Committee on Transportation for the opportunity to
4 testify today. As an organization of subway and bus
5 riders, we talk to many New Yorkers for whom
6 efficient transportation is simply out of reach.
7 Shining a light on the communities that lack good
8 transit options is important, and we're glad you're
9 doing. Transit in outer boroughs is under-resourced.
10 Nearly one million New Yorkers travel over an hour to
11 get to their job and two-thirds of those pay--of
12 those jobs pay less than \$35,000 a year. These are
13 often the same people who walk long distances to
14 reach subways or bus routes far from where they live
15 and work. That's why the Riders Alliance is focused
16 on bringing attention to the need for better buses.
17 Whether in Flushing, Jamaica or Woodhaven Cross Bay
18 Boulevard, we've been organizing outer borough
19 residents who are demanding we transform streets and
20 commutes through the expansion of more Select Bus
21 Services. SBS is one solution for transit deserts.
22 The Administration aims to install 20 routes by 2017,
23 but we should also expand local buses in areas
24 without good service. Many of our members have
25 punishingly long commutes. For instance, bus rider

2 Nancy Morales travels nearly two hours to get to work
3 from Woodhaven in Queens to Kings Highway in
4 Brooklyn. For many of these communities services are
5 unaffordable and don't go to their neighborhoods at
6 all. Given the predicament of a transit desert, what
7 choice would you make? Would you take a cab? Maybe
8 you'd order an Uber? The reality is that many riders
9 simply don't have the luxury of choice. It is
10 incumbent on this body and the relevant agencies like
11 the DOT and the MTA to know where our fellow riders
12 live and work particularly those who are on the
13 margins of our transit system. We need to make sure
14 that residents, all residents, regardless of where
15 they live or work can access jobs and vital services.
16 Thank you.

17 PIERINA SANCHEZ: Good morning. My name
18 is Pierina Sanchez and I'm the Associate Planner for
19 Regional Plan Association, which aims to improve the
20 New York Metropolitan region's economic health, and
21 environmental sustainability and quality of life
22 through research, planning and advocacy. We
23 appreciate the Council's efforts to address one of
24 New York's most critical problems, insufficient
25 transportation to underserved neighborhoods. Earlier

2 this year, RPA released a report called *Overlooked*
3 *Boroughs: When New York City's Transit Falls Short*
4 *and How to Fix It*. With findings and recommendations
5 that are very relevant to the resolutions before the
6 Council today. I'd like to highlight a few of these
7 for the committee's consideration. Today, three core
8 challenges confront residents of the other boroughs:
9 Trying to get to work, schools, doctor's
10 appointments, shopping centers and to other needs.
11 First, the subway is of limited use to travel within
12 the boroughs. Second, bus service within the
13 boroughs is slow and infrequent, and many residents
14 need to take two or more buses to reach their
15 destination. Third, the metropolitan region's vast
16 commuter rail network could be far better utilized in
17 the boroughs, as Alex agreed. (sic) Residents of
18 the outer boroughs sometimes need to take circuitous
19 journeys through Manhattan in order to travel work or
20 school in another borough. This adds significant
21 time to their commutes. The transit gap falls
22 especially as our--the follow panelists have
23 mentioned on lower income households who are less
24 likely to own cars and rely heavily on mass transit
25 for their daily commutes. Lower income residents are

2 far more likely to work in sectors such as retail and
3 healthcare, are in industries with jobs spread
4 throughout the five boroughs. They are also less
5 able to afford taxis, as was mentioned, and have
6 fewer service and retail options within walking
7 distance of the more affluent---affluent
8 neighborhoods. And the higher cost of commuter rail
9 service can be a barrier to residents who otherwise
10 look for reverse commute jobs in the suburbs. So we
11 suggest seven recommendations: We can address these
12 needs through a series of short and longer term
13 measures, including the following:

14 First, increasing the frequency of bus
15 service on a dozen--I'm sorry--on dozens of outer
16 borough routes. So there are 56 routes in the city
17 where frequency falls short of an acceptable
18 standards of ten minutes in the peak period, 15
19 minutes at other day times and 20 minutes on the
20 weekends. We estimate that it would cost \$28 million
21 per year not including capital costs for additional
22 buses and depots to bring all routes to these
23 acceptable standards.

24 Second, speed bus service by implementing
25 contactless fare payment, better traffic enforcement

2 and other measures. Right now, the average speed of
3 a local bus in New York is only eight miles per
4 hours. The measure suggests that here it could
5 improve speeds on all 200 bus routes in the city.

6 Third, expand Select Bus Services on an
7 additional eight corridors; two in each borough
8 except for Manhattan. The eight SBS routes
9 implemented to date have demonstrated that faster
10 service is possible. The additional routes
11 recommended in our report meet several criteria for
12 successful SBS service.

13 Four, run a 24-mile over-ground rail line
14 running on an existing rail right-of-way from Bay
15 Ridge in Brooklyn through Queens to Co-Op City in the
16 Bronx to carry passengers directly from outer
17 boroughs--from one outer borough to the--to another.
18 This is the so-called Tri-borough RX. These lines can
19 successfully handle both freight and passenger
20 service. We estimate that more than 100,000 riders
21 would use the 24-mile, 22-station tri-borough line
22 with stops strategically situated to establish
23 convenient transfers to subway stops and bus routes.

24 Five, expand the Second Avenue Subway
25 both north to the Bronx and south to Lower Manhattan.

2 It is critical to restore funding to the MTA's
3 Capital Plan to complete the expansion of the subway
4 to East Harlem. This could set the stage for future
5 extensions that would serve low-income communities in
6 the Bronx as well.

