

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEES ON MENTAL HEALTH,
DISABILITIES AND ADDICTIONS,
AGING, AND TRANSPORTATION

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December 18, 2019
Start: 1:13 p.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Ydanis Rodriguez
Chairperson
Committee on Transportation

Margaret S. Chin
Chairperson
Committee on Aging

Diana Ayala
Chairperson
Committee on Mental Health

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Chaim M. Deutsch
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Edith Prentice

Ray Wayne

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Maritza Flores

Jessica Murray

Taraya Mitchell

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2 KEITH POLITE: Today is December 18,
3 2019. Today's meeting is on Transportation, Aging,
4 and Mental Health, being recorded by Keith Polite.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [gavel] Good
6 afternoon. We're calling this meeting to order.
7 Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Council Member Diana
8 Ayala, chair of the Committee on Mental Health,
9 Disabilities, and Addiction. I'd like to thank my
10 colleagues, Council Member Margaret Chin, chair of
11 the Committee on Aging, and Council Member Ydanis
12 Rodriguez, chair of the Committee on Transportation,
13 for cochairing this hearing with me today. This
14 afternoon we are hear to identify the challenges and
15 explore some possible solutions to better meet the
16 transportation needs of individuals with disabilities
17 who live and work and visit New York City. Nearly
18 one million New Yorkers self-identify as individuals
19 living with a disability. Additionally, New York
20 City's population is aging. The city's older total
21 adult population increased from 1.2 million in 2000
22 to 1.73 million in 2017, with a significant portion
23 of the senior community affected by disabilities or
24 challenges with mobility. Also, of the 62.8 million
25 visitors to New York City in 2017, seven million of

2 those visitors were individuals with a disability.

3 Still, despite the significant number of New Yorkers

4 with disabilities and mobility challenges,

5 transportation is deeply inaccessible, with less than

6 one-quarter of subway stations having elevators,

7 inadequate subway, um, sidewalk curb cuts, and not

8 accessible taxis and for-hire vehicles. This hearing

9 will allow the committee and the public to examine to

10 examine the crucial role Access-A-Ride plays in

11 providing transportation services for individuals

12 with disabilities so they can travel safely and with

13 dignity. For those subway stations that do not have

14 elevators, old infrastructure, and a chronic lack of

15 investment in repairs has meant that elevators in

16 subway stations break down an average of 53 times per

17 year. According to the Mayor's Office for People

18 with Disability Annual Report, only 87 key subway

19 stations of the 472 subway stations are fully

20 accessible under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

21 Despite these continuing historic issues, we are

22 hopeful for a more accessible city in the future. We

23 are enthusiastic about the recent changes that the

24 MCA has announced with regards to making New York

25 City a more accessible city, including enhanced

2 sensitivity training for all MTA employees, more
3 direct routes for Access-A-Ride, 50-plus new
4 accessible stations within five years so that all
5 subway riders are no more than two stops from an
6 accessible station, and better information on
7 elevator outage and alternate routes, and an
8 accessibility advisor who reports directly to the
9 president of the MTA. Additionally, we are very
10 excited that the MTA has hired its first-ever, first
11 senior advisor for system-wide, and better
12 information on elevator outage and alternate routes,
13 and an accessibility advisor who reports directly to
14 the president of the MTA. Additionally, we are very
15 excited that the MTA has hired its first-ever, first
16 senior advisor for system-wide accessibility, Alex
17 Elgudin. Sorry, Alex. And we greatly look forward
18 to hearing from him today. I want to thank the MTA
19 and the advocates here today for the commitment that
20 they have made to ensure Access-A-Ride remains a
21 priority and it's truly accessible for all. I look
22 forward to hearing more about all of the work being
23 done and the role of the City Council can play in
24 supporting those efforts. I also want to thank my
25 colleagues, Council Member Chin, Council Member

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2 Rodriguez, and their staff, as well as my committee
3 staff, senior counsel Sarah Liss, policy analyst
4 Christie Dwyer, finance analyst Lauren Hunt, and my
5 deputy chief of staff and legislative director,
6 Bianca Almadina, and chief of staff Luis Lopez, for
7 making this hearing possible. I also want to
8 recognize Council Member Debbie Rose and Council
9 Member Holden. We will now pass this over to Council
10 Member Chin.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair.

