

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES
Of the
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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February 13, 2017
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Daniel R. Garodnick
James Vacca
Margaret S. Chin
Stephen T. Levin
Deborah L. Rose
James G. Van Bramer
David G. Greenfield
Costa G. Constantinides
Carlos Menchaca
I. Daneek Miller
Antonio Reynoso
Donovan J. Richards

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

Eric Beaton, Senior Director
Transit Development
NYC Department of Transportation

Jeff Lynch, Assistant Commissioner
Intergovernmental and Community Affairs
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Will Kerry, Senior Director
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David Jones, President
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Norma Jean
Riders Alliance

Julia Kite, Policy and Research Manager
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Sherma Dulles (sp?)
BMCC Student

Jules Flynn, General Manager
Citi Bike

Lillie Carino Higgins
Local Union 1199

Darelli Fabro, Student
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow

Yonny De Comesco
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow

Gay Thomas Winofski (sp?)
Community Service Society
Appearing for Laval du ha

Shulamit Warren, Policy Director
Appearing for Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President

Emily Lee, Supervising Attorney
Brooklyn Defender Services

Jackie Cohen, Campaign Coordinator
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Deborah Lolai
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Rebecca Balin, Campaign Manager
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Wilma (sic) Cabrera
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Monica Martinez
Riders Alliance

Pedro Baez, Jr.
Riders Alliance Member

Bret Stanley
Collegiate Congress

Christo Thomas, Chairperson
Collegiate Congress \

Marjorie Mitusaka
Theater of the Oppressed

Latisha Baudier
Theater of the Oppressed

Adrianna Espinoza, Manager
New York City Program
New York League of Conservation Voters

Jessica Garcia, Deputy Political Director
Retail, Wholesale Department Store Union

2 [sound check, pause] [background
3 comments]

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Good morning and
5 welcome to the New York City Council Committee on
6 Transportation. My name is Ydanis Rodriguez, and I
7 am the Chair of the committee. We are joined today
8 by my colleague the great Public Advocate Tish James,
9 and also by Council Member Constantinides, Richards,
10 Chin and Menchaca. This morning we will examine
11 public transportation, and the many ways improvement
12 in public transportation options can improve the
13 lives of New Yorkers. Our city's public
14 transportation, our system—oh, I'm sorry. Our city's
15 public transportation system are what make New York
16 one of the pre-permanent level city. There are
17 benefits who quickly move New Yorkers, tourists and
18 communities quickly throughout the five boroughs is
19 the envy of cities across the world. But as this
20 committee has explored in the past, transit deserts
21 persist creating highly inconvenient communities for
22 New Yorkers living far away from subway service, Bike
23 Share, or bus—or bus routes. In parts of Southeast
24 Queens or Brooklyn a commute can sometimes mean
25 multiple modes of transportation, and commute of over

2 an hour and a half one way. In New York–New York we
3 know the value of every minute. So three hours spent
4 traveling everyday could be spent in countless other
5 productive ways. But time is not the only cause some
6 New Yorkers are burdened with. For many, the cost of
7 Metro Card is preventative, meaning they must forego
8 job opportunities, education, cultural experience,
9 doctor appointments and more. This true today and
10 this is true today, and we know that with fares set
11 to increase next month, household budgets will see an
12 even greater strain. In a 2016 report conducted by
13 the Community Service Society who we will hear from–
14 from momentarily, over 300,000 New Yorkers allocate
15 more than 10% of their household budget to travel
16 costs. In a city where two-thirds of New Yorkers–
17 renters are rent burdened, spending half of their
18 incomes on housing, the budget crunch of travel can
19 be particularly hard on those with lower incomes
20 across our city. We know that–we know that in some
21 other major American cities for residents living far
22 below the poverty line local governments have made a
23 point to offer assistance providing half–half price
24 fares to ensure residents are still able to travel.
25 In Seattle, poverty stricken residents are able to

2 obtain a card for their local transit systems at
3 \$1.50 of the base fare. San Francisco also offers a
4 similar program, and even some small municipalities
5 like Dayton, Ohio have take up the effort. New York
6 City cannot be behind. In New York City where nearly
7 half of the New Yorkers live in poverty, developing a
8 system to support those most in need travel to work
9 or-or [coughs] school can be a tremendous benefit.
10 In the same report by the CSS savings in travel costs
11 incurred by those eligible for this program go as
12 high as \$700 per year. For fixed income households
13 that money could mean clothing or food for children.
14 It could also mean that families can afford to take
15 necessary trips to doctors, take children to a museum
16 or park or college students being able to make their
17 classes. As someone who faced these struggles myself
18 in college, sometimes walking miles from my own where
19 I used to live at 124 Sherman Avenue and going to
20 City College because my family was on a tight budget,
21 and at some time I also relied on public assistance.
22 I know what I'm talking about. That's why we will
23 hear today from a number of panels who have endorsed
24 the initiative know as Fair Fares including some New
25 Yorkers who stand to benefit most from this benefit.

2 The committee welcomes this testimony, and I want to
3 thank Community Service Society, Mrs. Joe Revere and
4 Riders Alliance and thanking the whole team for their
5 strong advocacy on behalf of New Yorkers in need. We
6 know very well that while our city has taken many
7 strides over the past three years in our effort to
8 close the poverty gap, there's always room to
9 improve. I can thank a few policies more finally-
10 finally targeted towards supporting hard-working
11 New Yorkers looking to claim their way into the
12 middle-class. Public transportation can be improved
13 in other ways as well, and I am proud to recent-of
14 recent efforts and others that will be underway
15 shortly, and our shortening commuter-commute for New-
16 for New Yorkers living in transit deserts. It was
17 welcome news last week when the MTA announced a pilot
18 program for what is known as the Freedom Ticket that
19 we are behind. It is simple. City residents should
20 be able to take commute rail service such as the LIRR
21 or the Metro North for the far lower price is
22 traveling exclusively in New York City. For
23 residents living in far out Queens, Southern Brooklyn
24 or Central and South Bronx, commuter rail into the
25 central business district would cut commute times in

2 half or more. It could also reduce serious crowding
3 on packed-packed subway lines that cause delays
4 system wide. This is something I-I and my colleague
5 Council Member Miller have been advocating for
6 several years now, and are very glad to see a pilot
7 program in the works. We look forward to hearing
8 more details about this plan from the MTA as it is
9 moved forward. There is also a exciting news coming
10 the New York City DOT whom we will hear from in just
11 a moment about the plan for the city wide transit
12 study. We will hear details on these efforts in just
13 a moment as well as the outreach plans already
14 underway aimed at getting feedback from New Yorkers
15 about what is needed and where. Since study began
16 extensive legislation, Council Member Lander and my-
17 and myself will look at raising populations as well
18 as expected trains in the future, and where
19 investments in public transit are most needed. We
20 know the Administration has already highlighted
21 potential benefits of a Utica-a Utica Avenue subway
22 line, and my office has put forward ideas for the
23 shorter train along Fordham Road in the Bronx ending
24 in Northern Manhattan at 207 and Broadway with the
25 potential to connect numerous subways and commuter

2 rail lines. I also hope that this study will
3 continue to focus on transit deserts like the North
4 Shore of Staten Island and the South Bronx and
5 Eastern Queens. Finally, we hope to hear briefly
6 about upcoming plans for the citywide ferry service
7 expect—expected to launch later this year and any
8 update on the BQX project, and the potential for Citi
9 Bike expansion, one of the most cost-effective
10 transportation modes that we need to bring to more
11 communities citywide especially those in lower income
12 transit deserts. There's much we can do to continue
13 improving public transportation as well as making it
14 accessible to more New Yorkers across the city.
15 Whether due to cost or distance, we know there are
16 many more who can be served by this informative
17 public good, and I'm eager to see some of these ideas
18 put into actions. We know that public transportation
19 is the most cost-efficient, energy efficient, and
20 sometimes even time efficient way of moving
21 throughout the five boroughs. Quality transit
22 options help take cars off the street, and make our
23 city healthier and more sustainable. Investment in
24 transit can have tremendous returns, and the evidence
25 could now be clear. Given New York City's population-

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2 --position as a truly global city, we look forward to
3 testimony from the Administration and general public.

4 Now, we're going to be calling for the vote, but
5 before that, we will be voting. So we will voting
6 legislation introduced by Council Member Maisel,
7 Intro 975-A ensuring that our roads are clear of
8 unused or abandoned utility poles. I would like to
9 offer--he's not here. So we're taking the vote.

10 [background comments]

11 CLERK: Good morning. William Martin,
12 Committee Clerk. Roll call vote Committee on
13 Transportation Introduction 975-A, Chair Rodriguez.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

15 CLERK: Garodnick.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

17 CLERK: Chin.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [off mic] Aye.

19 CLERK: Richards.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Aye.

21 CLERK: Constantinides.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Aye.

23 CLERK: Menchaca.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Aye.

25 CLERK: Miller.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Aye.

3 CLERK: Reynoso.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I vote aye on
5 all.

6 CLERK: Van Bramer.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: I vote aye on
8 all.

9 CLERK: By a vote of 9 in the
10 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,
11 the item has been adopted by the committee.

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you and
13 before the opening--

14 CLERK: Council Member Greenfield,
15 Introduction 975-A.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [off mic]

17 CLERK: The vote is now 10.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So before I open
19 the opportunity for the panel, the first panel, I
20 would like first to thank our great staff for putting
21 the hearing together, Policy Analyst Jennifer
22 Messarano, Gafar Zaaloff, and Emily Rooney, and
23 Finance Analyst Chima Obichere, as well as my staff
24 Rosa Murphy, Ansel (sic) Louis, and now I would like
25 to ask our committee counsel to please deliver the

2 Commissioner and welcome the representatives from the
3 DOT to offer testimony today.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: Pleas raise your right
5 hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole
6 truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony
7 before this committee, and to respond honestly to
8 Council Member questions? Thank you. [pause]

9 ERIC BEATON: [off mic] -- [on mic] and
10 members of the committee. I am Eric Beaton, Senior
11 Director of Transit Development of the New York City
12 Department of Transportation. I am joined here by
13 Jeff Lynch, Assistant Commissioner for
14 Intergovernmental and Community Affairs, and by Will
15 Kerry, our Senior Director for Special Projects.
16 Thank you for inviting us to speak with you about the
17 state of--state of public transportation in New York
18 City, a topic of significant importance to the
19 region's economy, and the quality of life for all of
20 our residents. Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner
21 Trottenberg are committed to supporting the thriving
22 public transit system, and we are pleased to be with
23 you this morning to discuss some of the city's key
24 priorities and initiatives on this front. More
25 people are choosing to live and work in New York than

2 ever before. Our population now over 8.5 million, is
3 the highest in recorded history. Between 2010 and
4 2015, the City has created 500,000 new jobs and added
5 370,000 new residents. Tour-tourism is booming with
6 nearly 60 million visitors coming to the city in
7 2015. Sustainable modes of transit particularly New
8 York City's public transportation system are the
9 engine powering this growth. In fact, traffic
10 volumes in the Central Business District have
11 remained flat even as this growth shows no signs of
12 slowing. From the meter of our transit system in the
13 1970s, the city, state and MTA together have invested
14 billions of dollars in rebuilding infrastructure,
15 attracting people back onto this most sustainable of
16 transit modes, and fulfilling the-fueling the
17 resurgence of this city. At the same time we have
18 worked to make our surface transportation system be
19 more efficient and safe, implementing adaptive
20 traffic lights, bike lanes, and other improvements.
21 But now we have a different problem. We are a victim
22 of our own successes, and our transportation system
23 is bursting at the seams. Between 2010 and 2015,
24 we've seen a 10% increase in subway ridership. We
25 want to continue our growth streak, and have the

2 capacity to accommodate all those who want to live
3 and work in New York City, continued investment in
4 public transportation is important, and must be a
5 priority. We work closely with the MTA on issues
6 pertaining to the core of the transportation system,
7 and that is primarily what I will discuss with you
8 this morning. However, I want to briefly touch on
9 some additional city initiatives that we are
10 implementing independently to generate additional
11 capacity throughout the city. For example, EDC is on
12 track to implement an ambitious plan to expand
13 citywide ferry service beginning this summer. This
14 service is anticipated to carry 4.6 million passenger
15 trips each year across six different routes for the
16 price of a subway or bus fare. The six routes will
17 run over about 60 miles in the water. Additionally,
18 the Brooklyn-Queens Waterfront has changed
19 dramatically over the past 15 years, yet, the
20 transportation system has not kept up. The city is
21 continuing its planning efforts regarding the BQX in
22 order to accommodate sustainable growth, and, of
23 course, DOT does operate a crucial transit link, the
24 Staten Island Ferry. Mayor de Blasio is committed to
25 enhancing this vital transit option, and has committed

an additional \$122 million for security upgrades and infrastructure improvements in the city's Capital Plan. Additionally, the city increased overnight service recently, and now both the both St. George and Whitehall Terminals at least once every 30 minutes around the clock. In the coming years we will also be adding three new vessels to the fleet to provide even better service to the public. That all said, the MTA is still the major provider of public transit in New York City, and we continue to partner with the MTA on a wide range of issues. One often overlooked component of this relationship is the robust financial support that New York City provides to help maintain and expand the MTA's infrastructure. Mayor de Blasio recognizes that our transit system is the backbone of our economy, and in the most recent MTA Five-Year Capital Plan, made a historic commitment of \$2.5 billion, the city's largest ever general capital contribution. These funds will support critical state of good repair and maintenance projects as well as providing new station stairs and elevators where needed to support the city's growth. The city also engages directly with the MTA on key projects and initiatives. For example, we are in

2 regular communication with the agency regarding
3 planning and outreach for the forthcoming L-Train
4 tunnel closure. On a daily basis the city most
5 directly collaborates with the MTA on bus service.
6 As we recently discussed here at the Council, one of
7 the significant challenges facing our transit system
8 is that average bus speeds have been declining
9 reaching a historically low average of 7.5 miles an
10 hour over the course of the day. While there are
11 about 2.5 million daily bus trips, ridership has been
12 following a downward trend with a decline of nearly
13 6% over the past ten years despite our record
14 population. The reality is that in too many areas of
15 the city, bus service is not as good as it could be.
16 We have a duty to equitably serve the millions of New
17 Yorkers who rely on buses. New Yorkers of all
18 backgrounds take the bus, but we also know that bus
19 riders are disproportionately low-income and over the
20 age of 65. New Yorkers with mobility impairments
21 also rely heavily on the bus, as much of the subway
22 system remains inaccessible, and there are
23 neighborhoods beyond the subway system where
24 residents must rely on the bus to connect to the rest
25 of the city. To fulfill the promise of equal

2 opportunity, the city must continue to improve access
3 to jobs, education and other critical destinations
4 for everyone by enhancing our bus service. As
5 Commissioner Trottenberg mentioned at a prior
6 hearing, the city pays for a significant share of the
7 MTA's bus operations. We have a duty to our city
8 taxpayers to be sure their dollars are well spent.
9 We can enhance bus service on many fronts. Many of
10 you are familiar with the jointly run and highly
11 successful MTA and DOT Select Bus Service program, or
12 SBS. Under Mayor de Blasio, we have more than
13 doubled our pace of rolling out new SBS routes, and
14 now have 12 total. Last year we added three new
15 routes, Utica Avenue, 23rd Street and the Q-70 La
16 Guardia Link. Together these 12 SBS corridors now in
17 place provide over 300,000 daily rides, about 12% of
18 total city bus trips. This year we plan to add three
19 more SBS routes along 79th Street, across the South
20 Bronx and along Woodhaven Boulevard. By the end of
21 2017 we expect that SBS will carry about 15% of all
22 bus trips citywide. Elements of Small Business
23 Service can also be used to improve local bus service
24 throughout the city. This includes installing more
25 dedicated bus lanes and thus Q jumps as well as

2 strategies to enhance safety along our routes. We are
3 rolling out Transit Signal Priority or TSP with the
4 MTA to keep buses moving, which has improved travel
5 times by as much as 30% along some routes. We
6 appreciate the support of the Council as we continue
7 to implement these types of initiatives. While not
8 under the city's control, I want to emphasize that
9 the MTA has real opportunity to improve bus service
10 as it develops and procures its new fare payment
11 technology. The city's key priorities for the new
12 system are the support of all-door boarding along
13 with good enforcement. It is time for New York to
14 join over leading cities around the world where bus
15 riders have been benefitting from all-door boarding,
16 and contactless fare payment for years. DOT also
17 focuses on enhancing pedestrian and bike connections
18 to transit. Every transit trip includes a walk to or
19 from the station, and DOT's commitment to Vision Zero
20 is ensuring that New Yorkers can safely access the
21 neighborhood transit stop. For residents who live
22 beyond the convenient walking distance from the
23 subway, DOT is working to make biking an attractive
24 option to the bridge that gap. That is why the city
25 continues to expand its bike route network, and that

2 well over 1,000 miles and Citi Bike, which will reach
3 12,000 bikes and 750 stations by the end of 2017.
4 Even as we remain intently focused on the short-term
5 actions we can take to enhance public transportation
6 in New York City, we also have one eye fixed on the
7 long-term investments that will be needed to truly
8 propel our city and region forward. We commend the
9 MTA on opening the first phase of the Second Avenue
10 Subway last month, a truly great achievement, but we
11 can't stop there. Other global cities such as Los
12 Angeles and London are planning for and investing in
13 their future. We should do the same. The Council
14 has acknowledge the critical importance of long-term
15 planning as well. Local Law 36 of 2015 sponsored by
16 Council Member Lander requires DOT to develop "a plan
17 to create a citywide network of bus rapid transit
18 lines connecting the boroughs of the City of New
19 York" by September 2017. As SBS is but one part of
20 the city's broader transportation network, we are
21 approaching this task comprehensively and will use
22 this study to offer a vision and set of priorities
23 for the future of transit in New York City. Included
24 in this plan will be a Transit Needs Assessment. We
25 will identify and examine those areas of the city

2 where there are high concentrations of people with
3 lower quality transit options including those areas
4 with crowding, unreliable service, low trips and
5 areas with a significant number of low-income and
6 transit dependent riders. I want to commend you, Mr.
7 Chairman, for your strong commitment to these
8 critical issues. Our analysis will help us
9 prioritize where to work with these MTA on additional
10 Small Business Services routes as well as potential
11 investment in other needed transit capacity and
12 access of improvements. We will also think about
13 strategies that can improve transit all over the city
14 whether they be smarter fare collection and
15 additional TSPM bus routes, or understanding the
16 effect that shares use mobility services have on the
17 transit system. The plan will be developed over the
18 course of this year, and we intended to incorporate
19 new and innovative tools into our public outreach
20 efforts to ensure we engage residents throughout the
21 city in this initiative. We are conducting on-the-
22 street outreach, and a series of public workshops
23 throughout this month, and early march. We also have
24 a significant online presence and are reaching out to
25 New Yorkers via an online survey and mapping tool.