7 Six, increase off peak and reverse
8 commute service on Metro North in the Bronx and Long
9 Island Railroad in Queens. Six stations in the Bronx
10 all fall short of a 20-minute peak in both
11 directions, and a 30-minute off-peak standard. In
12 Queens, eight stations have inadequate service in the
13 off peak and during midday hours, and finally

14 Seven, we should reduce the weekday
15 commuter rail fares for trips within New York City,
16 the City Ticket idea. Today the railroads offer half
17 price City Ticket but only on the weekends, and as
18 Councilman Richards mentioned not in the Far
19 Rockaways. This makes using the railroad a
20 prohibitive burden for many city residents and RP
21 recommends that expansion of the discount to week
22 days. The commuter rail service would become more
23 competitive to the subway shifting some borough
24 residents from the subway to the railroads [bell] if
25 they were willing to pay a small premium reducing

2 crowding on subway lines in Queens and in the Bronx.
3 The estimated cost after accounting for the revenue
4 gained by a shift from subway to commuter rail is \$30
5 million annually. Thank you for your time and I'm
6 happy to answer any questions.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Well, you know,
8 all for the boroughs are great suggestions, and that
9 idea we will continue in conversation with you guys
10 as we will work with the Mayor moving forward this
11 idea. But right now it's only the legislation that
12 we are holding a hearing today. But knowing that the
13 mayor is on board and in support of the idea to
14 conduct this study in the future, we will also have
15 conversations with other experts to get also your
16 feedback. I have one question on the plan Move New
17 York. First of all, I do believe that Plan New York
18 present a complete proposal to raise revenue, but the
19 question that I have that some people have asked me
20 is can Plan Move New York work and give a discount to
21 people who live in the five boroughs? So it take me
22 to ask the question do we have the data on how many--
23 when we look at congestion in Midtown, what
24 percentage of those drivers are coming from the five
25 boroughs compared with the number--with the number of

2 drivers that come from Jersey, Upstate or other
3 areas?

4 ALEX MATHIESON: Yeah, Chairman we do
5 have that data. I can't recall it off the top of my
6 head, but I can tell you that if you look across the
7 12-county MTA region I think that the average number
8 of commuters in any given county or borough--that
9 includes the five boroughs in New York City and the
10 other seven suburban counties that make up the metro-
11 -the MTA region. The percentage of commuters who are
12 going to be facing a higher toll, which is what I
13 think you're referring to is very, very low.
14 Anywhere from half a percent to five or six percent
15 of those commuters. In our view, generally is that
16 if you're talking about low-income--low and middle-
17 income New Yorkers the vast majority of those don't
18 actually use cars. They use mass transit, and they
19 depend on mass transit, and that's what I think
20 you're focusing on today is for those folks and for
21 all New Yorkers there are still way too many gaps.
22 And the--and the options they have are often too
23 affordable. We did actually a couple years ago
24 consider including some kind of discount for
25 particularly low income New Yorkers for the newly

2 tolled bridges and crossings. But surprisingly
3 enough, we didn't get a very positive reception on
4 that. It was considered to be very complicated.
5 There's a lot of folks who were concerned about
6 gaining the system that would result--that would come
7 as a result of having kind of different prices for
8 different drivers. And even a lot of the elected
9 officials who are representing some of those
10 constituencies thought that it was too complicated
11 and perhaps too much of a revenue loser. What we're
12 kind of trying to argue essentially is that right now
13 the existing tolling system in New York City, which
14 we've had for, you know, the better part of 100
15 years, is itself a very regressive unfair tolling
16 system where you're asking people in the outer parts
17 of the city who typically are facing and causing much
18 less congestion and much fewer transit options. On
19 average they tend to be less wealthy than those who
20 are driving into the core. We're asking those people
21 to pay as much as \$16 round trip for those outer
22 crossings, and then we're asking another group to pay
23 zero everyday to use the city's infrastructure, which
24 is very expensive to maintain. So again, one group
25 paying nothing everyday, and everybody else whether

2 it's drivers in the other parts of the city or every
3 other commuter who uses mass transit are paying
4 anywhere from \$2.75 to over \$20 to make that same
5 trip. And yet, we're not asking those drivers to
6 pay. So in our view, we're just simply saying be
7 part of the community of New York commuters who all
8 pay something to take advantage of our great
9 infrastructure. And so in that sense we think that
10 just keep having a kind of clean and flat rate is the
11 better way to go. I will just say one more comment,
12 and forgive me for the length. Which is that even
13 though we haven't proposed it and don't talk about it
14 a great deal when we go around and talk about the
15 Move New York Plan, our sincere hope, and we're going
16 to work hard to encourage our friends in the Assembly
17 and the Senate, that when a bill is drafted to
18 promote the Move New York Plan or adopt the Move New
19 York Plan we're going to propose variable tolling.
20 Which means you charge a little bit more during the
21 peak hours, but you charge significantly less in the
22 shoulder hours and at night, and particularly on the
23 weekends and overnight. So that gives New Yorkers a
24 little bit more flexibility to try and avoid some of
25 the highest tolls.

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Right, and can
3 you elaborate more, which for me is very important
4 the fees related to the Transit Community Fund?

5 ALEX MATHIESON: Sure and this thanks to
6 your leadership and vision and the feedback we've
7 gotten from around the region over the last couple of
8 years, which is, you know, the biggest obstacle of a
9 path and a plan like this--I mean everybody when
10 they're in a private room and no one is paying
11 attention will admit that our tolling system is very
12 unfair and inequitable. Even most of the drivers we
13 talk to. This is the first time that plan to toll
14 the East River Bridge right along 60th Street has
15 actually gained the support of the states to leaving
16 driver associations. The truckers--the New York
17 State Truckers Association, and Tripe A have both
18 supported this plan because they understand that we
19 need revenue for roads and bridges, and the current
20 system is not fair. But the other big complaint and
21 the other hurdle is no one trusts that the MTA will
22 actually take this new revenue and spend it wisely
23 and particularly spend it on addressing the transit
24 gaps that you and your colleagues have addressed
25 today. That's why we raise enough funds with this

2 Move New York Plan to not only fill the gap of the
3 MTA Capital Plan budget that still exists, but we
4 also raised an additional \$4 plus billion that could
5 be used expressly to aggressively address these
6 transit deserts particularly in the city and in the
7 five boroughs of New York City. But also to provide
8 some county bus service that's badly needed in the
9 suburban parts of the region as well. And part of
10 that \$4+ billion fund, a billion dollars of it would
11 be a community transit fund. I mean the idea is that
12 you and your colleagues and your--and your colleagues
13 from the Assembly and Senate would work with their
14 communities to identify very local needs in each
15 district where you might need a new bus shelter. You
16 might be interested in a new SBS line. You might be
17 banning together with some of your other colleagues
18 to get a new SBS line, et cetera, but that fund would
19 be very, very specifically targeted on transit
20 deserts and on community participation.