12 Good afternoon. I'm Council Member Margaret Chin,
13 chair of the Committee on Aging. And I thank you for
14 joining us today, ah, it's a triple joint oversight
15 hearing with the Committee on Mental Health,
16 Disabilities, and Addiction and the Committee on
17 Transportation on Access-A-Ride. I also want to
18 thank Chair Ayala and Chair Rodriguez for cochairing
19 this hearing today. New York City's paratransit
20 system, Access-A-Ride, is a vital mode of
21 transportation for many of our city's senior and
22 other individuals with disabilities. These
23 individuals rely on Access-A-Ride to take them to
24 doctor's appointment, to go grocery shopping, to
25 engage in social activities, and to complete many

2 other activities daily. Unfortunately, for years
3 Access-A-Ride has proven itself to be unreliable.
4 We've heard many horror stories about Access-A-Ride.
5 We have heard stories about passengers missing vital
6 doctor's appointment because Access-A-Ride was late.
7 We have heard stories about passenger waiting in
8 freezing temperature for an Access-A-Ride that never
9 showed up. We've heard complaints about driver
10 lacking training on how to work with individuals with
11 disability and driver taking meandering routes that
12 takes passenger hours to reach a destination. It's
13 no surprise that someone calling Access-A-Ride
14 stress-a-ride. Today's hearing will provide an
15 opportunity for the committees to hear first-hand
16 from our city's seniors and person with disabilities
17 about their experience with Access-A-Ride. We want
18 to hear about the challenges our Access-A-Ride user
19 have faced and hear their recommendation for
20 improvements. Importantly, we want to hear what MTA
21 plan to do about it. From MTA we want to hear why
22 Access-A-Ride is so unreliable and what plans the
23 agency has to improve services for seniors and those
24 with disabilities. Everyone deserve fast and
25 reliable transportation. For many using Access-A-

2 Ride is the only way to get around the city. We must
3 listen and fix this service. We cannot continue
4 failing our seniors and those with disability. I'd
5 like to thank the committee staff for helping in
6 putting together this hearing, our counsel, Nusach
7 Adari, our policy analyst, Kalema Johnson, finance
8 analyst, Daniel Croup, and finance unit head Joheni
9 Sapora, and I'd also like to thank my deputy chief of
10 staff, Marian Gara. Now I'd like to turn the floor
11 back over to my cochair, Council Member Ayala. Thank
12 you.

13 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: We will now hear from
14 Council Member Rodriguez.

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Our
16 Committee on Transportation has, as you know, been
17 working with all the advocate, addressing anything
18 that we need to do to make our street, our
19 transportation accessible and affordable. It's an
20 honor to be here with Council Member Ayala and
21 Council Member Chin from both committee, that they do
22 a great job. You know, I can say we have one mandate
23 to MTA. Let's maintain and expand Access-A-Ride.
24 This should not be the choice. This is about human
25 right. Unless one is sitting in the wheelchair and

2 unless one have experience the challenges of one
3 million New Yorkers with physical challenges you
4 don't have authority to come and speak against a
5 program that is so critical and needed. And the City
6 of New York play an important role to get congestion
7 price and even though I was not in the MTA board
8 meeting, but I was following all the public section
9 and when I heard some people say well, the focus
10 should be now only on fixing the train, yes, everyone
11 want to fix the train. But only 24% of the train
12 stations are accountable. So, you know, we have a
13 great opportunity to learn from the pilot project to
14 see how it work, to see how it can be better, but not
15 reducing, not putting a cap of \$15 an hour, not
16 reducing to 16 a month. You know, if someone need
17 five or 10, great. But if someone needs to use the
18 Access-A-Ride 30 times a year, a month, or whatever
19 number they needed, we should not have any cap. And
20 I think that, you know, when we were negotiating and
21 we were throwing our support to congestion price we
22 were clear to the governor, we were clear to the MTA
23 leadership, and we know that we had to, those of us
24 who are, you know, representing agency and entity, we
25 just had to [inaudible] to follow all the leadership