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2 Our website for the plan is www.transitplan.nyc. We
3 have provided you with flyers that contain
4 information on the plan including our workshop
5 schedule. We encourage you to reach out to your
6 constituents to inform them of both the workshops and
7 the online survey and mapping tool. We are pleased
8 that we have already received over 2,000 survey
9 responses and ask for your help in continuing to get
10 the word out. I want to close by emphasizing that we
11 are grateful for your support and partnership on all
12 of these issues. Thank you again for inviting me to
13 testify, and I look forward to answering your
14 questions.

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.
16 Before I—I call on the Public Advocate who wants to
17 take her time, I want to recognize the levels who are
18 here and all 1199 LBTJ (sic). I saw Lena Correno
19 (sp?) somewhere back there, and I know that this
20 initiative and this Fair Fare will be successful at
21 the end because so many sectors have embraced it. I
22 already said outside there that the editorial for the
23 New York Times, the Daily News, Diario La Prensa, all
24 of them are on board to vote on this initiative. I
25 hope that New York Posta also will join them, and—and

2 faith leaders from all denominations. They are also
3 on board, as also elected officials. We have a
4 majority of the Council that already have signed on
5 this important initiative, and I know that when it
6 comes to the representatives today of the Department
7 of Transportation, they will, you know, not be able
8 to answer many questions on the number of this
9 particular proposal because I—you know, they—we want
10 to oversee the hearing on how would we make
11 transportation affordable for all New Yorkers? And
12 we heard from the DOT's plan that DOT been working
13 with that there's a bill—there's bills that we also
14 passed, and—and by September 1st, 2017, DOT will have
15 to give a report, and that's what they're working
16 right. So we just hope that we will continue working
17 together in those community engagement transportation
18 effort that DOT is doing in listening from New
19 Yorkers on idea on—on how can we continue improving
20 transportation in our city? I also would like to say
21 that the Mayor, you know, have a stated when it comes
22 to the Fair Fare Initiative that he respects and
23 supports the merit. So, for me as the Chairman of
24 this committee, I just see the Mayor as an important
25 ally because remember paid sick days was not an easy

2 thing to lift up at the beginning. It took months.
3 It took years to see it happen. It took what they
4 Riders Alliance and the whole Coalition was able to
5 do today to pull out the numbers to mobilize to go to
6 other sectors not only the working class, but the
7 upper class understand that we can be the New Yorker
8 for all to say transportation means one of the areas
9 where we have this opportunity to provide that—to
10 provide the chance for working class citizens. So I
11 will nowt get into the questions for the DOT on what
12 the DOT can say about the Fair Fare because we
13 already have heard from the Mayor. He believes that
14 this is something that has the merit. The question
15 is, you know, how can that be happening when we all
16 agree that the MTA and the state should do much
17 better on the particular issue, but I just hope that
18 we will continue conversations with the Mayor, and
19 with the support of the Speaker, we can move this
20 initiative. Now, Public Advocate Latisha.

21 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Good morning.
22 Thank you, Chair, for this opportunity to just say a
23 few words, and I must say that I'm sort of
24 disappointed that MTA is not her this morning. I
25 think New York needs to rely the transit system.

2 Unfortunately, they being let down by the MTA, and a
3 lot of these service issues need to be addressed by
4 the MTA, and look forward to working with the Chair
5 to get some answers to New Yorkers who rely upon the
6 service. Because this—the system obviously needs to
7 be more reliable. Subway ridership is growing but
8 the system is becoming less and less reliable, and
9 delays are more common. There were 75,000 trains
10 delayed in November of 2016 up from 65,000 the year
11 before, and massive delays basically turn a morning
12 commute into a nightmare and New Yorkers are riding
13 the subways at off hours, and weekends and late
14 nights and we really—the system needs to adjust it—
15 itself to the fact that we now are 24-hour system, in
16 a 24-hour city that literally never sleeps, and more—
17 and the MTA needs to respond to this change with more
18 frequency during off peak hours. But ridership also
19 continues to decline. New Yorkers know that it's
20 often faster to walk than ride the bus in certain
21 corners of the city of New York, and these decline
22 bus service impacts are impacting seniors, the
23 disabled, and those living far from a subway stop,
24 those living in deserts, transit deserts. AI know
25 that there are—I joined some transit groups this

2 morning, the Community Service Society, the Riders
3 Alliance for students to support reduced fare Metro
4 Cards for low-income New Yorkers because
5 accessibility is the major issue in our city. One in
6 four New Yorkers say they can't afford subway or bus
7 fares, and what we are seeing more and more are
8 unaffordable fares has basically created an
9 underground economy resulting in individuals relying
10 upon an unreliable system of swiping. And this
11 underground economy you can see individuals at subway
12 stations all throughout the city just waiting for
13 someone to get a swipe. And then you have
14 individuals who are—who are evading the system
15 altogether, overburdening the Criminal Justice System
16 and costing all taxpayers more and more money. And
17 so I've been an early supporter of the Fair Fares
18 Campaign and I urge the Mayor and the Governor to
19 work together on this. I am very disappointed. I
20 read this morning in the Daily News that that
21 Governor injected a one-line sentence into the
22 Executive Budget, which resulted in a cut of 60—which
23 will result in a cut of \$65 million to the MTA at a
24 time when what—we do—what we need to do is
25 invest more. Now I support the Second Avenue Subway,

2 but clearly I support those who obviously are living
3 in transit deserts like those in Southeast Queens and
4 those in North-North Bronx and those in South
5 Brooklyn who unfortunately they can't cut their
6 commute time. They rely upon the system and if they
7 missed a train or if a train doesn't come, it may
8 result in them losing their jobs, or in some cases in
9 not being able to go to an interview. I was at a
10 recent town hall meeting with Council Member
11 Rodriguez in Washington Heights, and in Washington
12 Heights, the residents told me of their plight.
13 Three times—three times in the past two weeks the
14 elevators at 168th Street have gone down. Three
15 times, shutting the system down. It's really
16 outrageous, and this really should be simple, and we
17 should be investing in those communities again that
18 represent transit deserts and clearly rely upon an
19 unreliable system. The city's Access-A-Ride system
20 also is notoriously unreliable. The Office of the
21 Public Advocate would get more complaints with
22 regards to Access-A-Ride, and they feel they're often
23 stranded by Access-A-Ride. We need to roll out a
24 program where disabled New Yorkers can hail a taxi, a
25 green or yellow wheelchair-accessible taxi for the

2 same price as a Metro Card swipe. We need a transit
3 system that can meet the needs of a changing and a
4 growing city. I'm really excited about the ferry
5 service. I look forward to riding a ferry to the
6 Rockaways, the Far Rockaways, as my Council-Council
7 Member Richards reminds me, and I'm look forward to
8 the extension of the Utica Avenue Subway Station in
9 Central Brooklyn where I live. We've set aside money
10 for a study, and I'm glad to hear about the progress,
11 and obviously, we'll be asking some questions. I
12 also want to talk a little bit about the Tri-borough
13 X Line, the line that would run through Brooklyn and
14 Queens and to the Bronx connecting neighborhoods with
15 more people in jobs than ever before, and the quality
16 of the public transit system is essential to our
17 quality of life, a transit system that works for all
18 New Yorkers, and clearly by making Fair Fares a
19 reality through the city, through the state. We—
20 because we're both—we're engaging in budgets—in
21 budgets on both fronts. It would go a long way
22 addressing income inequality. It's another step
23 towards addressing poverty in our city, but again, I
24 must reiterate my disappointment about the fact that
25 the MTA is not here to testify, and that the MTA was

2 unwilling to come to a town hall meeting in the
3 Washington Height. I look forward to meeting with
4 the MTA, joining with the Chair of this committee to
5 express our concerns, and I would hope that this
6 message would get to Albany, and to let them know how
7 disappointed this public advocate is on behalf of the
8 New Yorkers who often times have to rely upon an
9 unreliable system.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,
11 Public Advocate. I only have one question and then
12 my colleagues—I will call on my colleagues, but
13 before getting to the questions, you know, we will
14 finish in the Bronx. Council Member Vacca.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: It's Introduction
16 975-A.

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]
18 Okay, the counsel will need to swear you.

19 CLERK: Intro 975-A, Council Member
20 Vacca.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I vote aye.

22 CLERK: The vote is now at 11. Thank
23 you.

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Again, I only
25 have one question, and then my colleagues they will

2 have questions. As we have said in the hearing, we-
3 we want to analyzing. Like I said today great
4 opportunities to hear from some of the experts that
5 been doing the research on the difference it will
6 make for more than 800,000 New Yorkers living on the
7 poverty line to have a major discount when they but
8 the Metro Card. But again, we-the whole title is
9 about how do we make-how can we continue making
10 transportation affordable in New York City. So my
11 question to DOT is like what is the plan we have to
12 keep transportation again affordable for fixed-income
13 households that money could mean clothing or food for
14 children that also means that families can afford to
15 take a necessary trip to a doctors, take children to
16 a museum or park or college students being able to
17 make their classes. So, and we know that the-you
18 know, the Administration is working with a number of
19 initiatives, but what is the new initiative that we
20 can expect we will see in our city to continue seeing
21 transportation affordable for working class and
22 middle-class?

23 ERIC BEATON: Sure, and-and Mr. Chairman
24 as you mentioned, the Mayor absolutely supports the
25 goals of these initiatives that-that we think that

2 it—that the—the cost of transit services obviously is
3 a big deal for a very large number of New Yorkers.
4 We always want to work together to make the transit
5 system better. So we support the push for—for Fair
6 Fares. We support the Freedom Ticket Initiative. We
7 think that all of that is really important. At the
8 same time we think the—it's also very important to
9 make sure we're providing options for New Yorkers
10 that people who might feel like they need to drive or
11 feel like that they can't get revenue to get to, we
12 want to make sure that they have the options out
13 there to do that. And that's why whether it's better
14 ferry service or better bus service, we're looking at
15 the next generation of transit investments. That's
16 why we want to undertake this citywide transit plan
17 that we—we know how we can extend those services to
18 more New Yorkers.

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [pause] Council
20 Member Richards followed by Council Member Chin.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you so
22 much, Mr. Chair. Just a few questions. So I wanted
23 to touch on—well on the conversation of obviously
24 equity in the Rockaways. There is a program called
25 city—well, not. Well, in New York City there's a

2 program called City Tickets that is just on the air
3 light (sic). That was obviously very grateful to the
4 MTA and the work Council Member Borelli (sic) did on
5 Freedom Ticket, but interested in knowing where is
6 DOT at in conversations with ensuring that City
7 ticket actually exists in the Rockaways. It's the
8 only place in New York City that doesn't offer City
9 Tickets, and I know this is a conversation that I've
10 had with the Commissioner. So I want a conversation
11 of access and equity. Where are we at with that?

12 ERIC BEATON: Absolutely, and—and we're—
13 we're very aware that even under the existing City
14 Ticket program, there's only the one station in the
15 city that's excluded from the program, and that is
16 the Far Rockaways Station, and they—we're—it's
17 something we're very focused on is as we look at
18 expanding City Ticket, as we look at how we can
19 bring, you know, the—the Freedom Ticket idea of
20 expanding these discounted commuter rail fares, the
21 more stations, the more times of day throughout the
22 city. Far Rockaway is one of the places that has
23 very long travel times from Midtown that via the
24 subway, and much shorter travel times by commuter
25 rail. As we think about how to provide equity and

2 how to provide access to our city residents, you
3 know, having them feel like they have the option to
4 take the commuter rail is really important. So as
5 we've engaged those conversations, we've made sure
6 that the Far Rockaway is part of that conversation.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay. So when
8 do we anticipate to hear something on that?

9 ERIC BEATON: So, we're—we're waiting to
10 hear back from the MTA on their exact schedule, and
11 we're happy that they've put out that they're looking
12 at this for the first time in a long time. I think
13 later this year they expect to tell us more about
14 which stations will be included in the pilot. Like
15 certainly we as a city are going to post—

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: [interposing]
17 So I'm not talking about Freedom Ticket necessarily,
18 but I meant Freedom Ticket I get already, but I'm
19 definitely interested in City Ticket.

20 ERIC BEATON: So, yes so. I mean that's
21 definitely a conversation that—that we're having with
22 them, but ultimately it is on the MTA to actually
23 make that happen.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: So you're
25 having both of those conversations simultaneously?

2 ERIC BEATON: Yes, it's part of the same
3 conversation.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay. Lastly,
5 and I want to thank you and thank the Commissioner
6 for the work to expand the Q-53 in the Rockaways--

7 ERIC BEATON: [interposing] Uh-huh.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: --and SBS so
9 there's--and--and, you know, as we look at lagging bus
10 times not just for the Rockaways but the other
11 portion of my district in Southeast Queens I'm
12 interested in knowing what specific programs are you
13 exploring. Are there any proposed or are you looking
14 at doing SBS service expansion anywhere in the
15 southern portion of Queens as well. And it's
16 something I am--if--if you're not, I'm interested in
17 you looking at it as we move forward with SBS service
18 as you look to expand it.

19 ERIC BEATON: Sure, and first I want to
20 say that--that we really appreciate your support on
21 the Woodhaven SBS project and their expansion of the
22 Q-52 farther east in the Far Rockaways. I think your
23 support has really made a tremendous difference here,
24 and I think you've pointed out something very
25 important, which is that the farther south and the

2 farther east you get in Queens, the sooner we get
3 farther away from the subway system, you have a large
4 portion of the city that's not as well served as it
5 could be, and, you know, in our 2009 BRT Phase 2
6 Study, they certainly identified Southeast Queens as
7 an important area to look at, and as we undertake
8 this new citywide transit plan, that's an area we
9 definitely want to look at. We want to make sure
10 that we hear from you, hear from your constituents,
11 that as we think about that area we—we hear about
12 which corridors are most important, which
13 destinations people most want to get to. When we
14 look at how we can use that plan to—to serve that
15 area of the city, as well, of course as other areas
16 of the city as far as we can. But it is certainly on
17 our rad that—that Southeast Queens is an area in need
18 of help.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you so
20 much, and I just want to add my support for the
21 affairs. I think and I just as you eloquently put
22 it, Southern Queens is definitely neglected when it
23 comes to investment in—in transportation, and I mean
24 it could take us two hours to get to City Hall
25 literally. So, we're definitely interested in seeing

2 something come forward from the Administration on
3 Fair Fares. You know, we're paying more fares,
4 getting less service. The New York Times had an
5 article today to point out the delays in trains as
6 well. The Daily News discovered this as well. So
7 we're definitely interested in seeing people taking
8 transportation and getting some—some sort of equity
9 back in their pocket, and certainly ensuring that
10 single mothers and working families have more access
11 to affordable transportation options is—is a
12 difference. So, I look forward to that continued
13 dialogue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [pause]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair.
15 Good morning. I have a couple of questions. One is,
16 you know, I love the SBS service that I have in Lower
17 Manhattan in my district, but last year—last June my
18 elected colleague and myself we wrote to DOT and MTA
19 about adding more local stops below—below Manhattan
20 below Houston Street. Because it doesn't make sense
21 that you have all these seniors and just everyone
22 waiting for bus service, and you see like four SBS
23 bus go by, and finally, the local service comes. And
24 the two areas that we asked for expansion on is one
25 stop on Delancey, which makes sense because it's

2 connected to the F-Train and the J-Train and it's
3 also going to have a lot more housing developments
4 happening this year, and another stop is the one on
5 Madison and Pike, which is also connected to the East
6 Broadway F-Train subway station, and there's a huge
7 residential population down there already, and
8 there's going to be more development down there. So
9 those are the two local stops that we've been asking
10 the MTA and the DOT to really add that along the
11 route. Is there any progress on that? Because we
12 haven't heard back.