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council Member
22 Miller. Council Member Treyger.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you,
24 Chair, for having a very, very important and timely
25 hearing on a topic that means a lot to New Yorkers,

2 and particularly I represent a big region in Southern
3 Brooklyn. And for years, the only mention of
4 Southern Brooklyn when it comes to transportation has
5 been cuts. 2010 was a bad year in my part of New
6 York when it came to transportation. Why? The X28
7 Express Bus Service was cut on Saturdays. Why is
8 that a big deal? Because if anyone comes to Coney
9 Island during the seasonal months on a Saturday good
10 luck getting around. So on the busiest day of the
11 year, the busiest time of the year the MTA decides to
12 remove bus service into Coney Island. The X29, which
13 served many of the high-rises in Trump Village,
14 Wabash, Luna Park major, major 23-story complexes
15 with thousands of families lost their service
16 altogether. We at one point used to have an F
17 express. Gone. They Mayor's latest ferry plan again
18 my part of New York seemed to have been forgotten
19 once again. So I agree that there is certainly a
20 transportation not just desert, but really a
21 transportation gap and problem that's being
22 exacerbated. And I just want to be--my message to
23 government leaders is this: You can't pinpoint
24 transportation deserts and then promote policies that
25 exacerbate and worsen the desert. And so, for

2 example in my district there are proposals to build
3 thousands and thousands of new units of housing in an
4 area that is already densely populated, has
5 difficulty getting around. When you mentioned
6 commute to work, I want to tell you that the commute
7 from Stillwell Avenue to West 36th Street that's just
8 in my Peninsula alone could take up to 45 minutes for
9 a driver just to even get around, just to their own
10 neighborhood because of how congested it is. So, I
11 believe that we do need to address this. I think that
12 we need to have a very serious conversation. I
13 appreciate your comments before. You mentioned that
14 there were some question that if you give the MTA
15 more revenue does it mean that they actually give it
16 back to the communities that need it the most.
17 Because quite frankly when they've had ribbon
18 cuttings and press conferences, they seem to forget
19 where my neighborhoods are. But when it comes to
20 cuts, they find me again. So let's have a very
21 serious conversation. Let's have more hearings. I
22 thank the chair for spearheading this conversation,
23 and I look forward to a lot more constructive
24 dialogue moving forward. Thank you. [bell]

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you. I, too,
3 you know, I want to thank you for your comprehensive
4 report and advocacy. Coming from a district as
5 Staten Island where we are unfortunately the
6 recipient of--of the nine neglect that the city has
7 chosen to--to meet out in communities that need
8 transportation. We are supportive of Move New York,
9 especially in terms of toll equity. We pay the
10 highest toll on the Verrazano Bridge, and the funds
11 that are paid into that go to support other transit
12 systems like Metro North and the Long Island
13 Railroad. We have a tran--transit deserts, which
14 fortunately only one of them was actually mentioned
15 in the report. We have an existing right-of-way that
16 would--would help to ameliorate some of the--the
17 transportation issues that we have that's ignored,
18 and we have to fight to have it included as part of
19 the BRT Plan. And we had bus routes that were
20 totally eliminated. So, I--I really would like to
21 implore you that in your advocacy for these
22 communities that are--have a deficit of transit
23 options that you remember to include Staten Island.
24 In fact, all of Staten Island because my colleagues
25 from the South Shore have a--have the longest commute

2 from the southern tip of Staten Island into
3 Manhattan. So, I--I just wanted to be on the record
4 that--that when we look at these plans and these
5 designs, we need to include all of the transit
6 deserts--

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Great.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: --and give them
9 equal. I'm sorry.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Sorry.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And give them equal
12 attention. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. I'm
14 sorry Council Member. Thank you. Now, I'm calling
15 the next panel. I'm calling on Roxanne Warren from
16 Vision for 42 Proposal, Eric McClure from District
17 Park, Douglas Adams from Waterfront Alliance and Erin
18 Abrams from Via Transportation.

19 [background comments, pause]

20 ROXANNE WARREN: Okay. My name is
21 Roxanne Warren. I'm an architect and Chair of the
22 Vision 42 Proposal, which is light--river to river
23 light rail on 42nd Street. I--I thought I was going
24 to be coming after George Haikalis who is--is talking
25 about Vision 42 in relation to a lot of other

2 projects that--that he wants to talk about. But in
3 any case--I'm sorry?

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I said, yeah, he
5 can join the panel, too.

6 ROXANNE WARREN: Um, but we've only got
7 four seats here.

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: That's fine. We
9 have another chair.

10 GEORGE HAIKALIS: Do you want me to go
11 ahead and then--

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing] No,
13 you can stay there.

14 [background comments]

15 ROXANNE WARREN: Okay, so.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And I'm sorry for
17 that. We're going to see the name George here, of
18 course. So you may--the only thing that I ask
19 everyone is please like if you know that it will take
20 more than three minutes, yes, summarize because we
21 have another hearing at 1:00 p.m. about helicopter.
22 (sic) No, wait. Helicopter. Yes.