2 from the top. And you're going to be explaining to
3 us why, you know, this program, you know, should put
4 a cap, why this program should have a cap on the
5 numbers a month, the cap of the dollars, of \$15, we
6 are here to say the City of New York as you know, you
7 are New Yorkers, too, so we don't have to persuade
8 you, you know, on this. The City of New York
9 contribute more than what we got from the state and
10 from the federal government. So congestion price
11 funding will be mainly used to fix our train. But
12 also we were clear to them that some of those money
13 also should be used to program that are critical for,
14 ah, to move our New Yorkers. So as the chairman of
15 the Committee on Transportation, as a colleague
16 together with the chair of the other two committee,
17 we are here to ask the MTA, but most important to ask
18 the governor and his governmental relation that
19 oversee the MTA and the chair of the MTA, to ask the
20 mayor to fight with us, to ask everyone on the public
21 and private sector to please let's raise our voice.
22 Most of the station here are not accessible. Our New
23 Yorkers that deal with [inaudible] issues, the New
24 Yorkers that are close to one million that have
25 physical challenges, need Access-A-Ride as an option.

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2 They will continue using the trains. They will
3 continue using the buses. They will continue using
4 the ferry. But they also need to have Access-A-Ride
5 as an option that no one should take away from them.
6 And so with that, thank you, Chairs, and let's, you
7 know, work together.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, Council
9 Member. We've also been joined by Council Members
10 Espinal, Ampry-Samuel, Reynoso, Vallone, and
11 Menchaca. The committee counsel will now administer
12 the affirmation.

13 COUNSEL: This is for anyone who is
14 testifying or answering questions. Do you affirm to
15 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
16 truth in your testimony before this committee and to
17 respond honestly to council member questions? Thank
18 you. You can begin.

19 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Thank you. Good
20 afternoon, Chairperson Ayala, Chairperson Chin,
21 Chairperson Rodriguez, and members of the Mental
22 Health, Disabilities, and Addiction, Aging, and
23 Transportation committees. And good afternoon to our
24 paratransit customers and advocates in the room. I
25 would like to thank you for this opportunity to

2 discuss Access-A-Ride. I am Craig Cipriano, the
3 acting president of MTA Bus Company, senior vice
4 president of New York City Transit Bus. I'm joined
5 here today, on my left here by Vice President Michael
6 Cosgrove, vice president of paratransit, and to my
7 right Alex Elegudin, senior advisor for systemwide
8 accessibility. I manage the MTA's bus and
9 paratransit operations. Mike manages the day-to-day
10 operations of the paratransit program, and we work
11 closely with Alex, who is the first-ever senior
12 advisor for system-wide accessibility and a valued
13 colleague in partner in shaping our vision for
14 paratransit as we look to the future. New York City
15 Transit's Fast Forward Plan is intended to modernize
16 every aspect of our operations. A key aspect of the
17 plan is to expedite work to make the transit system
18 fully accessible as quickly as possible. To this
19 end, Alex has assembled a world-class team that is
20 laser-focused on making our vision a reality. As you
21 know, we're investing an unprecedented 5.2 billion
22 dollars to add 70 new accessible stations to the
23 subway system, more than meeting our goal that no
24 customer is ever more than two stations away from an
25 accessible station. Paratransit service is provided

2 for people who meet the eligibility criteria set
3 forth in the Americans Disabilities Act of 1990.
4 It's important to note our service today goes above
5 and beyond the requirements set forth in the ADA.
6 ADA requirements include origin to destination and
7 door-to-door service where needed, next-day
8 reservations, no restrictions on trip purpose, and
9 zero denials. To give you some background on the New
10 York City Access-A-Ride system, our paratransit
11 service is the largest in North America, performing
12 over 8 million trips a year. We have 160,000
13 registrants with approximately 60,000 active New
14 Yorkers in any given month. This month we reached a
15 peak of 33,700 trips scheduled in a single day, our
16 highest number ever. 71% of registrants are over 65
17 years of age and 15% use a wheelchair. And this
18 year's budget for paratransit was 614 million
19 dollars. The MTA assumed responsibility for
20 providing paratransit service on the 1993 agreement
21 with the city. There is a partial annual subsidy
22 from the city, which amounts to the lesser of one-
23 third of the MTA's net paratransit operating
24 expenses, or 20% increase over the subsidy paid by
25 the city in the prior year. Since taking over the