13 ERIC BEATON: Sure, and-and as-as you
14 know, we-we have a very engaged public process when
15 it comes to like bus service where we-we talk to
16 communities as the route is being implemented, and we
17 try to make sure that-that we-what we put in really
18 reflects the needs of community. At the same time,
19 the-the exact stop spacing is ultimately set by the
20 MTA, and we do work with them very closely, and try
21 to make sure that everyone's needs are-are-are heard,
22 but with the MTA not being here, I think it-I really
23 can't speak about whether they-they would or would
24 not implement a particular stop. It's something we
25 try to do and-and not necessarily to speak to these

2 two particular stops, but as we implement Small
3 Business Service, we try to make sure that the stop
4 spacing is wide enough, that the bus can really pick
5 up speed and travel quickly, while also making sure
6 that there's enough local service to serve all of the
7 stops in between. But you want to make sure you're
8 both providing service that is appreciably faster.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] But
10 there's not enough local service, okay. I mean at
11 first I thought you have to like have a long
12 distance, and when I rode on the SBS bus going up
13 town, I found that they did stop just a couple of
14 blocks where the hospitals are. They made all these
15 local stops, and that's when I said well they could
16 do the same thing in lower Manhattan because a lot of
17 seniors, a lot of residents live in those
18 neighborhoods that are not serviced by the SBS bus.
19 And so, I hope that you can work with us and—and urge
20 MTA—I know they're not here today, and we've written
21 to them and we—every time they show up at a budget
22 hearing I raise this issue. So I just hope you can
23 also, you know, work with us. It's the same thing on
24 the Fair Fare issue. WE need it, right. We have a
25 program for a half price program for seniors, and

2 people with disabilities. We could always expand on
3 that program to help out low-income workers and—and
4 working families, and we need DOT to—to work with us
5 to advocate on that. And my last question is that on
6 your Citywide Transit Plan, you're only having—you
7 have six public hearings, but I wanted to see if you
8 will be able to send staff to help us as we do local
9 hearings to really get the local input from the
10 neighborhood. Would that be practical?

11 ERIC BEATON: Yeah, I—I think we'd would
12 be more than happy to talk to you about that about
13 whether—whether it was a smaller thing that—that we
14 could work on together assuming that we can help
15 people get to the website as well. So there's a
16 survey on there that has a lot of that--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] Not
18 everybody use websites, come on. You know.

19 ERIC BEATON: Yeah, sure, and we're happy
20 to talk you about it, and we—we can bring that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [interposing] So we
22 can, you know, print it out. Are they all translated
23 in Spanish and Chinese and other languages? We want
24 to make sure that the people who utilize our
25 transportation system how to stay.

2 ERIC BEATON: [interposing] I have two--

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And just having,
4 you know, one public hearing is not going to do it in
5 each borough, and go getting people on their website
6 is not going to do it. So what I'm offering is that
7 a local--if Council Members want to do something in
8 their district or working together with a local
9 community board, will you be able to kind of support
10 us on that?

11 ERIC BEATON: Yes, we're happy to talk to
12 you about that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So we should
14 definitely, you know--and what is the timeline for
15 this transit line?

16 ERIC BEATON: The--the goal is to come out
17 with the--with recommendations in [bell] in the late
18 summer or early fall.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. Thank you.
20 Thank you, Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Public Advocate,
22 Tisha.

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Just a couple of
24 questions. In your testimony you mentioned Utica

2 Avenue. Can you give me an update on Utica Avenue,
3 the subway extension?

4 ERIC BEATON: Right, sure. So--So in the
5 testimony it talked about the Select Bus Route that
6 started on Utica Avenue. Well, it started last July.
7 I mean we'll be compiling a one-year report, but we
8 think it's been going very well. We've been getting
9 really great feedback from riders. It seems to be
10 going much faster. At the same time as, you know,
11 we--we did put money into the MTA Capital Plan, a
12 study of Utica Avenue Subway--

13 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing]
14 Right.

15 ERIC BEATON: --and we're working wit the
16 MTA to scope that study--

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay.

18 ERIC BEATON: --and we hope that it will
19 take off later this year.

20 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. Any
21 update on the BX system?

22 ERIC BEATON: I'm--I'm sorry, which
23 system?

24

25

2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: The-the-I guess
3 for lack of a better terms it's the rail system
4 connecting Brooklyn to Queens and Long Island City.

5 ERIC BEATON: [background comments] Yeah,
6 so it's-this is talking about the-the-the Bay Ridge
7 Rail line--

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yes.

9 ERIC BEATON: --that the sort of--?

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: No, the
11 Williamsburg the Downtown Brooklyn and Long Island
12 City.

13 ERIC BEATON: Oh, okay, yeah, the BQX.

14 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: BQX, right.

15 ERIC BEATON: Yes, so over the past year
16 we've been doing a lot of studying, and getting into
17 the-the nitty gritty details of what kinds of streets
18 it would run on, how it might look, how much it might
19 cost. We had some public meetings where we've shown
20 sort of a range of streets that it might go on. We
21 haven't picked a single street, but we had some
22 showings with the kinds of choices we had, and some
23 of the pros and cons of those. I think in-in the
24 upcoming months, we-we hope to have more information

2 to share publicly about it, but it's certainly moving
3 along.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: How much Might
5 Car?

6 ERIC BEATON: You know, we—I think that's
7 something that we're really still studying, but it's
8 certainly not going to be cheap. At the same time,
9 we want to look at what the appropriate way to
10 finance it is, and things, look at all the options
11 for that.

12 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: The Mayor signed
13 Commuter Benefits Law into effect, which helps
14 working New Yorkers obviously get some savings on
15 their public transportation. Do you know whether or
16 not the---what is the—the Mayor—the Mayor's position
17 with respect to Fair Fares?

18 ERIC BEATON: So, with respect to Fair
19 Fares as well as Freedom Ticket, and for things like
20 that, the Mayor is certainly very supportive and
21 think that it can really make a tremendous difference
22 for New Yorkers living in poverty and below the
23 poverty line. At the same time, the city does
24 contribute a tremendous amount of money to the MTA

2 budget already, and position is that this is a—a cost
3 that really should be covered by the state.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: What is the cost?
5 Have you costed Fair Fares, how much it will cost?

6 ERIC BEATON: Our understanding is that
7 that's a program as—as currently proposed would cost
8 somewhere over \$200 million per year.

9 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And se can't
10 expand the system that we currently provide for
11 disabled New Yorkers and for senior citizens the
12 naked income base?

13 ERIC BEATON: I think that—that is the
14 Fair Fares Proposal. I think that—I think it is that
15 again, we—we contribute hundreds of millions of
16 dollars every year to the MTA operations, and while
17 it's something that we support, we don't think it's
18 something that's in the city budget right now.

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And as far as you
20 know, when the Mayor went to Albany recently did he—
21 was this included in his testimony to the
22 Legislature?

23 ERIC BEATON: We can get back to you on
24 it.

2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay. The
3 Triboro X-Line was that part of your discussions with
4 the MTA?

5 ERIC BEATON: Yeah, the—so the Triboro RX
6 Line this is the BRT proposal that has—the line goes
7 through Brooklyn and Queens. That's the type of
8 thing that we really want to look at in the Citywide
9 Transit Plan. It's—it's something that been out
10 there for a few years, and the city has never really
11 taken a position it, and we want to look where it's
12 really getting into the data as well as hearing from—
13 from residents along the line how much it will—how
14 much it would cost, and sort of where it fits in the
15 overall city set of priorities. It's not something I
16 have and answer for year, but it's an exact kind of
17 thing that we want to look at within the citywide
18 transit plan.

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: My last two
20 questions. Wheelchair accessible New Yorkers the
21 idea perhaps being able to hail a green cab or yellow
22 cab, at the same cost as an MTA fare. Is that going
23 to be discussed at all with the new administration?

24 ERIC BEATON: Yes, it's something we—we—
25 we certainly talked about. One of the things we know

2 is that Access-A-Ride is not always the best service,
3 but that it's both--

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: [interposing] You
5 said that.

6 ERIC BEATON: --both expensive.

7 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I said
8 unreliable, but I agree with you. [laughs]

9 ERIC BEATON: You know, we--and we are
10 committed to making sure that we can serve all New
11 Yorkers as well as we can. Again, Access-A-Ride is
12 an MTA provided service. So it's not something we
13 can directly control, but we certainly want to have
14 conversations with them about whether there are
15 better ways to provide that service, which could
16 include the vouchers with that.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. I
18 thank all of you for being here. Again, let me
19 express my disappointment that MTA is not here to
20 answer these question for Access-A-Ride. As you
21 indicated, it is unreliable, and clearly in order for
22 us to meet the needs of New Yorkers and the city of
23 New York, which is now a 24-hour, 7-day a week city,
24 the MTA will step up to the plate and answer some of
25 our questions and be held accountable, and it is

2 unfortunate that they are not here. It's really
3 unacceptable. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.
5 Council Member Miller following by Council Member
6 Reynoso and Council Member Greenfield.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Mr.
8 Chair. Thank you for convening this very, very
9 important hearing, and thank you to DOT and thank you
10 for being there. I also echo my disappointment
11 because the intake is not here, and their subject is
12 a crucial part in providing public transportation.
13 I'd like to start by thanking those involved in
14 Freedom Ticket. Certainly, it's a campaign that
15 we've been working on in Southeast Queens for a
16 number of years. I thank the Chair for his support.
17 We know that transportation is the great equalizer,
18 and there are so many communities whether they are
19 Southeast Queens, the extreme transportation deserts.
20 We have the transportation deserts throughout the
21 city, but I think when we talk about Fair Fares that
22 is exactly what we're talking about. We're talking
23 about transportation equity whether it's
24 affordability or it's just access, and we have to do
25 better access, and some of the things that we talked

2 about today whether it's about the declining use of
3 buses and what are the reasons for—for being so,
4 obviously my background is in buses, is in
5 transportation planning, public transportation in
6 particular, and there are things that I have as an
7 operations and planner presented to DOT, MTA more
8 than a decade, but have not come to fruition in terms
9 of efficiencies, and I think that's what we are
10 asking for. We are not asking for, you know,
11 billions of dollars in infrastructure and—and years
12 in labor. We are asking that we become more
13 efficient with the use of the services that currently
14 exist, which his the nexus of the—the Freedom Ticket
15 or transportation equity, but we also had buses. My
16 commute to train station is 4.5 miles, and then I go
17 from the first stop to the last stop is on bus. I'm
18 sorry, on the train, which makes my community from
19 anywhere one hour and 35 minutes to two hours each
20 way, as Councilman Richards attests to. With that
21 being said, and I think that we may be one of two
22 locations throughout the City of New York designated
23 by the federal government as an extreme
24 transportation location. I question why we have two
25 upcoming transit forums in Queens and neither are in

2 the Southeast Queens area. Considering that we all
3 recognize that there is a problem there, I would hope
4 that we can address that, that we can have a quorum
5 in the Southeast Queens area because I am concerned.
6 As Council Member Chin said was that we had a-a
7 portion of our constituency that—who was certainly
8 impacted, but does not have the capacity to maybe go
9 online, and to address this in a way that gives it
10 the—the—the latitude that it really deserves. So,
11 certainly we can have a conversation, but it needs to
12 be more than a conversation. When we talk about
13 efficiencies again, inter-borough ridership on buses
14 is something that we have to look at that there are
15 communities that are totally not being served, and
16 there are no trained access at all. There are a
17 number of things that we can do to address that. I
18 hope that in this plan to provide transportation
19 equity throughout the city, that we have a
20 comprehensive study. I do applaud the fact that
21 probably for one of the very few times in the past
22 century the—the—the residents of New York City are
23 actually being engaged in public transportation
24 options, and that is certainly commendable, but we
25 have to really bring this campaign to the people

2 because there are really communities that are
3 suffering. Are we addressing—what is being done to
4 address declining bus service? What does that survey
5 or study look like? Other than Small Business
6 Service I had my reservations whether or it is going
7 to do what we said it was going to do if we are not
8 fully investing in the proper infrastructure that is
9 necessary to have successful to our buses. Is there
10 anything else being done around bus service that we
11 can look forward to for communities that really
12 depend on that?

13 ERIC BEATON: Yes, so—so one of the
14 things that we wanted to do is not only extend Select
15 Bus Service [bell] but also look at ways we can bring
16 improvements to local communities whether that's
17 through bus lanes, signal priority, all-door boarding
18 just working with the MTA on—on dispatching a better
19 service looking at amenities at bus stops whether
20 they be benches or shelter and even the simple things
21 like making sure that every bus stop has a good
22 sidewalk and we want to bring this in.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: [interposing]
24 And—and if I could just end with this, and I'm
25 talking about efficiencies because everybody in my

2 district has to take a bus to the train, usually a
3 minimum of two miles. That's not walking distance,
4 but we have—we have Express Bus Service that only
5 takes you to the city in the morning and brings you
6 back in the afternoon. It doesn't run all day. It
7 doesn't run on weekend. It doesn't run past 7:00,
8 and doesn't come beyond 23rd Street for the majority
9 of the folks who work beyond 23rd Street. Most of
10 these systems I know in Queens is the old Northshore
11 system. It's running on old trolley lines. We have
12 to update and make them more efficient. How do we do
13 that? Have we taken a look at bringing buses
14 downtown here to the business district where the
15 majority of the folks work? Because now you board a
16 bus and then eventually at 23rd or 57th Street you got
17 to get off and take a train to come down anyway.
18 That kind of defeats the purpose of the Express Bus
19 Service where other communities can go from door to
20 door.

21 ERIC BEATON: Yeah, and obviously the
22 details of bus routing are—are most an MTA issue, but
23 part of the reason we want to do the Citywide Transit
24 Plan is so that we can provide people and opportunity
25 to talk about these things, and—and look at a city as

2 to what are the most important things to look at. So
3 I think these and—and all the issues you brought up
4 are the types of things we should be looking at in
5 the Citywide Transit Plan effort.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

8 Okay, Reynoso.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Good morning—
10 good morning. Just a couple of observations. We
11 know that the MTA is not here, but we also don't
12 necessarily want to all for the City of New York to
13 feel that they don't have an obligation to—to address
14 an issue that's extremely important for its
15 residents. So that's very important that we—we—we
16 take that into account. There are other creatures of
17 the state, the Department of Ed—the Department of
18 Education being an example where funding comes from
19 the state and then it didn't hinder or put us in a
20 situation where the Mayor didn't feel comfortable
21 enough to do Universal Pre-K or after school for
22 middle school, and just double down on the efforts
23 that are being made here in this city to really speak
24 about the tale of two cities, and—and how—how we
25 could close that gap. Our transportation options, or

2 alternatives, but definitely one of those options
3 And in this one case we're talking about \$200 million
4 to allow us to address an issue that truly is at the-
5 I guess at the forefront of the conversation of the
6 tale of two cities. So I-I don't think it's an
7 acceptable answer to say that this is the
8 responsibility of the state or solely of the state.
9 I do think that if we're-the city of New York we have
10 a responsibility to the neediest members of our
11 community, and when we come-when it comes to
12 transportation, it is become more and more obvious
13 that it is a tale of two cities and the poor can't
14 necessarily get around or won't be able to get around
15 in short order should we continue the trend of the
16 increase in-in ridership-in the cost of ridership
17 here in the city of New York. So I'd like to ask you
18 again in-in hopes for a different answer, then this
19 is the responsibility of the state is what is
20 responsibility of the city when it comes to equity
21 and fairness when it comes to transportation?

22 ERIC BEATON: Sure, and-and like I said,
23 the-the city does very much support the goals of-of
24 the Fair Fares Campaign of-of expending Freedom
25 Ticket. We're very happy that in the most recent MTA

2 fare increase that we helped work to keep the base
3 fare at-at \$2.75 that there was no increased fares.
4 That's something that was important for all of the
5 city. So these are all things that-that we sort of
6 agree with you are really very important. At the
7 same time, the MTA is a state agency and-and the city
8 already does contribute very heavily to those
9 operations. And so when we've looked at as-as right
10 now we feel like the city does not have the budget
11 and, you know, particularly as live in a-a time where
12 we don't really know what's going to happen to
13 funding at the federal level. There's a lot of
14 uncertainty going on the world that this is really a
15 very large financial commitment that we really feel
16 like it' better served at the MTA and the state
17 level.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So and the
19 Executive Budget briefing that we received, the-the
20 Mayor's Officer didn't necessarily address many
21 issues of concern that we might have coming down from
22 the Trump administration per se. I guess we're
23 playing being reactive not proactive being when it
24 comes to that. Did we look at the budget
25 specifically to address issues that are potentially

2 Trump related. We didn't necessarily really push.
3 Many of those items are in the budget. So we have
4 more money that we feel the that the budget is
5 increasing this year compared to what it was last
6 year. So we have an option to have a conversation
7 about this in which the city can play a role in
8 addressing the fare for adoption. I just don't think
9 that the budget is a real answer. I don't think that
10 it's—it's legitimate given that there is an increase,
11 and we could have a conversation about this. And to
12 that again, it is a creature of the state, and that
13 we should—we're already doing that. It's just
14 something that could truly address inequities in
15 communities that are poor in the city of New York,
16 and I believe that we have a responsibility I think
17 progressive counsel and a progressive city to
18 address. So I just wish given the boldness of the
19 Department of Transportation in almost every single
20 aspect of what you do, but in this one case you seem
21 to be playing like every other agency when it comes—
22 when you don't want to do something, and it's very
23 concerning.