23 ROXANNE WARREN: In any case, this--this
24 is--this is the surface transit component of what--
25 what George is talking about. For selected--for key

2 selected surface transit streets, I think it's
3 important to discuss them separately from other
4 transit streets. Why light rail rather than bus
5 rapid transit or Select Bus Service for these key
6 transit streets? Because light rail vehicles are
7 reliably guided by their tracks, they require a
8 minimum width of right-of-way, which is of great
9 importance in a crowded city like New York. This
10 also makes surface light rail especially appropriate
11 and safe for streets with heavy crowds of
12 pedestrians. The rails also provide a smoother more
13 appealing ride, and then obviously dedicated and
14 self-enforcing transit path, which discourages
15 motorists from entering it, and delaying the transit
16 line. This results in reliable trip times, and a
17 strong record of attracting riders of all income
18 levels, including former motorists. As a quote
19 "surface subway" albeit at a lower speed than a
20 subway, light rail thereby extends the effective
21 reach of the subways. Yet, a cost that is only about
22 one-tenth as much per mile as subways. Located at
23 grade, light rail's easy, quick boarding and
24 inexpensive station platforms will allow frequent
25 access points at every major cross street, making it

2 an ideal distributor for existing subways and buses.
3 There has already been a considerable amount of
4 research performed on the feasibility of building a
5 river to river light rail line on Manhattan's 42nd
6 Street, Vision 42 including its economic benefits,
7 construction impact and implications for traffic and
8 deliveries. The project's economic benefits are
9 project to fund its construction in a short period of
10 time due to dramatic increases expected in retail and
11 restaurant business. 42nd Street is an important
12 portal that connects with 17 of the city's subway
13 lines leading to all five boroughs. Having light
14 rail on the 42nd Street could open the way for
15 building other lines throughout the city. There are
16 many bus lines in New York City, and I have an
17 attach--an attachment to this sheet showing that they
18 carry more passengers than recently completed light
19 rail lines around the country. And therefore merit
20 serious consideration for consideration--for
21 conversion to light rail. There are also potential
22 connections between light rail and proposed citywide--
23 --and the proposed citywide ferry network. Light rail
24 will be able to meet the ferries, something that most
25 of the city subways cannot do. This can lend

2 credence to the city's interest in a citywide ferry
3 network. Light rail can serve massive--

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I'm sorry, Ms.
5 Warren, please summarize in a 30 seconds.

6 ROXANNE WARREN: Okay. Massive--it can
7 serve massive new developments planned along the East
8 and Hudson Rivers as well as important tourist
9 generators on the waterfronts.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

11 ROXANNE WARREN: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: George, we'd like
13 to continue. So is this is the same topic?

14 [background comments]

15 GEORGE HAIKALIS: Thank you. My name is
16 George Haikalis. I'm the President of the Institute
17 for Rational Urban Mobility. IRUM is a New York
18 based non-profit concerned with reducing motor
19 vehicular congestion and use, and improving the
20 livability of dense urban places. IRUM urges the
21 City Council to adopt all four measures relating to
22 transportation deserts. One is to study the
23 feasibility of where light rail works in New York
24 City, and we certainly would like the city DOT and
25 other agencies to work to do that. It has long

2 support modern light rail transit, and we talked--
3 heard about Vision 42, and I'll go onto the rest of
4 the items here because we--I wanted to cover a couple
5 of them. It--it--it's certainly important to have a
6 plan for developing--meeting the transportation
7 deserts, and we support that proposal and urge the
8 City DOT and City Planning to work closely with the
9 MTA to figure out ways to do that. The third thing
10 is to allow riders to use commuter rail within the
11 city by just paying regular Metro fare--Card--Metro
12 Card fares. The existing Metro Card system allows
13 buses and subways to make trips without paying double
14 fares. This should be extended to the rail station
15 as well. Just that simple. It can be done quickly.
16 Make the most effective use of the extensive system.
17 He unlimited ride 7-day and 30-day passes should also
18 include a 24-hour pass. This is a tourist town. It
19 should have a 24-hour pass, and 2-hour pass so you
20 can use two, or three or four buses whatever it
21 takes--and trains to get your trip. Not just one
22 each and that's it. The central ferry zone on the
23 map there's several illustrations. I hope you take a
24 look at them, and then introducing regional rail
25 service and under--under-utilized lines in New York

2 City. I was very pleased that Congressman Nadler
3 supports restoring the Rockaway Beach Line, and we
4 worked on this for years together, and it makes a lot
5 of sense. And other lines--other lines should have
6 the shared freight and passenger. Freight and
7 passenger do work around the world on the same
8 tracks. We don't have to have them exclusively.
9 What we really need is planning at the regional
10 level, and these four measures could be advanced as
11 part of a comprehensive regional transportation plan.
12 We can't just continue to have an ad hoc here and an
13 ad hoc there. We need to have this put together and
14 think about this in the bigger pictures. When we
15 talk about regional rail, we also need to talk about
16 increasing the frequency of service at the very least
17 every 20 minutes all day long and weekends. Because
18 it-what point is it to have an integrated ferry if
19 you don't have any trains showing up? To handle the
20 increased load we need to have trains going through
21 Penn Station. Amtrak goes through Penn Station. New
22 Jersey Transit, Long Island and Metro North also need
23 to go through. Because when you have the trains
24 coming in and going out, [bell] they conflict with
25 each other. You lose capacity. So, and this can be

2 done quickly, but it requires cooperation from all
3 the players and the political leadership, and we're
4 very happy that the City Council was here pushing for
5 this. We need to have the same level of support from
6 our governors and our local--other local elected
7 officials. Cooperative regional planning is
8 critical. The City DOT and the City Planning
9 Commission co-chair of--have leadership roles in the
10 New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, which
11 is the Metropolitan Planning Agency. They should
12 outline a comprehensive work program that for the
13 city and the region that can be federally funded
14 through the Council. Thank you very much.

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [off mic] Thank
16 you.