2 program paratransit ridership has seen a sixfold
3 increase in registrants, from 25,000 to more than
4 160,000, and the total number of trips has increased
5 1900% since 1994. Both registrants and ridership are
6 only expected to continue to increase in 2020 and
7 beyond. Although the ADA allows agencies to charge
8 up to double the base fare for paratransit service,
9 based on the 1993 agreement with the city our
10 paratransit customers pay the standard base fare.
11 This is an important note when thinking about the
12 budgetary aspects you will hear from us later on
13 today. As a result, our net operating deficit has
14 risen from 11 million dollars in 1994 to 548 million
15 dollars today. Of that, the city will pay only 176.4
16 million dollars, leaving us with the remaining
17 balance of 371.9 million dollars, which is twice as
18 much as the city's share. The reality is that the
19 city's contribution to paratransit's net operating
20 expenses has not kept pace with the growth and demand
21 and accelerated investments in service. Given our
22 current financial outlook, it is no longer
23 sustainable for the MTA to shoulder a
24 disproportionately high share of the operating
25 expenses. We believe that an equal 50% share of the

2 cost is fair. As you may know, in many jurisdictions
3 across New York, the locality covers the full amount
4 of paratransit costs and other cities dedicated taxes
5 have been appropriated to help share this expense. I
6 want to take a moment to highlight how we've gotten
7 to where we are today and how we have improved our
8 services to facilitate the type of growth we are
9 seeing. Over the last three years in particular
10 we've made great strides as part of Fast Forward
11 Plan. We've simplified the registration application
12 and improved the eligibility process by reducing
13 reassessments. The no-show, late cancellation policy
14 was updated and simplified. In 2019 we've introduced
15 700 new dedicated service vehicles to replace older
16 vehicles approaching the end of the their service
17 life. Customers can now take advantage of improved
18 GPS tracking to follow their trips on the My AR app
19 and web page. Thanks to a collaborative effort with
20 advocates and our partners in New York City
21 Department of Transportation, dedicated carrier
22 vehicles now have access to bus lanes. We launched
23 an on-demand E-Hail pilot and we will be doubling the
24 pool of participants as part of the next phase in
25 early 2020. To increase transparency we're now

2 regardless publishing performance metrics on our
3 public dashboard, found on the MTA website. We've
4 also introduced a customer bill of rights and
5 instituted improvements for driver training. Lastly,
6 there's also a new scheduling, dispatching, and AVL
7 system in development. These changes have led to
8 significant improvements in service and the numbers
9 speak for themselves. Since this time last year, on-
10 time performance for primary carrier pickup within a
11 30-minute window is up to 97%. Broker pickup on-time
12 performance within that same window is up to 96%.
13 Average trip duration is down seven minutes from last
14 year to 37 minutes in October of 2019. Primary carrier
15 no-shows are down to less than one per thousand
16 scheduled trips in October of 2019, compared to two
17 per thousand in October of 2018. Broker no-shows are
18 also down to less than one per thousand over that
19 same period. Our customers have also been telling us
20 that they're satisfied with the service. In our
21 latest customer satisfaction survey 89% of
22 respondents said they were satisfied with their most
23 recent AAR trip. This is an increase of 24
24 percentage points when compared to two years prior.
25 Along with customer service, the MTA has also

2 prioritized financial responsibility in paratransit,
3 with reforms dating back to 2017. These including
4 leveraging fixed route services by introducing feeder
5 service and a free fare Metro card, reviewing
6 contracts to find potential cost savings. In 2010
7 this yielded savings of 83.4 million dollars over a
8 10-year period. In our 2013 to 2015 carrier reviews,
9 we found another 31 million dollars in annual
10 recurrent savings. And in 2019 efforts to cut costs
11 across the entire MTA yielded 14.7 million over those
12 two years. We're fully leveraging our ability to
13 perform AAR trips in taxis and for-hire vehicles,
14 which have a lower cost per trip than the dedicated
15 vehicles in cases where such services meet our
16 customers' demands, or customers' needs. In the last
17 several years we've shifted service being performed
18 by dedicated carrier vehicles from 70% down to 40%.
19 60% of trips are now being performed by taxis and
20 for-hire vehicles, leading to 33.2 million in
21 recurring annual savings. We've also reviewed
22 schedules to improve dedicated carrier productivity.
23 While we have been laser focused on cost containment
24 measures, the substantial investments we made in
25 paratransit, along with the service improvements, has

2 lead to a booming ridership. Since 2017 alone we
3 have seen a 7% increase in customer growth, a 31%
4 increase in trips, and a 29% increase in the budget.
5 This shows no signs of slowing down. In fact, when
6 we look at the overall demographics of the city there
7 is a much larger population of potentially eligible
8 customers, including 1.1 million persons with
9 disabilities and another 1.1 million that are over
10 the age of 65. With that, I'd like to hand it off to
11 Alex Elgudin to take over the next portion of our
12 testimony. Thank you.