24 ERIC BEATON: Well, I guess I'll just
25 obviously \$200 million is a lot of money, and some of

2 those conversations will happen above my head and,
3 you know, I think so as you pointed out some of those
4 conversations will happen. You know, we'd be—we hope
5 that they happen at the State level as well.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Agreed. We're
7 going to hold them accountable as well. Don't think
8 that—but—but we're saying you have responsibility.
9 Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council Member
11 Greenfield.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you,
13 Mr. Chairman and I want to thank you, Chair for—you
14 know the truth is for the Council member there's all
15 sorts of different initiatives and ideas I get—come
16 through my desk. The Chair took the time to sit me
17 down and talk about the Fair Fare Initiative, and I'm
18 proud to announce my support for that initiative as
19 well and I want to thank you, Chair, for highlighting
20 this important initiative and I do want to ask some
21 questions related to this—specifically follow up on
22 Council Member Reynoso's question. You know, the—the
23 New York City's budget has gone up around \$13 billion
24 since Bill de Blasio became Mayor. That's a lot of
25 money, \$13 billion that would fill this room with

2 dollar bills if-if we were so able to do so. Yet-
3 yet, if you look at the facts, the facts are that the
4 city does contribute to other Fair Fare type fares.
5 For example, for student business, there's a
6 contribution by the city. Are you aware of that?
7 Yes, if you don't mind verbalizing the answers for
8 the record please, that would--

9 ERIC BEATON: The-the, yes, the City does
10 contribute to the--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]
12 A yes or no question, yes or no, yes or no, right.
13 Oh, yeah, it's my time. So I don't want the clock to
14 run out on me, but I'm happy to have you answer in
15 your own time. So, seniors, do you guys contribute
16 to that as well?

17 ERIC BEATON: Yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. So let
19 me get this straight. So, for busing for school
20 children you're willing to participate. For busing
21 for seniors you're willing to participate, but for
22 busing for poor people, you're saying not my problem.
23 Go to Albany. Is that essentially the position of
24 the Administration? You won't commit to one dime, a
25 dollar. Can you start with a dollar? Give me a

2 dollar. Let's—let's—lets get the conversation
3 rolling over here. The whole position of the
4 Administration has been go to Albany. It's not our
5 problem, but you're spending \$13 billion more since
6 the Mayor became Mayor on every initiative under the
7 sun. You're already spending money on school busing,
8 busing of children through—to school obviously
9 through the MTA. You're spending more money on
10 seniors. Why won't you give a few bucks towards, and
11 at least say okay, let's start the ball rolling.
12 We'll give 50%, 10%, 20%. I'll make it easier for
13 you. Give me a buck, one dollar. Tell me that the
14 city is so invested, they want to commit a dollar to
15 be part of that system. Can you do that for me?

16 ERIC BEATON: I think it's fair to say
17 that we're at the start of the City Budget process,
18 and that the—the city, you know, a number of Council
19 Members have had strong feelings about this, and I
20 think that those conversations will happen.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: A dollar?
22 Are you committing to a dollar, Eric? Do you have
23 the authority to give me a dollar for this project?

24 ERIC BEATON: Okay.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Let's start.
3 \$1.00 mean a \$1.00 less. Can you do that?

4 ERIC BEATON: I'm but a poor civil
5 servant. There is only so much I can do.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I mean they
7 don't send out their poor civil servants to speak to
8 elected officials in the city. That's a nice try,
9 though. That's a nice try. I'm pretty sure you're
10 not poor nor are you a poor civil servant. If you're
11 here representing the Administration, you certainly
12 should have some authority. My only point is that
13 you guys are literally—I just want the record to
14 reflect this. This is literally you're passing the
15 buck, the one dollar, in fact. You're passing the
16 buck from the city to the state, and I've got to tell
17 you I really can think of no other initiative in the
18 city. You know you guys have spent \$13 billion on
19 God knows what. I can think of no other initiative
20 in the city that would do more to help low-income New
21 Yorkers get to work, get to school, get to their
22 jobs, get to their appointments. I could think of no
23 other initiative than lowering the cost of basic
24 transportation. So I've got to tell you honestly
25 your position really boggles my mind. So let's move

2 along. I think we've acknowledged now that you're
3 passing the buck. [applause] Thank you. Let's—
4 let's—let's move along and talk about some other
5 issues. Citi Bike. You guys control Citi Bike?
6 Right that's your initiative?

7 ERIC BEATON: Yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay, you're
9 giving this now to NYCHA residents, is that correct?

10 ERIC BEATON: Yes, we're very pleased
11 that a NYCHA resident can get a discount on this.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]
13 I'm so pleased about that as well. You're willing to
14 commit today that all low-income New Yorkers can get
15 the same discount as NYCHA residents so that they
16 have an alternative transportation method? I mean
17 you completely control it. It's in your power.

18 ERIC BEATON: We work very closely with
19 our partner Motivate on issues—on issues like this,
20 and, you know, it's certainly a conversation that
21 we've had.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: So right now
23 you're saying that?

24 ERIC BEATON: I'm saying that right now
25 that is not our policy, that's correct.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Right now
3 it's not the policy. Okay. So that's within your
4 control, and which you do not do. Alright, you guys
5 have this big initiative coming forward, BQX. You're
6 not even sure how much it's going to cost, a billion,
7 two billion, five billion, ten billion. Who know how
8 much money it's going to cost, BQX. BQX according to
9 the current projections right will run on its own
10 system. It will not integrate with the MTA. So you
11 guys will do it on your own, which I think is a point
12 of pride for you that you want to do it on your own.
13 Are you willing to commit right that BQX or one of
14 the arguments you're making is that it's going to
15 serve low-income communities that those low-income
16 communities that will be serviced by BQX will have
17 reduced fares? Are you willing to make the
18 commitment to us today?

19 ERIC BEATON: We're very early in the
20 study process for BQX, to have any--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]
22 Oh, you guys have sketches and plans and Executive
23 Director you spent millions of dollars. I mean
24 certainly you can make a commitment to low-income
25 residents. I mean I don't imagine that you're

2 planning on building a multi-billion dollar system
3 without actually providing those low-income residents
4 with the ability to actually ride the BQX. Can you
5 at least commit to that?

6 ERIC BEATON: Well, we want this for the
7 BQX to be integrated into the city's transit system
8 and to think what would be appropriate for the--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]
10 So you won't commit to the line. (sic)

11 ERIC BEATON: --the fare MTA bus or
12 subway.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Eric, all I'm
14 pointing out is that these are excuses because even
15 when you have the ability to commit to something
16 whether it's Citi Bike or BQX, which are two-two
17 specific entities that you 100% control, you will not
18 commit to this, and the reality is, and we talk about
19 equity, the most important equity in our city, the
20 most basic fundamental is transportation equity.
21 Because you know what, you can't get out of poverty
22 if you can't get to your job. I'll leave it at that.
23 Thank you very much. [pause]

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council Member
25 Menchaca.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you,
3 Chair. I wanted to do a little bit of just kind of
4 some one-on-one work, and really for a lot of the
5 constituent interactions that I'm having right now,
6 there's been a real great swell of engagement from
7 all corners of the district, from Red Hook to Sunset
8 Park, and I'm sure this is happening in other parts
9 of the city. One of the things that people keep
10 coming back to me about is how do we get a bus? How
11 do we get—how do we get a new bus route, a direct
12 line into Manhattan say from Red Hook? So can you
13 walk us through and walk us folks listening at home
14 as well about how—how the community can engage in
15 this process? Your testimony really talks a lot
16 about focus and laying out new SBS in the city, but
17 break it down from the kind of simplest community
18 side, how—how does this happen working with a
19 community member, a mom in the neighborhood get
20 involved from—from her point of view from her vantage
21 point and from—from her voice? Walk us through that
22 process.

23 ERIC BEATON: Sure and—and I will say
24 upfront that I think that as I said few times the MTA
25 is a state agency. They—they do run the subways and

2 buses. So at some point ultimately the—the power
3 does lie with them in terms of what they run and how
4 frequently in there that it goes and so forth. But
5 one of the reasons that we want to undertake this
6 citywide transit plan is that the city can have a
7 strong voice in the discussion. If we want to hear
8 about not just what areas are underserved, but
9 certainly we've, you know, heard and talked about
10 Wake up (sic) for a long time, but really to come up
11 with where do the people want to go, and make sure
12 that we can come up with ideas that serve them well,
13 and then that becomes something that we can take to
14 the MTA where we as a city can use the money that we
15 already spend, and think about what else we can do,
16 you know, to use this sort of weight of the city to
17 bring about what we want. So what I'll say first is
18 if you could encourage people to make their voices
19 known if they're able to come to a workshop. If not,
20 if they could go and—and they fill out the online
21 survey where—where, we know that people can't make it
22 to the new workshops, but we—we did put this on line.
23 It's in multiple languages. We do want to do that.
24 As a couple of council members have mentioned, if you
25 have an interest in this—doing some sort of more

2 local event, we're happy to talk with you about that.
3 With us the first thing is really about understanding
4 those need, not just as high level broad bands, but
5 understanding where people want to go, what-what do
6 people who live in those neighborhoods really see
7 what the needs are. That then helps us work with the
8 MTA. It helps us. You look at city initiative
9 whether it's BQX, whether it's Citywide Ferry, we
10 make sure we're targeting those where they're needed
11 the most whether it's Citi Bike or other things. You
12 know do have tools ourselves. We do have things that
13 we can work with the MTA to do, and the more we hear
14 from you, the more, you know, as an elected official,
15 as a representative, the more we can hear from
16 individuals, the more power that gives us to do all
17 those things we want to do.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay, that's-
19 that's fair, and I think we're going to-we're going
20 to see that more and more, and I know there's a lot
21 of folks here who want to testify to that-to that
22 effect. And so I hope we can hear their voices today
23 in the future. You brought the BQX and ferry
24 service. One of the bigger concerns here as we think
25 about the future of-not the future, but of more

2 transportation, public transportation is and
3 implemented from the Department of Transportation's
4 perspective. How are you anticipating the possible
5 multi-structures of ferries (sic) in the system from
6 everything from BQX to subways, buses, and ferries
7 (sic), and--and are you doing some analysis right now
8 about what that--what that looks like, and the impacts
9 that can have as--as--as we potentially could be
10 rolling out multiple ferries--ferry structures and
11 systems for--for neighborhoods like Red Hook with high
12 public housing?

13 ERIC BEATON: Sure, and something that--
14 that we've tried to do as you've seen in many of our
15 initiatives is really try to keep everything tied to
16 that subway and bus base.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: So I'm not--I'm
18 not talking about your intentions. I'm talking about
19 your analysis about how are you thinking about the
20 impacts. So if you go--the worst case scenario
21 everything is going to be different. What's going
22 to--are you studying that impact for communities like
23 public housing communities in Red Hook? I get your
24 intentions. My intention is the same. We want one
25 car to rule it all, but are you analyzing the--is that

2 the—is that the bell? I can't really hear it. Okay,
3 you can answer that question.

4 ERIC BEATON: Sure and I think the more
5 we can provide access and information, you know, we
6 want—you know the MTA is going to come out with a
7 fare payment system, and the more we can work to have
8 it all be integrated so everyone is able to use it, I
9 think the better off we'll all be. [bell]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Again, that's
11 what we want. I know what we want. How you're
12 analyzing that moment where we don't get what we
13 want, and what that impact is if we move forward
14 projects that have different systems. That's—that's
15 the question, are you analyzing it?

16 ERIC BEATON: [interposing] It's
17 certainly—certainly something we'll look into.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: You'll—you'll
19 look into it? Okay. I don't know if anybody else
20 wants to add to that. Great. [pause]

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Now
22 we're going to the second panel, which will allow to
23 get, you know, what those and the people that they're
24 doing the research and they're leading the advocate
25 initiative can share with us on this the Fair Fare.

2 We just hope that again the DOT, as they have been
3 before, be sure that you leave one of your staff to
4 be able to, you can follow what they're saying.
5 First we have David Jones from Community Service
6 Society, Norma Jean from Riders Alliance, Julia Kite
7 from Transportation Alternatives, Sherma Dulles from
8 Lower Manhattan Community College, and Jessica Garcia
9 from I believe the—let's see (sic). [pause] You may
10 begin. [pause]

11 DAVID JONES: Hey, I'd like to thank you
12 for the opportunity. I'm David Jones and I'm
13 President of the Community Service Society. We
14 obviously with the Riders Alliance in many other
15 courtrooms have been championing Fair Fares. This
16 process, however, in terms of our decision to support
17 this campaign was based on research that I think the
18 committee has seen, based on research that was
19 surveyed research showing that large portions of the
20 riding public were having difficulty affording
21 transportation on buses and subways. We didn't stop
22 there, however. We looked at the issue of other
23 cities including that's been mentioned, San
24 Francisco, outside New York a larger city London
25 already--

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]

3 Sir, sorry, they may—I'm sorry for interrupting. So
4 you can read the whole testimony. You can say as
5 much—as long your minutes, and then we will be timing
6 the rest for this panel, and therefore.

7 DAVID JONES: [interposing] Okay, yeah,
8 so I've submitted a testimony, and maybe we should
9 start there and I can take most of it and—and--

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No, what I'm
11 saying is that you can read the whole testimony and
12 take as long as you need it.

13 DAVID JONES: Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And, therefore,
15 the rest of the panels are going to be putting the
16 time on three minutes.

17 DAVID JONES: Okay. Well, I'll still try
18 to be somewhat brief. So we obviously recognized and
19 went instantly to the issue of would this kind of
20 system be difficult to implement. We talked to the
21 leadership and Human Resource Administration, which
22 administers the food stamps and other systems to see
23 if eligibility would be the problem. It turned out
24 no that we already have a unique system in the city
25 of New York, which would make this almost seamless,

2 and at extraordinary low cost for the city to
3 evaluate who would be eligible for it. So this is—
4 this is a proposal that not only makes economic
5 sense, our numbers have been confirmed by the MTA.
6 The suggestion is when fully implemented this would
7 cost \$212 million. We came in with \$200 million, and
8 we think that's well within the range. It looks—this
9 whole program is premised on the fact that we're
10 coming into March 19th, and most New Yorkers will
11 have to pay more for a ride even though the single
12 fare hasn't move, the price—the price for unlimited
13 passes will rise to \$32 for a 7-day pass and \$121 for
14 a 30-day pass. This—these types of fares are the
15 ones most widely used by low-income riders. The
16 bonus card will cost 5.7% more because of the amount
17 of the bonus you receive when you put at a round trip
18 on your ticket is being reduced. Using the MTA's
19 fare data, that's used by those collectively, those
20 systems, seven-day bonus and other [bell] and others
21 are used by the 82% of low-income riders. We think
22 that making public transit affordable should be the
23 priority for this mayoral administration. We
24 obviously know, and many of us were supportive of the
25 notion that this was a mayoral fee that would be

2 confronting the issues of economic inequality. This
3 is why we did this. We also have to recognize that
4 while we're talking about a discounted fare for
5 people below the poverty line, which is \$24,000 for a
6 family of four that many people in this category earn
7 even less than that, and this makes this even more
8 problematic, and we see signs obviously from the
9 survey data, but also now sitting on the board of the
10 MTA we hear reports obviously of fare evasion
11 efforts, and essentially now the main work of the
12 transit police has become catching people who jump
13 turnstiles. 52,000 contacts of this sort have
14 occurred in this past year, and this is the kind of
15 thing that I look at Victor Hugo of people stealing
16 bread and being prosecuted for it. This is a kind of
17 insanity going on in this city particularly because
18 of the great wealth here that we're starting to make
19 a priority of people who try to evade a fare as if
20 they are major criminals. That's just not
21 acceptable. It's also the first engagement with the
22 Criminal Justice System by the very young, and that's
23 not acceptable either. Moreover, there are other
24 issues that if we could hit this half fare, that
25 would hit 800,000 people it could lead to a savings

2 of some \$726 a year. This is more than most people
3 get in the EITC. This would be the most direct
4 support for working poor people that is--can be
5 initiated by a city. This is not just a token. If
6 you are earning \$24,000 a year, an income enhancement
7 of \$726 is huge. It's nearly a month's rent. It's
8 food. It's a whole range of basic necessities, which
9 don't go into hedge fund, but go right out into the
10 local economy. So we put this proposal out. We have
11 obviously Community Service Society has worked on
12 issues like this before. We're 174 years old, and
13 basically we created the Columbia School of Social
14 Work, the Hospital of Special Surgery, but more
15 recently we were one of the intellectual help--helps
16 and undergird the argument for paid sick leave. That
17 took a long time as well. We have major, you know,
18 resistance at first, but people finally came to
19 understand that, and we see this is in that
20 tradition. If you're interested in helping working
21 poor people, this doesn't even get to the question of
22 people who don't have jobs often. This is literally
23 the people who are providing childcare, the people
24 who are providing security services at buildings.
25 This is the people who are the car wash workers, you

2 name it. People who essentially undergird the fabric
3 of New York not only for their benefit, but everyone
4 in this room upper, middle, lower class, depend up
5 this workforce to get everything they need done, as
6 being someone who cared for a mother with
7 Alzheimer's. The workers who came to help her are
8 not well paid. At most hey earn \$20 an hour, if
9 they're lucky, and sometimes the institutions that
10 they work for take a cut off that. So, if anyone has
11 a childcare problem, a senior, if they have—they want
12 their hospitals clean, if they want their streets
13 clean, and their buildings clean, they depend upon
14 this workforce. It's been brought up that basically
15 this discount is already in place for people who are
16 seniors, and people with disabilities. What we found
17 out anecdotally that there are other benefits going.
18 There is a benefit of free passage for students.
19 That applies obviously to public school students, but
20 it also applies to kids in private schools. So
21 there's no income-based decision when we give away
22 discounts here. I have no difficulty with childcare,
23 and other people getting discounts to get to school.
24 Whether a child whose parents are earning many
25 millions of dollars also gets a discount subsidized