17 ERIC MCCLURE: Good afternoon. My name
18 is Eric McClure. I'm the Executive Director of
19 StreetsPAC. On behalf of my colleagues in StreetsPAC,
20 I commend Chairman Rodriguez and the Committee on
21 Transportation for holding this hearing today. The
22 lack of good access to transit is a significant
23 challenge for far too many New Yorkers, and it's an
24 issue that in general doesn't get enough attention.
25 It's imperative the we increase and improve the

2 mobility of residents in New York City. Our economic
3 health depends on an improved mobility that is
4 fundament to reducing inequality in our city. As the
5 cost of housing in parts of Manhattan and Brooklyn
6 and Queens especially rises unabated and large
7 numbers of residents are driven by financial concerns
8 to move farther away from our key business districts,
9 it's critical that we find ways to shorten and
10 improve commutes. In solving the mobility challenge,
11 it's important that we look to modes of transit
12 capable of moving the greatest numbers of people with
13 the greatest efficiency. There is, of course, no
14 rival to our subways in that regard, but the cost of
15 extending our subway system are enormous as we are
16 seeing with the Second Avenue Subway. That's why a
17 resolution to have the MTA study unused and under-
18 utilized railroad rights-of-way makes tremendous
19 sense. There has been much talk about the Triboro RX
20 Line since it was first proposed two decades ago, but
21 little action. The restoration of rail service on
22 the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch has a potential
23 to connect Northern with Southern Queens and moves
24 tens of thousands of riders a day. Are these ideas
25 feasible? We can't know for sure without a

2 comprehensive study. The same holds true for the
3 study of light rail implementation in New York City.
4 Does light rail make more sense than bus rapid
5 transit? Can it move more passengers and spur more
6 development and economic opportunity? Those are
7 things we should know as we tackle the transit desert
8 problem. Regardless, we must summon the political
9 will necessary to reallocate street space from
10 automobiles to transit. On its surface, expansion of
11 the City Ticket program appears to make great sense.
12 Allowing city's own riders to use Long Island
13 Railroad and Metro North trains at a cost comparable
14 to a Metro Card fare would speed commutes and improve
15 access. However, commuter trains carry their fullest
16 passenger loads within the city zone. So a concurrent
17 increasing capacity would surely be necessary, and
18 free rail to subway transfers might have the
19 unintended consequence of adding to the large subsidy
20 suburban rail commuters already receive. Those are
21 details that can be ironed, however, as we work
22 towards the worthy goal of ferry equalization within
23 the five boroughs. Lastly, while the expansion of
24 ferry service in New York City waters has great
25 political support, it's important that we look at

2 cost versus benefit. Ferry rides are far more
3 substantially subsidized that most other modes of
4 transit, and ridership is relatively low. About ten
5 times as many people take the Citibike ride daily as
6 cross the East River by ferry. Without any subsidy,
7 public dollars from Citibike and its further
8 expansion is a topic for another day, of course. For
9 certain parts of the city, however, ferry service may
10 be the best transit solution. Of course, solving the
11 transit desert challenge may take more than
12 innovative thinking. It will also take substantial,
13 perhaps historic investment. The first step toward
14 achieving that investment is to implement the Move
15 New York plan without further delay. We need Albany
16 to act, and this Council must unite behind Move New
17 York to help make that happen. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

19 [bell]

20 DOUGLAS ADAMS: [coughs] Good afternoon.
21 I'm Douglas Adams of the Waterfront Alliance,
22 formerly the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance. We're
23 the leading civic voice for transforming our
24 waterfronts and a coalition of over 850 waterfront
25 stakeholders. Thank you City Council members and

2 Committee Chair Rodriguez for conducting this
3 hearing. We strongly support the proposed
4 legislation regarding transportation deserts. A
5 single mother in Soundview in the Bronx does not have
6 time to both care for her child and commute three
7 hours a day to a job in Manhattan. So she works
8 locally earning \$8.75 an hour at the Dollar Store
9 getting home earlier and avoiding unaffordable day
10 care. With citywide ferry service his travel time to
11 Manhattan would be cut in half giving her far better
12 job prospects that could even allow her to pay for
13 day care. A dad spending in Astoria Houses spends
14 almost two hours a day commuting by bus and subway to
15 Manhattan. With citywide ferry service he'll get
16 home 30 minutes earlier everyday in time to help
17 coach his son's little league team. Of the 35
18 neighborhood identified in the City's One New York
19 Plan is both low-income and transit poor within
20 inadequate access to jobs and economic opportunity.
21 Two out of three of those could be served by expanded
22 ferry service beyond what citywide ferry services
23 will provide. [coughs] Unfortunately, even citywide
24 ferry service is not funded beyond it's five-year
25 pilot, and the inability to transfer between ferries

2 and New York City transit will limit its ability to
3 serve low-income riders. These problems must be
4 corrected. Ferries are relatively cheap to implement
5 and subsidies for citywide ferry service will be
6 competitive with those from local buses and below
7 those for express bus and commuter trains. Expanded
8 ferry service combined with new Select Bus Service
9 routes and bicycle improvements provides the most
10 economically responsible opportunity for underserved
11 parts of the city. Thank you.

12 ERIN ABRAMS: Good afternoon, Chairman
13 Rodriguez and Transportation Committee members. My
14 name is Erin Abrams and I appreciate the opportunity
15 to address you today on behalf of Via Transportation
16 an on-demand ride sharing platform currently
17 providing service to most of Manhattan. Via is a
18 true ride sharing service that aggregates in real
19 time multiple passengers traveling in the same
20 direction in a single vehicle. We currently have
21 over 100,000 members, and have provided nearly two
22 million rides, the majority of which were shared.
23 Via got its starting 2013 serving the corridor along
24 York Avenue on the Upper East Side, the well known
25 transportation desert within Manhattan, but it

2 several avenues away from the nearest subway.

3 Particularly in light of cutbacks to the M78 and M31

4 bus service some of our elderly members, and those

5 with limited mobility greatly appreciate the option

6 for safe, reliable and affordable transportation in

7 their neighborhood. Today, thousands of members on

8 the far east side and far west sides of Manhattan

9 relay on Via's \$5.00 flat fee rates to get to and

10 from work, school and doctor's appointments each day.

11 We continue to progressively expand the geographic

12 area that we cover. We recently expanded to cover

13 Battery Park City, another neighborhood with limited

14 subway access. We also plan to expand to Upper

15 Manhattan and the more densely populated parts of the

16 outer boroughs. Since more than 70% of our rides are

17 at peak times and shared with 30--with three or more

18 passengers, we are able to keep our prices

19 predictable and relatively affordable while also

20 reducing the number of cars on the road in the long

21 term. Because our services cost far less than a cab,

22 a private car or even other ride sharing services,

23 it's much more economical for our consumers to

24 consider Via when they're not well served by public

25 transit. While we firmly believe that ride sharing

2 services like Via area a part of the solution to the
3 transportation desert problem, it's important to know
4 that our local legislators support the true ride
5 sharing model that Via represents. With city
6 government as a an ally in the campaign to provide
7 access to affordable transit for all New Yorkers, we
8 will have the stability and certainty needed to
9 expand our operations. To that end, if Intro 965 is
10 passed, we hope that the resulting study takes into
11 account the positive impact and the potential of true
12 ride sharing services to provide mobility solutions
13 to consumers who live far from subway stops, or who
14 have to take multiple buses and trains to get across
15 town. Private ride sharing services can supplement
16 the existing transit infrastructure by filling gaps
17 in the public transit system, and offering low cost
18 alternatives to consumers, particularly in
19 underserved areas. Ride sharing services can help to
20 address these concerns by offering solutions for the
21 last mile problem where a person could share a short
22 ride from the train or bus station to their home or
23 workplace after already enduring a long commute. In
24 our view, ride sharing works best in partnership with
25 local government, not in competition with it. To

2 that end, we would support a measure like Resolution
3 670 that argue that it doesn't go far enough. To
4 address the mobility needs of constituents living or
5 working in transportation deserts in a transformative
6 way, the Council may wish to consider a city
7 partnership with [bell] ride sharing services to over
8 transfers to shared vehicles with the consumers who
9 have already taken the commuter rail or New York City
10 bus as part of their commute, possibly within an
11 hour. We look forward to working with the city to
12 implement constructive solutions to this important
13 problem, and we thank you for your time today.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,
15 everyone. Now, I'm going to be calling the next
16 panel, Karen Lisowski (sp?), Steven Buckman, Robert
17 Diamond and William Henderson.

18 [background comments, pause]

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Sir.

20 WILLIAM HENDERSON: Good afternoon, my
21 name is William Henderson. I'm the Executive
22 Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee
23 to the MTA and New York City Transit Riders Council.
24 Both the PCAC and TRC have long advocated better
25 transit connections in New York City neighborhood

2 that are transit underserved. Thanks to the Chairman
3 of the committee for addressing these important
4 issues this morning. The NYCTRC believes that the
5 MTA must invest resources and measures in systems
6 growing ridership. Innovative, efficient and timely
7 solutions are needed to accommodate this increasing
8 demand. As population and job growth continues
9 citywide, areas in the outer boroughs are lacking
10 adequate transit options to support this growth.
11 Therefore, we encourage both the City of New York and
12 the MTA to work together to identify solutions to
13 meet ridership demands on all MTA modes of travel.
14 The first step in this would be to reduce commuter
15 rail fares within New York City to provide affordable
16 fares while dramatically decreasing travel times for
17 outer borough commuters. In 2003, the PCAC worked
18 with the MTA to create City Ticket, which created a
19 lower weekend fare on both Metro North and Long
20 Island Railroad within city limits. Now, as New York
21 City Transit's ridership has increased and will
22 continue to do so, it is becoming imperative to
23 examine New York City's commuter railroads to see how
24 they can relieve pressure on the subway system, as
25 well as improving transit system and transit deserts.

2 In several weeks we will be releasing a new report
3 entitled the *Freedom Ticket: Southeast Queens Proof*
4 *of Concept*. Freedom Ticket will expand the premise
5 of City Ticket, and allow customers to use any MTA
6 modes that meets their needs with bus, subway or
7 commuter rail within a given zone for reduced fare on
8 weekdays. That would be 24/7. The New York City
9 Transit Riders Council envisions implementation of
10 Freedom Ticket in Southeast Queens where the nearest
11 subway access can be up to five miles away resulting
12 in long and difficult commutes and many require
13 connections. In areas like Rosedale over 34% of the
14 community population travels 60 minutes or more to
15 work. Travel to and from these neighborhoods can be
16 over an hour and a half compared to 37 minutes on the
17 LIRR. Unfortunately, the issue is cost. A ticket
18 from Penn State--to and from Penn Station from
19 Rosedale can be \$10, and the same is true for
20 Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn. It's prohibitively
21 expensive for most folks, and substantially more
22 expensive than the transit fare. We proposed to
23 implement a new fare class, the Freedom Ticket, to
24 reduce per ride weekly and monthly fares on commuter
25 railroads and provide transfers to New York City

2 Transit to complete the trip. The fare may be
3 greater than an existing transit fare, but it must
4 all be affordable to riders including provisions for
5 weekly and monthly fares can reduce the cost of
6 travel for commuters. It's crucial in a time of
7 record breaking ridership and limit financial
8 resources that we use all of our assets in the most
9 efficient manner possible. We think that [bell] that
10 manner is to reduce fares on the commuter railroads
11 to the--to encourage that use. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

13 STEVEN BUCKMAN: My name is Steven
14 Buckman (sic). Intro 670 calls for the MTA to
15 equalize fares and transfers between New York City
16 subway system and commuter railroads within New York
17 City. It doesn't make clear whether the equalization
18 is to be accomplished by lowering the commuter rail
19 fares or by raising the subway fares. I think it
20 needs clarification on this point. Intro 965 the MTA
21 has not been expanding the subway system with great
22 rapidity. I fear each five-year report is likely to
23 be a copy of its predecessor. Reports using census
24 sports will yield more substantial and accurate data
25 and are available at ten-year intervals. Also, the