2 by the city of New York gives—gives me pause. We
3 have seniors, most of whom are low income, but many—
4 that's not means tested as well. So we are—we're
5 essentially providing discounts without a means test,
6 which is acceptable for certain categories of people.
7 We think it's time to open the door towards this
8 particular category of person essentially because the
9 ramp up, in other words, the first—while we're
10 talking about \$200 million ultimately, we project
11 that in the early years it would not hit those
12 numbers immediately. So, I think we've heard a lot
13 about the issue of other priorities by this
14 administration. We are very supportive of things
15 like new watercraft routes and a new street car, but
16 somehow these going to have costs that we recognize,
17 and somehow this doesn't factor into our discussion
18 of subsidizing fares for the very poor and the
19 working poor. We think that the argument that the
20 state should pay I have two issues with that, and I'd
21 like to put that forward. First of all, I'd like to
22 see if the city and the Mayor have made a demand on
23 the governor. Is there any writing? They say the
24 state should pay for this. I don't know if there's
25 been any campaign or effort to actually get the state

2 enlisted in paying for part or all of this. So I
3 don't want the buck passed without an understanding
4 that there's actually been a demand and I don't hear—
5 I haven't heard that yet. Finally, I think we should
6 talk about the fact that while this is a state
7 agency, the Mayor has representatives on that, I
8 being one. Obviously, Polly Trottenberg,
9 Commissioner Trottenberg being another. Veronica
10 Vandepool, and he has an open seat that he still has
11 rights to. There has to be some recognition that
12 this particular program would be focused only on New
13 York City residents. This is not a subsidy program
14 for the Long Island Railroad or Metro North. This is
15 concentrated exclusively on people from the City of
16 New York, which I think is another argument, a strong
17 argument for the city to weigh in the subs. I think
18 the report we've issued we haven't changed a bit.
19 This is a critical need for the city of New York. It
20 can drive immediate support for low-income
21 individuals. It is very modest in terms of its
22 actual cost, and we think that time is right
23 particularly to allow New York City to be the leader
24 in the nation for large cities providing benefits to
25 its working poor. Thank you. [pause]

2 NORMA JEAN: Good morning. My name is
3 Norma. I live in the Bronx, and I'm a member of
4 Riders Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity to-to
5 speak today at the committee. Already at 275, a
6 slight repairs or an obstacle from my-me and my
7 members of my community. I mean I'm an employed
8 single mother of three girls. Everyday I go to take
9 my kids to school and to childcare. I need a Metro
10 Card not only to go get groceries to the store, to
11 take my kids to doctor's appointments, therapy, but
12 also to get them to political and community
13 activities that I'm involved in. I care a lot about
14 making a positive change in my community, but it's
15 hard to get involved when I can't afford my Metro
16 Card. Sometimes I have to choose between Metro Cards
17 and buying a snack for my girls. There were times
18 especially when I was the shelter system in 2012 that
19 had the bed for a swipe or walk in the heat or cold.
20 I want to search-first searching for a job, but after
21 expenses, I can't afford the added cost of going to
22 interviews. I'm disappointed that Mayor de Blasio
23 didn't include funding for half fare Metro Cards for
24 low-income riders in his Preliminary Budget, but
25 there's still time for him to do the right thing and

2 include Fair Fares in the Executive Budget to make
3 transit affordable to all New Yorkers. I ask the New
4 York City Council to fight for Fair Fares in the
5 budget negotiations, and I ask Mayor de Blasio to
6 amend his budget so low-income riders like do not
7 have to amend theirs. No one should have to skip
8 class because they cannot afford a Metro Card. No
9 one should have to skip meals to beg ahead—to get
10 ahead or to get involved. Thank you.

11 JULIA KITE: Thank you Council Member
12 Rodriguez for calling this hearing. My name is Julia
13 Kite, and I am the Policy and Research Manager of
14 Transportation Alternatives, New York City's 44-year-
15 old membership organization dedicated to walking,
16 biking and safer streets. Public transit is crucial
17 to our mission as a means of reducing New Yorkers'
18 reliance on private cars. Today, we would like to
19 speak about two issue central to our work as
20 advocates, the provision of discount Metro Cards for
21 low-income New Yorkers and the creation of car-free
22 People Waves with enhance bus rapid transit, and
23 pedestrian and cyclist facilities in anticipation of
24 the L-Train shutdown. We support Riders Alliances'
25 Fair Fares Campaign. At Transportation Alternatives

2 we have long believe that public transit is an
3 essential component of city life. Not only does a
4 well funded and popularly maintained network reduce
5 the need for cars, it also enables New Yorkers to
6 take advantage of everything the city has to offer.
7 However, if fares are so high as to make transit
8 inaccessible for a significant portion of the
9 population, it's not succeeding in its basic purpose.
10 With so many other demands on low-income New Yorkers
11 particularly high rents pushing out those less able
12 to pay to the outer parts of the city, and away from
13 job centers, the implementation of discount Metro
14 Cards should be a priority as a matter of basic
15 fairness. This discount would be an investment in
16 the city's greatest resource, its people. With MTA
17 fare hikes on the horizon, the statistic of one in
18 four low-income New Yorkers not able to able to
19 afford the fare will only become more grim. We see
20 this as a helping hand up to opportunity for hundreds
21 and thousands of people and support Riders Alliance
22 wholeheartedly. We recognize it's far from simple to
23 keep New York City's public transit operating
24 seamlessly and that inconveniences are sometimes
25 unavoidable. However, they should also offer us the

2 opportunity to innovate. Since it was announced that
3 the L-Train will temporarily shut down in part in
4 2019 for tunnel repairs, Transportation Alternatives
5 has been pursuing solutions to this challenge that
6 would avoid the need for more cars on city streets,
7 and would also leave transportation improvements in
8 place for long after service resumes. We are
9 proposing the people way of repurposing of space on
10 14th Street in Manhattan, Grand Street in Brooklyn
11 and the Williamsburg Bridge Corridor between them.
12 We envision the People Waves containing true bus
13 rapid transit along with expanded space for
14 pedestrians and cyclists. In order to avoid total
15 gridlock caused by L commuters having to find another
16 way across town, and across the river, personal car
17 usage, the most inefficient use of street space would
18 be prohibited along the People Waves. Our prints
19 with the design using guidance from experts like the
20 National Association of City Transportation Officials
21 and our People Waves Campaign has the support of
22 residents, businesses, community organizations and
23 educational institutions in the affected parts of
24 Manhattan and Brooklyn. The People Waves would also
25 be a boon to local businesses as most New Yorkers

2 shopping on and around 14th Street after all do not
3 arrive by car. They use public transit, or they walk
4 or bike. Without the People Waves, New York City
5 would not be able to L shutdown. The result would be
6 gridlock [bell] inefficiency, air pollution, loss of
7 business traffic, loss of productivity and an overall
8 disaster for the public. In order to have the People
9 Waves ready for use by January, 2019, it's imperative
10 that final planning begin soon. We look forward to
11 working with the DOT and MTA on the way forward, and
12 are happy to answer any questions you may have about
13 this project at Transportation Alternatives.

14 SHERMA DULLES: So hi. My name is Sherma
15 Dulles and I'm BMCC student who currently resides in
16 the Bronx. Thank you first for allowing me to be
17 here. As you know, the MTA BMCC is always to keep
18 the base fare at \$2.75. While that may be good news
19 to some New Yorkers, there are plenty of those who
20 cannot pay to \$2.75, and this is the result of the
21 city refusing to put the funding New Yorkers need
22 into public transit. Thus making it difficult for
23 struggling New Yorkers like me to afford to survive
24 economically even more difficult for those who need
25 to get to childcare, their jobs, school and buy

2 necessarily items of food. Paying \$2.75 or more
3 during the week just to simply get to work and school
4 has created as financial burden in my pocket. There
5 are times when I cannot go to activities on weekends
6 because I do not have the money for public transit.
7 I have a job and many can argue that if I have that I
8 can pay for it, but the numbers don't lie.
9 Millennials today make 20% less than Baby Boomers did
10 at the same stage of life despite being more
11 educated, and this is according to analysis of
12 Federal Reserve data done by organizations totally
13 indivisible. On top of that, I am helping my family
14 by managing. We're also saving money for future
15 emergencies and college expenses. The reasons I'm
16 here fighting for Fair Fares is because I refuse to
17 stay silent on the issue that is going to draw
18 community of color for this poverty. Now, to break
19 down the numbers, according to the New York City
20 Center for Economic Opportunities, the percentage of
21 families living below the poverty line based on their
22 borough goes as follow: Bronx, 26.5%; Brooklyn,
23 21.9%, Queens, 20.4%; Manhattan, 14.6%; and finally
24 Staten Island with 18.3%. 72.3% of students going to
25 my college are either Hispanic or Black and live in

2 the same boroughs with the highest levels of poverty.
3 This bases the majority of those who have no issues
4 paying for this fare hike or those in-people who are
5 CEOs of companies or working on Wall Street. Howe do
6 you expect the economy of New York City to flourish
7 if you're not going to make-if you're going to make
8 it harder for communities of color to get a job,
9 finish college, buy foods and just live in economic
10 stability. I am deeply disappointed in Mayor de
11 Blasio that he did not include funding for half-price
12 Metro Cars for low-income riders in his preliminary
13 budget, but there's still time for the Mayor to do
14 the right thing, and that is by making sure that low-
15 income riders have-have a fair-a fair price, and be-
16 are able to-are able to have access to all the
17 resources they need to-to make it. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Have-have you and
19 members of the Coalition of the Coalition per se
20 being able to keep track of the other cities where
21 even initiatives have already been working, and what
22 has been the positive impact or negative impact in
23 the city?

24 DAVID JONES: I think it's still
25 relatively news. We have reached out to Seattle and

2 San Francisco. Each of them use different methods.
3 We were most concerned about the implementation, how
4 do you clear people to—to meet the standard of low-
5 income, and each of those cities has a different
6 method. It's apparently not been an effort. In
7 these early days, a major financial deal breaker. We
8 have to recognize, however, New York like London
9 would be in a totally different category. The
10 numbers of people who fit that category in Seattle
11 and San Francisco are much smaller in terms of the
12 number of—of poor people. You're—you're talking in
13 not 800,000, you're talking in tens of thousands
14 rather in those cities. So this would be a—a
15 leadership position for the City of New York. It
16 would be something that hadn't been seen in America
17 before, and we've made that case right from the very
18 beginning.

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

20 JULIA KITE: I know that in London they
21 tie the risky—those discounts in public transit to
22 receive of other means tested benefits and that is a
23 way where they can, you know, keep track to make sure
24 that someone definitely has a need for it, and that
25 if they're already in the system as receiving other

2 kinds of benefits, this is something that can be
3 added on.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, and
5 we know that CUNY with a program ASAP they provide a
6 free Metro Card to a student going to community
7 college. If they are part of the ASAP program, as
8 many other services that those--those particular CUNY--
9 CUNY students receive have you also looked at that or
10 other sectors of the city or any agency provide any--

11 DAVID JONES: [interposing] No.

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --discount and
13 look at just expanding those.

14 DAVID JONES: Right. HRA already expends
15 about \$15 million I think dollars to provide free
16 Metro Cards to TANF recipients. Theoretically, we
17 think there may be some savings potential right
18 there. So the city is already providing some
19 subsidies, but to a very narrow band of people, and
20 obviously it doesn't really hit the working poor who
21 are, you know, obviously where the people in TANF
22 we're trying to move them into work, but it's
23 interesting that when they do get work off TANF then
24 they lose the--the subsidy that they were receiving.
25 So there's a sort of counterintuitive idea here that

2 once, you know, we get people off public assistance,
3 we don't supply—say that we supply them with needed
4 benefits. You know, we have heard consistently from
5 CUNY students that they're struggling with this that
6 that program is relatively modest, but for the—all of
7 CUNY many of the students I don't care if immigrant
8 or resident, they're having a lot of problems with
9 this against a student debt obviously that has been
10 made more difficult when we decided to make CUNY no
11 longer free. So this is yet another burden of the
12 books, paying tuition, and now having to often take
13 multiple trips on the Metro Card without much money.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [off mic] We
15 will—[on mic] and we will continue working together.
16 Now, let's call the second panel. Jules Flynn,
17 Lillie Carino, Darelli Fabro (sp?), Johnny De
18 Canesso—De Conesco (sp?) Laval du ha. [pause] You
19 can begin. [pause]

20 JULES FLYNN: Good afternoon, Chair
21 Rodriguez and Members of the City Council and
22 Transportation. My name is Jules Flynn. I am
23 General Manager of Citi Bike. On behalf of Motivate,
24 the operator of Citi Bike, I'd like to submit the
25 following testimony regarding how Citi Bike can

2 better serve the transportation needs of New York
3 City residents. In 2013, Citi Bike launched with
4 6,000 bikes at 332 stations in Manhattan's Central
5 Business District in Downtown Brooklyn. Today, peak
6 daily ridership has nearly doubled growing from
7 42,000 trips in a single day in 2013 nearly 70,000
8 trips in 2016. In fact, we broke the record of
9 60,000 trips a day, 23 times last year, and annual
10 ridership has reached 14 million trips. Today, Citi
11 Bike is no longer just about bike share for the
12 Central Business District. We've added thousands of
13 bikes and it stretches from Holland to Red Hook.
14 This year we'll take it further north in Manhattan
15 and reach neighborhoods like Astoria, Prospect Park
16 and Crown Heights, but there are many neighborhoods
17 like the South Bronx, Bushwick and Eastern Bed-Stuy
18 that are not yet covered by Citi Bike. These are
19 places where the program would help serve both
20 transportation and public health needs. City Bike
21 has the potential to help close the transportation
22 equity gap in our city. Bike Share is one of the
23 fastest and most cost-effective ways to add transit
24 options to underserved neighborhoods, both capital
25 and operating costs are a fraction of what other

2 modes require. Unlike other forms of public
3 transportation bike share can be implemented quickly
4 and flexibly adding as many or as few stations at a
5 time as budgets permit. Third, bike share also had
6 the added benefit of helping to address health
7 inequity by having easy access for physical activity
8 in underserved communities where they're
9 disproportionately affected by chronic diseases like
10 diabetes and obesity. Citi Bike continues to work
11 actively to ensure Bike Share is accessible to all
12 New Yorkers. Citi Bike maintains an affordability
13 program for New York City Housing Authority residents
14 and members of the select Community Development
15 Credit Unions. Individuals enrolled in the
16 affordability programs pay a reduce \$60 annual
17 membership in 12 five-month means—12 \$5.00 monthly
18 installments compared to the standard Citi Bike price
19 of \$163 a year. In addition, Citi Bike offers a 15%
20 discount on memberships for IDNYC card holders, and
21 we've been working with community organizations from
22 East Harlem to Bed-Stuy from our multi-lingual
23 community outreach to ensure that low-income New
24 Yorkers can reap the benefits of bike share. With
25 all these benefits, bike share stands out as the

2 lowest cost, fastest and most efficient way to
3 develop infrastructure and reduce the city's transit
4 deserts. We look forward to working with the City
5 Council and the de Blasio Administration to continue
6 growing Citi Bike's success. Thank you for the
7 opportunity to testify, and I'm happy to answer any
8 questions.