2 one-third mile distance criterion is a bit too
3 strict. There is more than just pass/fail. I've
4 done my own analysis and I used three categories.
5 Less than half a mile for walking to the subway
6 system--between half a mile and two miles for which
7 bus and bike access is a real possibility, and then
8 greater than two miles for which you are going to
9 have to extend the rail system. The half mile
10 walking distance criteria is based on my own
11 experience of the Board of Eds no school bus policy
12 for 8-year-old third graders some 60 plus years ago.
13 With regard to how well the system stacks up, there's
14 a table in here that describes essentially 75% of
15 citywide people are already within walking distance
16 of a subway station. 19% are within the bus/bike
17 access and 6% or half a million people are beyond.
18 There is also a borough breakdown for that. Tables--
19 where--where re there the more than two-mile places?
20 There are maps for each borough in the document that
21 I gave you. The red--red patch area shows the
22 walking distance. You're at a half a mile. The green
23 patch area shows half a mile to two miles with half-
24 mile contours, and the more than two-mile access is--
25 from a subway entrance is white. The areas with more

2 than two mile access in the city is essentially
3 northeastern and southeastern Queens, northern and
4 western portions of Staten Island. It comprises half
5 a million people in the city's population. And if
6 strengthening gentrification, poor people will be
7 pushed to these areas. This is from the European
8 cities. Those with the money in the center live
9 there and they push the people to the far fringes of
10 the city. It stands to reason that priority for
11 subway expansion should be directed toward providing
12 access to these far-flung areas. Too many of the
13 current and past projects are centered on improving
14 services to areas that already are joined. (sic) One
15 metric, which I have is judging how well a project
16 contributes to his is how many more people are added
17 to the half mile radius to the system. With regard
18 to Intro 903 [bell] there rail corridors in the city
19 that are under-utilized for a good reason. When the
20 subway system was expanded in the teens and 20s, they
21 bankrupted the system with the fares. With regard to
22 the Montauk Branch, it's going to add--using the
23 Montauk Branch it's going to add 32,000 more riders
24 within that space, but all of them are with 1-1/2
25 miles of the--of the existing system. You can see

2 that on Figure 6. Reactivating the Rockaway Beach
3 Branch would provide 13,000 more riders within half a
4 mile, but all of them are within 1-1/2 miles and none
5 outside, none of them beyond two miles. Finally,
6 the--the Triboro RX Branch from Bay Ridge to Woodside
7 would add 53,023--76,053 in Brooklyn, 23,000 in
8 Queens. However, again, as Figure 8 shows, all are
9 within 1-1/2 miles of a subway entrance. None is
10 beyond that two mile threshold. None of these
11 projects will benefit the half million people who
12 currently live beyond this two-mile threshold.
13 Projects must point east and southeast in Queens to
14 help these people. Using the north--Staten Island's
15 North Shore right-of-way will bring 52,000 new
16 residents within half a mile of the--using the old
17 SART stops. Many of these are beyond the existing
18 two-mile threshold as the Figure 5 shows. Thank you
19 very much.

20 KAREN LISOWSKI: Hi. My name is Karen
21 Lisowski (sic). I'm a French architect. I recently
22 moved to New York, and I was working for the last 12
23 years as the Chief Architect of the light rail in
24 Jerusalem. (sic) And I would like to speak about the
25 city about the light rail. I would like to say that

2 based on my experience, the light rail is much more
3 than a transportation system. In addition, I think
4 an efficient high capacity, sensible and reliable
5 system it's a need too, to integrate transportation
6 and urban planning. And I think that it's very
7 important to integrate that in the city. It's a--
8 it's a--it's a tool--light rail is a tool toward
9 develop--to urban development. It attracts real
10 estate development, low gentrification, creates new
11 public space, near attractive zone, and it's--usually
12 when it's designed the right way it fosters social
13 collision between commuter and neighborhood. And the
14 design--the design of the light rail, of course, is
15 answering a demand. But doing the study I think it's
16 very important also to take into account the new
17 policy of the city in urban planning because light
18 rail allows really to develop--it's tool to develop
19 new urban policy. And because if the light rail is
20 creating ridership and creating new demands. And so,
21 for that reason, I think it's very important for the
22 city--for the Department of City Planning to be very-
23 -very involved as a city of the light rail. Because
24 it's not only a transportation city. It has to be

2 also an urban planning city because of all of the
3 potential of the right rail.

4 BOB DIAMOND: Good afternoon, Chairman
5 Rodriguez and learned Council Members. My name is
6 Bob Diamond. I'm the Chairman of the Brooklyn
7 Historic Railway Association, and I'm here to speak
8 in favor of resolving the terrible blight of
9 transportation deserts around the City of New York.
10 Very quickly, let's take a quick look at how they got
11 like that to begin with, and a way of fixing them by
12 using modern streetcars. We've got a firm grip on
13 the past. Let's pull back the veils of time to the
14 prohibition era in New York City, the late 1920s.
15 Mayor Jimmy Walker and Board of Estimate approved a
16 massive program of subway expansion called the Second
17 System. This undertaking included the Utica Avenue
18 Subway, which would have been the first rapid transit
19 line in the country to be funded through tax
20 increment financing. Interestingly enough, tax
21 increment financing has been effect--has been in
22 effect in the City and State of New York ever since
23 1915. Brooklyn and Queens once had [bell] all-
24 electric freight delivery system, freight trains
25 arriving from all over the U.S. funneled into the