9 LILLIE CARINO HIGGINS: Good afternoon.
10 My name is Lillie Carino Higgins. I am here
11 representing 1199. I want to thank you for this
12 opportunity to address how public transportation can
13 better serve needs of New York residents. I am here
14 on behalf of our 200,000 healthcare workers who live
15 in New York City. We have 70,000 who are homecare
16 workers. We represents cashiers in Rite Aid and we
17 represent support staff and clinics. The vast
18 majority of our members rely on public
19 transportation. These members and other low-wage
20 earners are adverse affected by fare increases no
21 matter how small. The round trip fare of \$5.60 comes
22 to \$27.50 for a five-day work week. Added costs of
23 multiple trips to drop off children to the medical
24 appointments, to run errands to visit loved ones
25 creates hardships requiring budget adjustments just

2 to make ends meet and to be able to afford basic
3 necessities like food, housing and utilities. We are
4 finally making gains on wages in this state and we
5 just can't afford to have the extra income absorbed
6 by fare increases. While hundreds of thousands of
7 low-wage earners are struggling, it is worse for
8 those who are unemployed or seeking employment.
9 Missed opportunities are discouraging when you're
10 trying to schedule appointments or get to interviews,
11 but you just cannot afford to voluntarily (sic) pay
12 that. Their cash flow constraints make it impossible
13 to take advantage of weekly and monthly Metro Card
14 discounts. There is growing support to establish a
15 half fare program for low-income New Yorkers referred
16 as Fair Fares. It is an idea whose time has come.
17 Reduced fares are already provided for students,
18 senior citizens and the disabled. Some of them live
19 on fixed incomes, but as we heard earlier, some of
20 them have limited resources. It is incumbent upon
21 our leaders to address income inequality by removing
22 any barriers that prevent people from prospering.
23 1199 proudly supports funding to extend the Half Fare
24 Program to low-income New Yorkers, and we urge the
25 City and the State to find the means to do so. Such

2 a program would go a long way towards providing
3 transportation parity to all New Yorkers. Thank you
4 again for this opportunity. [pause]

5 DARELLI FABRO: Good morning Council
6 Member Rodriguez and members of transit-of the
7 Transportation Committee. Thank you for the
8 opportunity to speak today. My name is Darelli (sic)
9 Fabro (sp?). I am 23 years. I'm a mother of a five-
10 year-old daughter by name of Mary Ellen. I am
11 student at Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, a
12 program assisting me to obtain my High School
13 Equivalency Diploma through the Department of
14 Education, job training and college access. I am a
15 low-income parent struggling to do good in this big
16 stress filled city. I'm-I am representing not only
17 myself for today, but millions of other people
18 struggling to make it to the dinner table every
19 night. Yes, there are many of us out there. More
20 than you know. We all know the train and bus fares
21 in the city are extremely high, and there is no
22 evidence that they will ever go down. As a matter of
23 fact, the fares will go up by next month. If you
24 simply took a train or bus to and from work daily two
25 rides, it would cost you over \$110 per month. That

2 does not include the various additional trips for
3 doctor's appointments, benefit appointments, school
4 schedules, practice tests, interviews and other
5 community events. I could go on and on all day.
6 This is a struggle not only for me, but for millions
7 of people in the city, and I haven't even included
8 expenses for housing, food, clothes—clothing and
9 other necessities. We know how expensive those can
10 be. I am presently in school working hard to earn my
11 HSE diploma. I am doing everything I can in the most
12 honest way possible. It is so difficult for someone
13 like me a low-income mother and a student trying to
14 make a difference to my daughter, trying to establish
15 myself as a professional with a career trying to be
16 an inspiration not only to my daughter, but to
17 everyone else that I come in contact with. Yes, I
18 was given a school Metro Card in my program. You'd
19 think—you think it would be a problem solved. It
20 wasn't. My program has a strict code where I have to
21 dress professionally like this everyday. When I used
22 my school Metro Card one day as I was heading to my
23 program and I was stopped by the police. They did
24 not believe I was a student who was in school, and
25 they didn't care that I had all my documentation on

2 me to prove I was being honest. They wouldn't even
3 look at it. People don't realize the complex
4 problems we face day by day, hour by hour and minute
5 by minute. The ticket was for \$100, and I had to
6 take time off to fight it in court. Why? Because
7 that \$100 was the difference between meals or no
8 meals for myself and my daughter for a week or more.
9 This is an added struggle I didn't need added to my
10 already over-stressed schedule. I thought to my-so I
11 thought to myself there needs to be a better way,
12 something somewhere, anything. I thought how can
13 public transportation better serve the needs of
14 working age New Yorkers? Well, there is a solution.
15 If you are willing to understand what millions of NYC
16 residents have to endure everyday. That solution
17 comes in the form of a subsidized Metro Card for low-
18 income people between the ages of 18 to 65. This is
19 the reason why we are here today. [bell] That
20 solution comes in the form of the sub-oh, sorry.
21 [laughs] This new Metro Card would enable those
22 affected to enjoy the benefit of a half priced fare.
23 The passing of this initiative will help to relieve
24 some of the change that low-income people carry
25 everyday. How will it help low-income families?

2 (1) It will allow us the chance to
3 have days where we do not have to choose between a
4 train ride or bill.

5 (2) It will give us a chance to
6 maintain the three necessities of life: Food,
7 shelter and clothing.

8 (3) It will give us a chance to maybe
9 even save money for emergencies instead of living in
10 fear of what we would do in such a case.

11 (4) We might even be able to provide
12 better quality meals for our families and try to see
13 a better quality of life overall.

14 (5) It could give us a chance to
15 pursue our educational needs in order to improve our
16 standing in the working world and our community.

17 I could go on and on. The benefits are
18 endless. Everything big starts small, and this is
19 the start we need. All you have to do is picture
20 yourself walking in a day in our shoes, and you will
21 feel the struggle, the burden, the heart wrenching
22 decisions we face. The thought of a half price Metro
23 Card for low-income families, people-income people,
24 is one of the best ideas to serve us for many, many
25 years. It is the change we need. It will give us

2 some hope. It can unlock the doors for a better
3 life. Yes, it is that serious. I just wish people
4 would understand that. I have one more thing add,
5 and it will sum up exactly how we feel about this
6 idea. Trust me, I would gladly pay the full fare,
7 the full train or bus fare if it was—if I was able.
8 But for now a half price fare is fair enough for all
9 of us at least until we are able to afford the full
10 fare. I encourage you to take—to make funding for a
11 subsidized subway and bus fares to low-income New
12 Yorkers a top priority as your response to the
13 Mayor's Preliminary Budget. Thank you for listening.

14 YONNY DE COMESCO: Good afternoon. It's
15 pretty tough, right, to have to choose between
16 whether you are buying food today or you're going to
17 school or you're going to work. So, my name is Yonny
18 De Conesco. I represent the Opportunities for--

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]
20 Sir, can you say your name, please.

21 YONNY DE COMESCO: Sure. So my name is
22 Yonny De Comesco. I represent the Opportunities for
23 a Better Tomorrow and Darelli's story is just one in
24 the 800,000 people who live in New York City and
25 trying to make ends meet, and one of the many

2 thousands of students that we serve with the
3 Opportunities for Better Tomorrow. So they started
4 coming to work, to school everyday to-to get the High
5 School Equivalency diploma through the Department of
6 Education to go to job training, to be sent to job
7 interviews, to go to get clothing. So, you know,
8 imagine if you don't work how can you make this
9 happen, or imagine if you work only, you know, for
10 minimum wage from 20 to 40-to 30 hours per week. You
11 have a family to take care of, and you have the
12 choice that you're going to work or you're going to-
13 to school or you're just not going anywhere. So
14 thank you so much for listening today, and we hope
15 that Mayor de Blasio will-will approve this budget
16 their Metro Cards. Thank you.

17 GAY THOMAS WINOFSKI: Good afternoon. My
18 name is Gay Thomas Winofski (sp?), and I'm speaking
19 on behalf of Laval du ha on we have-he spoke earlier
20 at the press conference this morning. She had-she
21 had to leave to go to her Workforce Development
22 program. Laval du ha is a resident and client a
23 resident of the Bronx and client of Community Service
24 Society. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
25 today on how public transportation can better serve

2 the needs of the resident of New York City. We are
3 sure people offered many good suggestions today. At
4 the top of the list should be making public
5 transportation affordable for all New Yorkers. New
6 subways and faster buses with free WiFi mean nothing
7 if you can't afford to ride them. The current fare
8 of \$2.75 per trip is difficult for me and many other
9 lower income New Yorkers to afford. And Metro Cards
10 will be more expensive by March 19th. The base fare
11 will stay the same, but the price of weekly and
12 monthly Metro Cards will go up and the bonuses you
13 get when you add money to a Metro Card will be
14 reduced. Many of us depend on those bonuses. I'm a
15 mother of two. I'm on a fixed income, and I'm
16 attending an administrative training program to
17 prepare myself to re-enter the job market. A 30-day
18 Metro Card is almost 20% of my monthly income, and
19 every penny counts in my household. I can't afford
20 it, but it's necessary in order for me to take care
21 of my responsibilities. If it wasn't for the
22 occasional help that I receive from Community Service
23 Society, I would not have made it this far. There
24 are many New Yorkers like me that are trying to
25 finish their education, find work, get to their jobs,

2 take their children to school and/or take their
3 children to the doctor. We can't afford \$121 for a
4 monthly Metro Card, but we—we do what we have to even
5 if it means having to ask for a swipe on the train.
6 That's why I support the proposal for half price
7 Metro Cards for the lowest income New Yorkers. I
8 urge the City Council and the Mayor to please
9 including funding for the Fair Fares in the budget
10 you are now considering. The Council passed transit
11 tax benefits that give a tax break to middle and
12 higher income New Yorkers, but the lowest income New
13 Yorkers need a break, too. Thank you very much for
14 your time.

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you all,
16 and we will continue working together. You heard
17 like Motivate is like one of those that, you know, as
18 the whole conversation will continue for a discount.
19 We hope that we also keep it in mind that an
20 expectation to see a discount that Citi Bike is
21 already providing to residents of NYCHA buildings to
22 be expanded also if it's expected again that the
23 company Motivate and the Administration is able to
24 work with that type of agreement. But thanks
25 everyone, and we will continue working together. The

2 next panel is Shulmit Warren from Manhattan Borough
3 President Gale Brewer; Lou Millie from Brooklyn the
4 Train Service; Deborah Lolai from the Bronx
5 Defenders; Jackie Cohen from NYPIRG; and Lisa Hamner.
6 [pause]

7 SHULAMIT WARREN: Hi, my name is Shulamit
8 Warren. I'm the Policy Director for the Manhattan
9 Borough President, and I'll be reading her remarks
10 for the record on her behalf. My name is Gale A.
11 Brewer, and I'm the Manhattan Borough President.
12 Thank you to Chair Ydanis Rodriguez for the
13 opportunity of today's hearing on how public
14 transportation can better serve the needs of city
15 residents. We have heard many great ways to improve
16 our public transit system. I would like to focus the
17 bulk of my remarks on affordability, an issue fresh
18 in the minds of my constituents for the movement in
19 fare increase. For the base they ultimately stay the
20 same at \$2.75. The most was reduced from 11 to 5%.
21 Additionally, the Metro Card increased from--by \$1.00
22 to be \$32.00 and the monthly pass increased by \$4.50
23 or \$121. Fares and tolls by commuter railroads and
24 tunnels and bridges have often raised by that 4%.
25 The fare increases are troubling to many New Yorkers

2 already struggling to make ends meet and outcomes are
3 a surprise that part of the regularly scheduled
4 increases were approved by the New York State
5 Legislature in 2009 is part of the plan to ensure the
6 financial solvency of the MTA. The Authority also
7 notes in able to keep costs down, the proposed fare
8 increases before today are the lowest since 2009.
9 This year Lower Manhattan MTA managed to achieve \$1.8
10 million in facility and in savings, and for more cost
11 cutting is planned in the community. The total
12 command of those at the MTA has managed to control
13 cost and keep proposed increases this year to a
14 minimum. We cannot let these achievements distract
15 us from a troubling reality. Many low-income New
16 Yorkers struggle to afford MTA fares even under
17 today's current fare system. A range of recent
18 reports by Community Service Society one in every
19 four New Yorkers cannot afford to have subway or bus
20 fare. For more than 300,000 working poor New Yorkers
21 transportation costs often exceed 10% of their family
22 budget. This in turn can have a debilitating impact
23 on the economic values for these families, limited
24 access to jobs, medical appointments are forcing them
25 to forego as an impossibility. The regularly

2 scheduled fare increase in New York is like every two
3 years will clearly only exacerbate these problems,
4 and make the public transportation network even more
5 impossible for thousands of New Yorkers. For this
6 reason, I am in support the proposal advocated for-by
7 CSS, the Riders Alliance and many other advocates
8 many of whom are here today to offer half price
9 subway and buses to New Yorkers who are below the
10 federal poverty line and that's \$24,000 for a family
11 of four. In a report recently released by CSS and
12 the Riders Alliances, they do estimate the budget
13 plan would be 800,000 riders at roughly \$700 a year.
14 Such a benefit would help thousands of New Yorkers to
15 access jobs, help the people to move more easily.
16 But, of course, this will not come cheap, and it has
17 been estimated at a cost roughly \$115 million during
18 its first year and \$194 million in the second. The
19 problem besides (sic), of course, that MTA's
20 resources are already spread far too thin which
21 brings me to a second priority to emphasize. Our
22 transit system is really need of upgrades and
23 repairs. According to the General Contractor's
24 Association of New York 82% of the public stations
25 are in poor condition; 37% of MTA's railings (sic)

2 have exceeded their useful life. We likewise want—we
3 likewise want to see work continue in a timely [bell]
4 cost-effective manner-- [off mic] I don't want to
5 go over there—including mega projects like the Second
6 Avenue Subway and the East Side Access. And ideally
7 the MTA should be able to pay for all these
8 enhancements without balancing its budget on the
9 backs of commuters with drastic continued increases
10 in fares. Both these problems affordability and the
11 upgrades are sourcing the problem. The MTA needs
12 more money and lots of it. The best way to create a
13 new permanent dedicated funding stream for the
14 Authority in my opinion is to implement a fair
15 tolling system for bridges and tunnels in East
16 Manhattan. Implementing such a plan would raise
17 billions in transit revenues, which would more than
18 pay for the increased Metro Card discounts for low-
19 income New Yorkers while making sure the MTA meets
20 and exceeds its other obligations. Our fabatorian
21 (sic) plan like Move New York is often advocated for
22 by the transportation experts to ensure we would see
23 higher tours or more transactions exist and lower
24 ones where there are fewer actions. It is not only
25 fair, but also helps redirect necessary traffic in

2 and out of Manhattan's CBDs. More important for our
3 discussion today is dedicated funding stream that's
4 now created for the MTA. The new New York Plan
5 estimates that at \$1.5 billion each year would help
6 prevent MTA's persistent funding gap ensuring their
7 transportation infrastructure gets needed upgrades,
8 and provides for half cost Metro Card for low-income
9 New Yorkers all of that passing the cost onto transit
10 riders. We have a series of never ending fare hikes.
11 I look forward to working with my colleagues in the
12 Council and trans advocates to ensure Albany passes
13 such a plan in the city. Thank you again for the
14 opportunity to testify.

15 EMILY LEE: [off mic] Hi, my name is
16 Emily--[on mic] My name is Emily Lee and I'm a
17 supervising attorney in the Criminal Defense Practice
18 at the Brooklyn Defender Services. BDS provides
19 disciplinary and client centered criminal defense,
20 family defense, immigration and civil legal services.
21 BDS provides multi-disciplinary and client centered
22 criminal defense, family defense, immigration and
23 civil legal services to thousands of indigent
24 Brooklyn residents every year. I thank the New York
25 City Council and in particular the Transportation

2 Committee for giving me this opportunity to testify.

3 Rising fares hurt all low-income New Yorkers, and our

4 clients are among those who have been hit the

5 hardest. Every year thousands of our clients are

6 arrested for fare evasion and face immediate and

7 lasting punishment at significant costs to them,

8 their families and our city as a whole. In fact,

9 fare evasion was the top arrest charge in New York

10 City in 2015 with—I'm sorry with close to 30,000

11 arrests, and an additional close to 124,000 summonses

12 an average of 419 police interactions per day. Of

13 those arrested an overwhelming 92% were people of

14 color. Many were detained on Rikers Island, the

15 horrors of which are well documented at a cost of

16 approximately \$500 per day simply because they cannot

17 afford the \$2.75 subway fare. People can lose their

18 children and jobs, and now more than ever be deported

19 for this crime of poverty. Even an arrest can result

20 in deportation. I want to now talk about some

21 clients that we've had. Mr. M, and Army veteran, was

22 stopped on his way to a job interview. He was simply

23 trying to make it to his job interview, but couldn't

24 afford the fare. He was arrested and missed his

25 interview. Another client Mr. W was homeless and his

1 shelter didn't provide Metro Cards. He couldn't get
2 to his program, his public benefits meetings. Mr. R
3 another client was on his way to get his public
4 assistance restored after an error by HRA. It
5 resulted in the suspension of his benefits. All of
6 these individuals were arrested for fare evasion,
7 detained overnight and churned through the criminal
8 arraignment process. All of them were Black and
9 indigent. The taxpayer funds wasted on punishing
10 them for the poverty only made them less able to
11 afford the fares. There are two critical steps the
12 New York City and the state can take to end this
13 injustice. First, they should eliminate criminal
14 penalties for theft of services as it relates to fare
15 evasion. The violators continue to be subject to
16 answer the adjudication bureau summonses that have a
17 reduced penalty. In the interim, local law
18 enforcement should end the arrest and prosecution of
19 people accused of fare evasion and instead focus on
20 preventive measures. The second step is that the
21 city and state should reinvent—to reinvest the
22 resulting savings and making public transit [bell] a
23 viable resource for all New Yorkers. BDS is proud
24 to joined the Riders Alliance, the Community Service
25

2 Society, a majority of Council Members and many
3 others in calling on the Mayor to fund Fair Fares.
4 To benefit the maximum number of people in needs,
5 these criteria should be as inclusive as possible.
6 This modest financial support would go a long way
7 toward helping New Yorkers who are struggling to get
8 to job interviews, work, school or anywhere else in
9 the city. We also recommend eliminating time
10 limitations on student Metro Card to encourage young
11 people to pursue as many opportunities—activities as
12 possible, and prevent countless unnecessary arrests.
13 Students should be able to use their Metro Cards as
14 needed without police intervention of any kind. Each
15 misdemeanor prosecution costs an estimated \$1,750
16 according to the Police Reform Organizing Project.
17 By that estimate, New York spent more than \$51
18 million prosecuting fare evasion cases in 2015 or
19 about a million per week. Taxpayers would be better
20 served if this money were redirected toward helping
21 rather than punishing those in need—I'm sorry—those
22 in need. Moreover, under Fair Fares low-income
23 commuter savings would likely be re-invested in their
24 communities and other New York businesses a boon for
25 our economy. I thank the majority of Council Members

2 who already report reduced fare options for low-
3 income New Yorkers, and I respectfully urge the
4 entire Council to make it a priority in this year's
5 budget negotiations. Thank you.

6 LISA HAMNER: Good afternoon. My name is
7 Lisa Hamner, and I am addressing you today in support
8 of reduced fare Metro Cards of low-income New
9 Yorkers. Despite having worked full time for over 25
10 years, I now find myself in a situation I would have
11 previously found unimaginable. Due to a perfect
12 storm of domestic violence and my daughter's serious
13 illnesses, I now find myself a resident of the
14 Tillary Street Women's Shelter. This is a city
15 shelter for people suffering from mental illness.
16 Because of the treatment I received from—for Major
17 Depressive Disorder and Post-Traumatic Stress
18 Disorder, and so that I can participate in my
19 daughter's treatment, I was declared temporarily
20 disabled to work. My current sole source of income
21 comes from public assistance. I receive \$114 per
22 month. A hole in my shoe can create a major personal
23 crisis. I do not wish to live off taxpayers, and I
24 am not a lazy person. In order to facilitate future
25 employment, I found a program in Manhattan that would

1 train and certify me the Microsoft Office Program. I
2 took the assessment and was given a school schedule
3 for three days a week of training. MEOC is 8.6 miles
4 from the Tillary Street Shelter. HRA will provide
5 monthly Metro Cards to graduates of the program once
6 they have attained employment, but do not provide any
7 form transportation assistance to look for a job or
8 while in training. Though I have Fibromyalgia, which
9 is at times excruciating, I can and have walked from
10 my shelter to Harlem and I have walked from the Bronx
11 back to Brooklyn after attending my daughter's mental
12 health treatment, but there are times when a three-
13 hour walk is not practical. In addition to my own
14 situation, I have seen how issues of poverty affect
15 transportation for other residents in my shelter.
16 Far from being leeches who expect little free ride,
17 many-many of the residents in my shelter work full
18 time. One of the women in my dorm rises at 4:00 a.m.
19 to take two trains and a bus to her job as a cashier
20 in Riverdale. She works full time and yet cannot-
21 cannot afford to purchase a monthly Metro Card
22 because she can't put that much money down at once,
23 and would have nothing left to get to work if the
24 card got lost or stolen. The woman in the bed next
25

2 to mine in the shelter has been in and out of the
3 hospital with diabetes and an enlarged heart. I
4 recently found her sobbing because she could not get
5 to her doctor for an appointment because she did not
6 have money for the train, and she was too weak to
7 take the change that someone would take pity on her,
8 and give her a swipe. The average New Yorker
9 rightfully complains when fares go up because it is
10 an—it is an inconvenience. Belts may need to be
11 tightened. I see first hand that people living in
12 poverty in the City was having the stress and
13 struggle to—to feed themselves, have their physical
14 and mental health on the line when transportation is
15 not available. Poverty should not preclude one from
16 dignity. There is not dignity in begging a stranger
17 for a swipe to get to a doctor, a job or to bring
18 their [bell] child to school. I ask you please to
19 consider allocating funds in the city's budget to
20 provide new—reduced fare public transportation to
21 those who are struggling on a daily basis. They are
22 just asking for the chance to pull themselves up, and
23 achieve the same American dream that we all hope for.
24 Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you for
3 being here.

4 JACKIE COHEN: Hi. My name is Jackie
5 Cohen, and I am the Campaign Coordinator the NYPIRG
6 Straphangers' Campaign. Thank you for the
7 opportunity to speak here today. Mass transit is a
8 great equalizer. Robust transit systems connect
9 community members to jobs, schools, libraries, civic
10 centers and other resources increasing economic,
11 political and social opportunities beyond an
12 individual's immediate surroundings. Despite being
13 such a crucial resource, though, many New Yorkers
14 face difficulty in accepting subway and bus service.
15 Since 2005, riders in New York City have faced now
16 it's seven fare hikes with a decrease in fare bonus,
17 and increase in weekly and monthly Metro Cards
18 approved just last month. While many New Yorkers
19 struggle to pay the fare, it is especially burdensome
20 on the poor many of whom simply cannot afford the
21 cost of the subway or bus fare. Low-income New
22 Yorkers are disproportionately burdened by increased
23 transportation costs. More than one—more than one—
24 third of all low-income working age New Yorkers have
25 reported the rising transit fares have prevented them

2 either seeking or accepting employment further from
3 where they live. Transit inaccessibility further
4 perpetuates the cycle of poverty by limiting
5 educational and employment opportunities for low-
6 income New Yorkers, and rising costs make it
7 exceedingly difficult for these individuals to love
8 in New York City or even attempt something like to
9 complete a college degree. For example, according to
10 the most recent Student Experience Survey conducted
11 by the City University of New York, CUNY in 2016,
12 about 560% of all CUNY students live in households
13 making less than \$30,000 a year, and I think it's
14 worth noting that 40% of all CUNY students are the
15 first generation in their families to go to college.
16 New York City already offers reduced fares to many of
17 its residents, senior citizens over the age of 65,
18 New Yorkers with disabilities, and high school
19 students under the age of 18 already benefit from the
20 discounted Metro Card program, but unfortunately,
21 many low-income New Yorkers do not benefit from these
22 programs. Additionally, middle card new-middle-class
23 New Yorkers are able to save hundreds of dollars—
24 dollars each year through free cash benefits towards
25 their Metro Card. It's implemented and estimated

2 800,000 New Yorkers would benefit from a reduced fare
3 system giving individual over \$700 annually. The
4 Straphangers' Campaign feels strongly that no New
5 Yorkers should have to risk losing a job, or
6 foregoing a college education due to the cost of a
7 Metro Card. It is time that New York City provide
8 financial review to its neediest residents, and adopt
9 and a Fair Fare system much like Seattle, San
10 Francisco and Chicago have already done, and allow
11 for low-income New Yorkers to have the opportunity to
12 get on board. Thank you.

13 DEBORAH LOLAI: Good afternoon, Chairman
14 Rodriguez and members of the committee. My name is
15 Deborah Lolai, and I'm here on behalf of the Bronx
16 Defenders. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
17 before you today on this important matter. The Bronx
18 Defenders is a community based and nationally
19 recognized public defender office dedicated to
20 serving the people of the Bronx. Since its founding
21 almost 20 years ago, the Bronx Defenders has rooted
22 its work in the knowledge that preventing people from
23 becoming caught in the revolving door of the Criminal
24 Justice System requires addressing both the
25 conditions driving people into the system as well as

2 the devastating circumstances that results from
3 Criminal Justice involvement. To full understand the
4 impact the reform under consideration here today
5 would have on our clients' lives, it is important to
6 paint a picture of the community we serve and its
7 struggle. Our office is located in the South Bronx,
8 which is the poorest congressional district in the
9 country. Almost 38% of its residents live under the
10 poverty line. It may be difficult for some of us in
11 this room to understand, or maybe not, the decisions
12 required of those living in such poverty, but many of
13 our clients have to choose between eating a meal on
14 any given day or buying a Metro Card to get to
15 school, work, appointments or courts. This proposal
16 to make public transportation affordable is both
17 smart policy and the right thing to do. Since the
18 implementation of Broken Windows policing, many
19 arrest in low-income communities such as the ones
20 that we serve, are for fare evasion including jumping
21 a turnstile or getting on the bus without swiping a
22 Metro Card. Between 2008 and 2013, newly 37,500
23 people received sentences for fare evasion that
24 involved time behind bars, and this does not include
25 the thousands of arrests or summonses, which resulted

2 in sentences requiring paying a fine or completing
3 community service. Many public transportation-making
4 public transportation affordable for the communities
5 we serve real result-result in fewer arrests. Our
6 clients do not sometimes just jump turnstiles because
7 they want to steal from the MTA. They occasionally
8 do so because they do not have the money to buy a
9 Metro Card. Our city spends an enormous amount of
10 money on these cases when they result in arrest.
11 From the point the officer makes the arrest to the
12 likelihood of incarceration during the pendency of
13 their cases because they cannot afford bail, to the
14 many court dates the client must attend. All of
15 these costs could be avoided by making Metro Cards
16 realistically accessible to the poorest people in our
17 city. Making public transportation affordable is not
18 just smart policy, it is also the right thing to do.
19 What comes to mind for me is a 16-year-old client I
20 worked with who had a developmental disability. He
21 had several cases for jumping a turnstile almost in
22 every single borough. He was sentenced to probation,
23 which will also require him to use public
24 transportation to travel to his probation
25 appointments. If he does not attend, he will be in

2 violation of probation and pulled deeper into the
3 system. If he jumps a turnstile, he could pick up a
4 new charge with the same results. This is a clear
5 example of the criminalization of poverty and the
6 most vulnerable in our society. Many of our clients
7 depend on affordable public transportation to
8 maintain custody of their children or to get them
9 back from foster care. ACS often requires them to
10 participate in several programs and services in
11 various locations not to mention the appointments
12 just to visit with their children. When parents lack
13 the money for a Metro Card they are literally
14 choosing between seeing their children and risking
15 arrest. Make no mistake, an arrest for fare evasion
16 is not just an arrest. It can cost our clients their
17 hard earned jobs, their public benefits they depend
18 for survival, their children, their housing and can
19 even incredibly especially now subject them to
20 deportation. All these devastating consequences of
21 an arrest could be prevented simply by making Metro
22 Cards accessible to low-income people. These are
23 just a few of examples of why we need to make public
24 transportation affordable for the most vulnerable New
25 Yorkers. When I have conversations with my clients

2 about what they believe would be the most helpful in
3 avoiding recidivism, continuing their education or
4 maintain employment, their response is overwhelmingly
5 realistic access to Metro Cards. This is a challenge
6 that we are capable of meeting, and it is time to do
7 so. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, and
9 all I can is that I have a feeling that in the energy
10 that we have in this room, with your testimony, your
11 expertise, and your commitment, that this is a matter
12 of time when we can get this initiative done. We've
13 been in previous initiative as to the city, basic
14 day, fast food workers. Now they're beginning many
15 of those initiatives. They look at UPK. Many people
16 they don't believe now there's something that can be
17 done, and this is not about 800,000 New Yorkers
18 begging. This is about doing the right thing by
19 bringing those monies back to our local communities.
20 This is about creating opportunities for New Yorkers
21 who are our city. So, you know, helped us in our
22 committee. You have like a strong life (sic). I
23 will be pushing this initiative with all the energy I
24 have. All I ask you is also to do the same thing.
25 Go back to your neighborhood or the city, you know,

2 advocacy group. Go back to your boroughs, and help
3 us to expand the escalation, but I think that this is
4 something that with the support that we have, again,
5 all the editorial boards they have indulged this
6 initiative from the Daily News to the New York Times
7 or the El Dioria La Prensa, laborers being on board
8 all of them. Interfaith leaders are being on board.
9 Most of the Council Members have signed on this
10 initiative. All their statements later they had
11 those. So, you know, you have showing or so it was
12 like a strong testimony on why this is right thing to
13 do not only for percent for us all, but for the
14 residency of it. So, thank you, and now let's go to
15 the next panel. The next one is—it's the one that
16 have a lot of responsibility from moving all the
17 numbers that we got today. One of the leaders of the
18 Riders Alliance, Rebecca Byler—Lelah (sp?)who's here,
19 Monica Martinez, and Wilma Cabrera, Crystal Palmer.
20 [pause]

21 There you go. Thank you Chairman
22 Rodriguez for calling this hearing, and being such a
23 strong supporter of Fair Fares and—and public
24 transportation in general, and also to Council Member
25 Greenfield who is not here any more, but he spoke so

2 passionately about the state for Fair Fares. I'm
3 Rebecca Balin, Campaign Manager of the Riders
4 Alliance. Today, you've been hearing testimony from
5 New Yorkers struggling and not who are calling on the
6 city to fund—to help fund one program that would help
7 break down a major barrier to the economic
8 opportunity and community life in New York City, and
9 that barrier is, of course, the Metro Card. For New
10 York City residents, public transportation is a
11 necessity that allows access to all other
12 necessities. Trains and buses connect families in
13 different boroughs. They get us to job interviews
14 and to college classes, and they allow us to engage
15 in political and democratic life when we need that
16 engagement the most, more than ever. But it's not.
17 Of course, just buying Metro Card is completely out
18 of reach. The New York City Council and the Mayor's
19 Office has acknowledge that the Metro Card is a
20 burden for all New Yorkers, and has demonstrated a
21 commitment already to helping ease the cost for
22 middle-class New Yorkers by signing the Commuter
23 Benefits Act into law. This law, one that the Riders
24 Alliance and transportation advocates fought for, is
25 helping hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers like

2 myself save hundreds of dollars every year. So it's
3 truly a huge burden lifted, and we thank you for
4 that, but many New Yorkers right now cannot take
5 advantage of the Commuters Benefits Act, and for
6 those who can't they are disproportionately low-
7 income residents struggling to get by. Now, more
8 than ever we need Fair Fares. When New York is so
9 unaffordable for our most struggling community
10 members, it only makes sense and it is only right
11 that we show the same commitment and extend those
12 savings for those who are working hard, and are—but
13 ate blocked by the turnstile. That's why we're here
14 asking Mayor de Blasio and the New York City Council
15 to take this next obvious step to make New York City
16 truly affordable.

17 WILMA CABRERA: [off mic] Good afternoon.
18 [on mic] Good afternoon, Chair member. My name is
19 Wilma (sic) Cabrera, and I am from the Bronx. I'm a
20 member of the Riders Alliance. Thank you for the
21 opportunity to testify today because I use public
22 transportation to move around. The cost of Metro
23 Card makes it difficult for struggling New Yorkers
24 like me to afford or even get to where we need to go.
25 Two surgeries (sic) is why—is why I have had trouble.

2 I am presently unemployed, and I have struggled to
3 recuperate your income views. Because I couldn't
4 afford to get on the bus or on the train. I have
5 challenges to get to the unemployment officer because
6 the cost of transfer is too much for me. I have ever
7 had to walk to the post-operating unit (sic). To get
8 to where I need to go, I have to choose between
9 paying my electrical bill or buying groceries in
10 order to afford a weekly Metro Card. Recently I had
11 to skip lunch in order to get to the hospital, and
12 even then I just feel I had to ask enable for helping
13 getting home. Having to do these things makes me
14 feel very helpless. Having to constantly decide what
15 I do based on whether or not I can afford a Metro
16 Card makes me sad. I'm fighting for Fair Fares
17 because it is something that low-income people need
18 event those who are working and still have too many
19 expenses to fully provide for their families. My
20 community needs the cost of transfers to go down. If
21 we're even going to go to get ahead. It is unfair
22 that the City expects that working people with lower
23 income to have to pay more. I have to give some
24 points that Mayor de Blasio didn't include funding
25 for half price Metro Card for low-income ricers in

2 his Preliminary Budget, but there is still time for
3 the Mayor de Blasio and do the right thing by
4 including Fair Fares in his Executive Budget to make
5 transfer and for level to all New Yorkers, and I ask
6 the New York City Council—Council to fight for Fair
7 Fares in the budget negotiations. No one should have
8 to skip meals or jump turnstiles in their effort to
9 pull themselves out of poverty. Thank you for your
10 time today.

11 MONICA MARTINEZ: Hello. My name is
12 Monica Martinez. Thank you for the opportunity to
13 testify today. I am a member of the Riders Alliance
14 and a native residents of the Bronx. I'm here to
15 fight for half price Metro Cards for low-income New
16 Yorkers. My husband and I struggle to get by as
17 today he is unemployed. In the winter he used to
18 ride his bike to ride to work, but today it's
19 impossible. I have three kids. My eldest goes to
20 school in Manhattan with me, but I rely on the subway
21 and bus to attend to all of her important school
22 functions. I must very carefully to make sure I have
23 the money to attend PTA meetings, parent-teacher
24 conferences and similar events. This past Wednesday
25 it was a—it was a ceremony, and I couldn't be able to

2 attend because I didn't have the money to-to go. The
3 price of the Metro Card gives me a tremendous amount
4 of anxiety. My greatest fear is that I will be out
5 with my kids and not have enough money to get us
6 home. As for the school, when I get out, I often
7 skip meals to ensure that I always have enough cash
8 on hand to get me and my family home. It is common
9 for me to walk one of my kids to a doctor's
10 appointment because we cannot afford to take the
11 train or a bus. My family needs a reduction in the
12 price of the Metro Card. Fair Fares will really help
13 us and we hope that Mayor puts this in the budget as
14 soon as possible. Thank you.

15 PEDRO BEAZ: Good afternoon, Chairman
16 Ydanis Rodriguez of the New York City Council
17 Transportation Committee. My name Pedro Baez, Jr.
18 (sic) and I'm a Riders Alliance member. Thank you
19 for the opportunity to testify today. I've lived in
20 a NYCHA in Bedford-Stuyvesant for over a year, and
21 I'm living with some other family relatives, my
22 single mother, my three sisters, my brother, my
23 nephew and my niece. I'm the only family member that
24 does have a reduced fare Metro Card due to my mental
25 disability known as-known as the Amal Autism Spectrum

2 Disorder. Sometimes the rest of my family has to
3 spend much of their income for either a 7-day or a
4 30-day Metro Card to get where they're going.
5 However, they had to say the same on the Metro Card
6 sometimes. I urge Mayor de Blasio to help make the
7 transit system affordable to all New Yorkers by
8 offering half price-price fares for the city's lowest
9 income New Yorkers as we do for seniors, students and
10 people with disabilities like myself. Let's make our
11 turnstile the entry point not the barriers, to upward
12 mobility. Muchas Gracias.

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Now, I am
14 disappointed. (sic) Thank you. The next one is
15 Teresa Palmer, Yusep Demagnu (sic), Bret Stanley,
16 Collegiate Congress. [pause] Yes.