2 Long Island Railroad electrified Bay Ridge Branch
3 into mobile transfer yards, which were strategically
4 located along the line where cargo was taken off the
5 trains by electric forklifts and transferred to
6 electric trucks for local delivery. But soon came
7 the Great Depression and World Ware II that
8 effectively put the kibosh on the second system of
9 the Bay Ridge Line. Then the New York City's street
10 care system was systematically dismantled by the oil
11 and--by the oil and automobile industry National City
12 Line scandal. Way back in the day in 1981, when I
13 was somewhat younger and a lot thinner, I
14 rediscovered the world's oldest subway, which is
15 under Brooklyn's Atlantic Avenue. The tunnel built
16 by the Long Island Railroad in 1844 was sealed up and
17 lost in 1861. Hearing about the tunnel by accident
18 and being intrigued by the many extreme legends
19 surrounding it, I found the way inside. This led
20 directly to a New York City sponsored streetcar
21 demonstration project in Red Hook with an eye towards
22 connecting our transportation starved neighborhood
23 with Downtown Brooklyn transportation nexus. For a
24 brief shining moment in 2002, streetcars were once
25 again clanging along Brooklyn streets. For the first

2 time since the Brooklyn Dodgers won their only World
3 Series back in 1956. Sadly, it didn't last. This
4 Red Hook street car demonstration line was completely
5 removed by the former city administration in 2003.
6 But, a major part of this experiment has survived.
7 In order to build and operate in Red Hook streets, we
8 had to develop the design and construction paradigm,
9 which was then approved by every conceivable
10 governmental agency. It received a negative SECA
11 declaration, which is no impact, and we passed
12 through ULURP with flying colors. Perhaps this
13 material could help get the new street car project
14 off the ground today. Now, what can modern
15 streetcars do for New York City? Bring over a
16 billion per mile in new investments along its route.
17 Streetcars help build strong communities, promotes
18 walking, and helps draw people out of their
19 automobiles. Repopulation of the city. For example,
20 in 1950, Red Hook had a population density of about
21 250,000 people per square mile. Today, it's less
22 than 2,000 per square mile. Conversely, neighboring
23 Cobble Hill has a population density of about 50,000
24 per square mile. The street car can facilitate the
25 repopulation of neighborhoods that were decimated

2 during urban flight and burning times of the 1950s
3 through 1980s. Thereby helping increase the city's
4 overall tax base. Streetcars can help reduce
5 greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutions.
6 Streetcars are electric and have no tail pipes
7 spewing out noxious vapors. Because of the
8 fractional (sic) historic energy loss inherent in--
9 inherent in any rubber tired vehicle, a street car
10 only uses 5% of the energy of a bus. Streetcars can
11 help improve travel--help improve transportation
12 travel time. Modern streetcars have utilized traffic
13 signal prioritization and dedicated transit lanes
14 wherever feasible. The base cost of building a new
15 street car line in New York City is about \$13 million
16 per route mile, which is two tracks if it's done on a
17 non-profit construction basis. The operating cost to
18 efficiently run street car lines is under \$70 per
19 hour per street car. The current operating cost of a
20 New York City bus is about \$250 per hour per bus.
21 Ongoing street car operations can be funded via a
22 TID, which is the same thing as a business
23 improvement district, but the revenue raised goes to
24 support the streetcar operation. Certain makes of
25 modern streetcars can [bell] can travel around 36-

2 foot radius curves. Streetcars can fit into nearly
3 any existing New York City street--

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]
5 Summarize please, sir, in 10 seconds.

6 BOB DIAMOND: Okay. Last year the Hong
7 Kong Transit Authority made a \$2 billion profit by
8 working in creative ways with developers. Why not
9 here in New York City. For example, if the MTA's Bay
10 Ridge and Sea Beach open cut were to be moved over
11 between Fort Hamilton Parkway and New York Harbor and
12 the air rights are leased or stalled--

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]
14 Thank you--thank you.

15 BOB DIAMOND: Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thanks. Then the
17 last two persons is Roddy--Ronnie and Joseph Gardner
18 (sic).

19 [background comments, pause]

20 JOSEPH GARDNER: I'll be quick.

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: This is our last
22 panel since we're getting ready to hear from the
23 Helicopter. (sic)

24 JOSEPH GARDNER: [off mic] Okay. I'm from
25 Rockaway, Queens. I'm a big ferry advocate. [on

2 mic] On the Rockaway Beach Line. On the Rockaway
3 Beach Line. That is brought here connecting the
4 northeast train corridor to Kennedy Airport. You
5 would also give access from the Bronx to Kennedy
6 Airport. The next thing, and I'll make it quick
7 because it's been done already, is the ferry service
8 throughout the city. Ferry service in Rockaway was
9 decided on a Wednesday and up and running on Monday,
10 and it cut commute time to Rockaway in a half, by
11 over half an hour. It was on time to the minute
12 better than 97% of the time. And in two years, two
13 months it was in place. Not one police incident was
14 on that boat. We could put ferry services in New
15 York and the other thing I would like to see is the
16 airports interconnected by ferry. If we do that, the
17 path train is subsidized for \$220 million a years
18 from the Port Authority. So we can get them to
19 subsidize the ferries. Also, by connecting the
20 airports, 10 million people go from Kennedy Airport
21 to Lower Manhattan, 10 million. There's your subsidy
22 for half an hour. Everything else has been covered
23 ten times. I'm finished. [laughter]

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. With
25 this we are coming to the end of this hearing. I am

2 inviting everyone to our next one, which is going to
3 be the 23rd, a joint hearing with Public Safety about
4 drones in New York City. And again, this hearing
5 today was about how New York City should improve
6 transportation to the transportation desert areas.
7 And I would add it is my goal that by 2030 we will
8 reduce the number of cars from 1.5 million that we
9 have today to one million. I also am inviting
10 everyone, including all--everyone present here for
11 the next hearing to be part of the great event that
12 we're looking to do on the Earth Day, Friday the 22nd
13 of 2016 as a car-free day in New York City so that we
14 can follow other cities with there being also
15 reducing cars in our city. Taking advantage, knowing
16 that the next hearing is going to be about
17 helicopters. I live in Inwood and I walk to work
18 everyday to the West Side, I understand this issue,
19 and I do agree that we have to work to find a
20 solution to all the noise that is produced by the
21 helicopter. Thank you. With this, this hearing is
22 adjourned.

23 [gavel/applause]

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 November 18, 2015