17 BRET STANLEY: Thank you for having us
18 here, Council Member Rodriguez and thank you for
19 those of you who have managed to stick around this
20 morning. This is my very first time a City Hall, and
21 I understand that sometimes we can take a long time,
22 but I-I am motivated and encouraged by some of the
23 spirit that I've seen today, and the motivation to-to
24 create a different here in the city. I will start by
25 speaking from my own background. I'm here

2 representing Collegiate Congress. We are an
3 advocacy-advocacy group for college students here in
4 New York City, and I have sort of a-a unique
5 perspective by currently being both a professor and a
6 college student. This allows me to have sort of a
7 dual view of the situation. As a professor on one
8 hand, despite having an advanced degree and working
9 as many hours as my tenured full-time colleagues, I
10 currently live below the city poverty line. At the
11 same time, I-I get to hear the experiences of my
12 undergraduate students who are in-in my generation,
13 many just younger than me, and existing in a-in a
14 state that I see consistently overlooked by the
15 politics of the country and-and this city as well the
16 idea that very much unlike the presidency you need
17 five years experience even for an entry level job,
18 and that as a result people spend a great amount of
19 money to make their way to positions, internships
20 that may not pay them at all. This to me is-is a
21 gross injustice that is currently experienced by
22 college students in this city, which I-I think cannot
23 be overlooked as-as much as hearing some of the-the
24 experiences of people that have spoken before me, and
25 I'm impressed by as difficult as it can be for

2 college students how we are simultaneously privileged
3 at the same time even to-to be going to school. I
4 am-am reminded actually just this morning realizing
5 that we have a new college on Collegiate Congress,
6 who is a former student of mine. Four years ago
7 outpacing (sic) New York City directly across the
8 street, and seen him again for the-the first time in
9 four years, and I'm reminded of the promise of higher
10 education, which for those of us from-from far away
11 whether-whether Southern India or the Central Valley
12 of California is very much the promise that brings us
13 a city like New York. It's that here in this place,
14 you can get to where you need to go, and so far as
15 the actual transportation costs of people getting
16 around this city day to day to jobs or internships or
17 to school is prohibitively expensive as it is, the
18 injustice continues. And I was sitting right in that
19 seat and saw these little black placards saying
20 reserved for somebody that never sat down there that
21 this entire committee has been talking about MTA all
22 morning that didn't even bother to show that the
23 representative of the Mayor's Office scurried away
24 what must have been 15 minutes listening to the panel
25 to me is a disgrace. And I would remind this room,

2 those of us that remain that the by and large young
3 population of students in this city and nationwide do
4 not take the service progressivism very kindly. We
5 are not content with exclusively social liberalism.
6 We vote. We are a sizeable population in this city
7 and to the—the gentleman likewise is not here, but
8 mentioned outside how is an initiative like possible?
9 Well, I said yet the Mayor has not shown more than
10 even lukewarm support. Clearly we are not living in
11 normal times, and whether for the better or the
12 worse, time and time again, we are minded by those
13 that are told they cannot be done that—that it is
14 done by those that are willing to give it. I ask
15 those of you in this room to continue your fight, and
16 Council Member Rodriguez in particular thank you for—
17 for continuing this effort for bringing this to—to a
18 larger audience. We—we must and continue to fight
19 for—for underprivileged people in this city regarding
20 higher—excuse me—public transportation, and I ask
21 that you please keep in mind college students as we
22 do.

23 CHRISTO THOMAS: Thank you very much,
24 Chair. My name is Christo. I am the Chairman of the
25 Collegiate Congress. We are a consortium of students

2 that developed—represents every student who pays from
3 there. We have the largest and the leading consumer
4 (sic) of development in New York City. We've been
5 fighting for this Council for the last. We have a
6 proposal actually submitted to your offices. There
7 stills that to be done to it. (sic) We're been
8 asking for a discount on the unlimited Metro Card,
9 with 30 discount--down—we're asking 30% on it. We are
10 asking 30% discount on it, but it means which comes
11 to around \$85, and they need to write that. If you
12 have that discount, it's actually cost-effectively
13 pursuit, and it also balances the MTA as the debt,
14 because we respect MTA as a service, we also know
15 it's a business as well. But the thing is that when
16 we take issues we completely never let the students
17 and we can still lose 10% of New York, and it's going
18 to be 17 years actually making a political move to
19 make our voice heard. So that's a different story.
20 If you want that discount we have seen or we will
21 actually conduct the survey across New York City with
22 2,400 students across five boroughs, all different
23 schools, public, private and for private schools that
24 will. So only 40% of the students uses the one, and
25 we're going to correct that. A student spends almost

2 like \$65 to \$70 a month on Metro Rides. If you give
3 that discount most of them they'll buy it. I'm
4 linked in Card so we can we can all—which will
5 simultaneously increase the revenue of MTA. So we
6 are actually, but we do support the Riders Alliance
7 Initiative for the Fair Fares. Again, our community-
8 student communities actually do not come into this.
9 For example, someone give me this offer free-tuition
10 free CUNY. It will help only less than 3% of public
11 school students. It's not for the entire CUNY
12 students, but then it was in the news media. It says
13 that it's for the impact of the schools. No, it's
14 only 3%. Similarly, fostering communities there's an
15 advocacy we actually formed this Coalition of some
16 leaders from all schools across New York City. So we
17 are—we lead to give all the support for you, and
18 making implementation. So we have spoken to all the
19 student affairs and select the department that a
20 student if you give it to some—only those at the
21 door, either you can buy these up. And that also we
22 can implement through the selectivity. But they will
23 do it as a free service. So, how we will it
24 implement this thing? We have a specific plan for
25 it because is it—is it positive? Yes it is, and we

2 will—we are even willing to give free marketing and a
3 fare riding and free counseling if you take up this
4 initiative. Thank you very much for the time.

5 JUSEF PENECHLIO: Hi. My name Jusef
6 Penechleo. (sp?) I am a student leader for CASE
7 University across the way, and I'm also a member of
8 the Collegiate Congress. As my colleagues have said,
9 we do, in fact, support this initiative for Fair
10 Fare. However, what is something that's concerning
11 to us is that of all the speak the only mention
12 that's really been about student universities,
13 university students have only included those of CUNY
14 schools, and as many of us know there are plenty of
15 other universities in New York City that aren't a
16 part of that community, and we want to just make sure
17 that our voices are still heard. As first generation
18 student myself, I am very well aware of the cost that
19 the MTA fare can kind of cause stress on the
20 students' behalf. As a student leader myself, I am
21 very active in my university, and I am often hosting
22 events that take place off campus, and one of the
23 largest problems that experience and hear from
24 students is that they simply don't have the money to
25 spend on the fare to get wherever this event may be

2 taking place. Going to the university in in New York
3 City one of the main selling points is that you're
4 given access to all of these kinds of opportunities
5 and experiences that's unlike anywhere in the
6 country, and one of the main things that isn't told
7 to a lot of students when they first come here is
8 kind of these hidden costs that come about with
9 transportation. As has been spoken time and time
10 again by almost everyone that has spoken, there is
11 kind of disbelief that across the board we need to
12 get all these places across the city. It's a very
13 large city branching from the Bronx to Queens to even
14 Manhattan itself. It's not viable for us to be able
15 to just simply walk to these places or even if we can
16 afford it take Citi Bike to things like that. We
17 need to be able to ride the Metro in many cases, and
18 as many have also pointed out, it's simply almost
19 unaffordable for many of the students. Going to a
20 university is very pricey, and many of the students
21 are only attending these ones that they have been
22 given, and some of the ones just don't cover these
23 expenses that the—and CASE can place, and having a
24 discounted rate as the Collegiate Congress has been
25 proposing would allow for students to kind of be a

2 part of the community of travelers. So, just to
3 restate, the Collegiate Congress does, in fact,
4 support the Fair Fare Act, but we just want to stress
5 that we as university students do not want to get
6 left behind in this initiative. Thank you for
7 allowing me to speak on behalf of my university as
8 well as Collegiate Congress, and I urge the continual
9 commitment that all of us have been providing.

10 MARJORIE MITUSAKA: [off mic] Yes. [bell]
11 Hi, my name is Marjorie Mitusaka. [background
12 comments] [on mic] Yes, good morning everybody. My
13 name is Marjorie Mitusaka and I represent Theater of
14 the Oppressed.

15 LATISHA BAUDIER: And my name is Latisha
16 Baudier, and I represent Theater of the Oppressed,
17 and we do theater on real issues that go on as we—we
18 don't fabricate it. We may leave out certain
19 details, but we like to show our tenets in theater so
20 people would like to see exactly what we're doing
21 because sometimes when you have an experience you
22 read about it, but you don't get so oppressed or
23 covered, and we like to do a little a little bit of
24 acting of our Fair Fare if possible. [background
25 comments]

2 MARJORIE MITUSAKA: Maybe I ask this
3 lady.

4 LATISHA BAUDIER: Hello, how you doing.

5 MARJORIE MITUSAKA: Can you speak up. I
6 can't hear you. I can't hear you through the glass.

7 LATISHA BAUDIER: Hello, you doing?

8 MARJORIE MITUSAKA: Yes, how can I help
9 you?

10 LATISHA BAUDIER: Yes, I noted that my
11 card says insufficient fee. Is it possible that you
12 can let me get in because I have an important meeting
13 about housing, and I will get a message card on the
14 way back?

15 MARJORIE MITUSAKA: I'm sorry. The first
16 \$2.75 do you have that?

17 LATISHA BAUDIER: No, unfortunately no I
18 don't. It's says insufficient fee. I'm asking if I
19 can get on.

20 MARJORIE MITUSAKA: The answer is no. I
21 cannot put my job on the line. Sorry, I can't help
22 you.

23 LATISHA BAUDIER: Is it possible that you
24 open this police officer aisle here so I can ask them
25 if they can let me on?

2 MARJORIE MITUSAKA: That's none of
3 business. I can't help you. You can find the police
4 if you can. I can't help you.

5 LATISHA BAUDIER: Why you acting like
6 that like all the other people come in you bee nice
7 to them, but today you're in a bad mood. Honestly,
8 and I'm not going to, you know, disrespect you
9 because I don't want any violence of abuse going to a
10 state worker. So I'm going to just look to see if I
11 can find someone to help me. Can I get a free ride?
12 Can you help me? Anybody wants to help me? I see my
13 problem is the clerk doesn't want anybody to get on.
14 No one is swiping me. I can't ask for a fight really
15 because I will get in trouble or a fine, and I will
16 definitely get arrested or a ticket if I jump the
17 turnstile. What am I to do? I guess I'll be
18 homeless.

19 MARJORIE MITUSAKA: Thank you for your
20 time.

21 LATISHA BAUDIER: Thank you. [applause]

22 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you and
23 it's a great way of how to be getting to the closing.
24 If you don't leave we would like to take a few
25 minutes to speak to the Student Congress Group, but

2 now I'm going to be calling the last panel. So
3 before the hearing is over, I definitely would like
4 to get some time to tell them how, and it's a way of
5 how we can expand, you know, this initiative not only
6 for CUNY but the other students that. Those are the
7 hard fish (sic) right? The last panel Karen Ashton,
8 Adrianna Espinoza and Kim Comack. Those are the only
9 three that we have left in case that we have someone
10 else, one, two, three. That's it. [background
11 comments, pause] Begin.

12 ADRIANNA ESPINOZA: Okay. These two.
13 Good morning. My name Adrianna Espinoza. I'm the
14 Manager of the New York City Program at the New York
15 League of Conservation Voters. We have 28,000
16 members and we're committed to advancing a
17 sustainability agenda that will make our people, our
18 neighborhoods and our economy healthier, more
19 equitable and more resilient. I'd like to thank
20 Chairman Rodriguez for the opportunity to testify
21 before the Committee on Transportation regard public
22 transportation in New York City. New York LCV is
23 committee to increase access to low carbon modes of
24 transportation, and would like to offer support for
25 two proposals that would help provide public

1 transportation options for all New Yorkers. First, I
2 do know there are many neighborhoods especially in
3 the outer boroughs that are public transportation
4 deserts. Expanding citywide to strategic locations
5 in the outer boroughs would help bridge the gap
6 between these neighborhoods and the nearest bus stop
7 or subway station. According to those frequently
8 available data from the December 2016, Citi Bike
9 averaged 26,021 rides per day, and some of the most
10 popular origins have consistently been near large
11 transit centers like Penn Station or the Port
12 Authority. This accounted for 69.3 million calories
13 burned in offset 900,933 pounds of carbon in December
14 2016 alone. Thus, expanding Citi Bike could have the
15 added benefit--to underserved areas that have the
16 added benefits of improving public health, lowering
17 reliance on private vehicles, and reducing greenhouse
18 gas emissions. Second, New York LCV would like to
19 communicate our support for the Freedom Ticket Pilot
20 Program, which would instate a flat fee with
21 unlimited transfers for bus, subway and commuter rail
22 rides within city limits. Recently, the New York
23 City Transit Riders Council founds that residents
24 living in areas of Southeast Queens spent an average
25

2 of 15 hours a week commuting. That's more than twice
3 the citywide average of six hours and 18 minutes.
4 Continuity of service between bus, rail and subway is
5 imperative to decrease commuting time and increase-
6 and ease the financial burden facing many low-income
7 residents. Finally, the New York LCV would like to
8 commend the New York Department of Transportation on
9 a commitment to Mayor de Blasio's goal of achieving
10 20 Select Bus Service routes citywide. As part of
11 this effort, we are pleased to see the launch of a
12 citywide transit expanding process. We have been
13 supportive since Intro 211 back in 2014, and we
14 applaud the recent launch of a substantive engagement
15 process as a precursor to the transit plan. You
16 can't realize a sustainable future without a robust
17 transit network that meets the needs of all New
18 Yorkers. The above changes would not only better
19 serve New York City residents, but also bring us
20 closer to reaching One New York City's 80 x 50 goal.
21 I'd like to thank the City Council for their support
22 over the years on transit issues of our-of the
23 concern of our members and look forward to continuing
24 this work in the future. Thank you for your time.

2 JESSICA GARCIA: Good afternoon. Sorry
3 for missing my earlier slot. My name is Jessica
4 Garcia. I am the Deputy Political Director at the
5 Retail, Wholesale Department Store Union. We
6 represent 40,000 workers in New York State, 100,000
7 workers nationwide, and our members work in retail,
8 food processing and other low-wage sectors. On
9 behalf of Stuart Appelbaum, our President and
10 thousand of retail and car wash workers here in New
11 York City, I'm here to testify on the issues of
12 affordable transportation for low-income New Yorkers.
13 As you know, in March, the MTA is scheduled to
14 increase fares for bonus 7-day and 30-day Metro
15 Cards. While single-single ticket fares will remain
16 the same, the fare hikes will impact over 80% of New
17 York City's working poor per MTA's own figures.
18 Transit expenses eat up more than 10% of poor
19 families by just making transportation one of the
20 biggest costs to families second only to housing.
21 High transit fares limit people's ability to get to
22 work, to access training opportunities and to pursue
23 higher education. It forces low-income families to
24 juggle for paying for food, rent and bills. At RWDS
25 many of—of our workers who organize and represent—

2 struggle with New York City's high cost of living.

3 Some like car wash workers are forced to look for

4 work that's close to home, work that's walkable or

5 reachable by bicycle to avoid high commuter costs,

6 limiting their opportunities and work options. As a

7 solution, we support the Community Service Society

8 and Riders Alliance proposal to subsidize a half fare

9 Metro Card for the working poor. It would benefit

10 800,000 New Yorkers struggling at or below the

11 federal poverty line, which is \$24,000 roughly for a

12 family of four. Those eligible would save over \$700,

13 a year, a significant amount for low wage workers in

14 various industries including thousands who work in

15 retail. While we recognize that the MTA is

16 responsible for the MTA fare hike, and the state does

17 need to do its part for funding MTA. We see an

18 opportunity for New York City to create an innovative

19 program addresses the need of its people much like it

20 has—it has led in creating access to paid sick days

21 and Universal Pre-K. The cost to the city would

22 amount to .3% of the city's annual budget, a small

23 amount when you consider the benefits to families and

24 to business. San Francisco, Seattle and London have

25 already implemented similar proposals. Support in

2 New York has been growing since last year, and some
3 of you on this committee are already supporting this.
4 We join you here to declare on the record our support
5 and look forward to working with you to make Fair
6 Fares a reality for New York City's working poor.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thanks. I would
9 like to close inviting all New Yorkers, not only the
10 800,000 that can benefit, but the rest of New Yorkers
11 that in this particular period of time and—and where
12 the city and the nation is under attack, you know, by
13 the federal government, and we have seen so many New
14 Yorkers like asking for opportunity how we can help.
15 How can we help to organize? How can we help other
16 people who are living in—in the poor suppression?
17 So, you know, as many areas that we have to keep
18 organizing, defending immigrant rides, creating more
19 opportunity to protect our working class New Yorkers,
20 and also our middle-class New Yorkers. I think this
21 is a good cause, and I would like to invite again
22 anyone to please contact one of those institutions
23 that made this great coalition the Fair Fare
24 campaign. They can contact again the Riders Alliance
25 go onto their website or go into the—also the

2 Community Service Society, and they will—you will
3 find a way of how to be connected with this great
4 campaign to help working class, and we hope one of
5 those 800 New Yorkers is shown the compassion that
6 New Yorkers have. So thank you again everyone for
7 being here. I would like to invite also for our next
8 hearing, which is going to be February 27th, and with
9 that, this hear is adjourned. Thank you. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date February 22, 2017