13 ALEX ELGUDIN: Thank you, Craig. Sorry,
14 got it. Thank you, Craig, and thank you to everyone
15 who is here today and for having us here today. As
16 Craig mentioned, we're working on numerous efforts to
17 improve paratransit service for our customers. There
18 is no silver bullet solution when it comes to
19 paratransit. So we are taking a multi-pronged
20 approach to create a more flexible, responsive
21 service that's based on a vehicle mix that best
22 serves our customers, and that the MTA can manage
23 responsibly and sustainably. Also as Craig mentioned
24 earlier, we are fully committed to expanding the
25 availability of taxis and for-hire vehicles to take

2 trips where it makes sense for our customers. We
3 have heard loud and clear from many who say that they
4 prefer to travel by taxi and that they enjoy the
5 efficiency and potential flexibility that this mode
6 offers. That's why earlier this year we launched our
7 enhanced broker service. We now offer fully ADA
8 compliant service with a high level of driver
9 training and customer assistance. Customers can book
10 their trips on the app or website and track their
11 vehicles as it arrives. While we faced some
12 challenges over the summer, we have transitioned to
13 this new program. We are confident we have reached a
14 milestone in terms of enhanced broker service. We
15 are doing approximately 18,000 trips on an average
16 weekday with on-time performance in the mid 90
17 percentile. We also have added a new broker to
18 provide service on Staten Island, bringing parity and
19 service across the city. The brokers are adding more
20 wheelchair-accessible vehicles to their fleets and
21 continuing to train more drivers with the skills
22 needed to successfully perform Access-A-Ride trips.
23 Overall, we see this transition as a way to make taxi
24 and for-hire vehicle trips an even more integral part
25 of our service mix. We believe that this modal shift

2 is responsive to our customers' feedback and needs.

3 About 60% of our trips are currently carried out

4 through broker service and we intend to grow this

5 number even more in the future coming months and

6 potentially years. This is yet another of our

7 strategic cost containment efforts which Craig spoke

8 to a few minutes ago, as well as an effort to improve

9 customer service. The average broker trip costs

10 about \$34, while the same trip would cost about \$85

11 on dedicated carrier. This modal shift represents

12 significant potential savings over time as we work to

13 right size our dedicated carrier fleet. We continue

14 to work closely with our partners at the TLC to

15 educate drivers and the industry around the program

16 and the important opportunity it provides for the

17 taxi industry. Of course, moving trips to taxis is

18 only one part of the equation. We are working on

19 many ways to improve our dedicated carrier service,

20 which remains an integral element of our system and a

21 mode that will always be needed by a significant

22 portion of our customers, who require various levels

23 of accessibility and assistance. It not only serves

24 some of our customers who can't use taxis or FHV's,

25 but helps us to meet our zero denial mandate set by

2 the ADA. We know that at times paratransit
3 customers' travel needs may change and they cannot
4 plan this in advance. We are looking at options to
5 offer this kind of flexibility and make trips faster
6 for everyone involved through our existing modes,
7 including broker. We will have more on that in the
8 future. But know that we hear our customers and
9 their representatives here today and share the goal
10 of building a more flexible system. Of course the
11 on-demand pilot program represents the greatest
12 possibility, the great possible flexibility we could
13 offer. Through this pilot, which has been running
14 for about two years, 1200 of our customers can book
15 trips at any time using a smart phone app. Although
16 this service has received rave reviews, we are still
17 studying how to best implement it and its capacity to
18 serve a greater portion of the Access-A-Ride customer
19 base. Throughout the pilot we have seen previously
20 low use paratransit customers become high users and
21 previously high users taking even more trips,
22 sometimes more than 100 trips per month. Our
23 experience to date is that some users have increased
24 their trips tenfold, some medium users have doubled
25 their trips, and some high users have increased their

2 trips by 30%. While we are glad to see our customers
3 using the service, we are also closely monitoring the
4 cost of the program. As I announced to our board
5 last month, we will be expanding the pilot to 2400
6 participants in early 2020 with new parameters in the
7 form of caps and subsidies designed to make the
8 program more sustainable. Customers will be able to
9 take up to 16 on-demand trips each month with a
10 subsidy of \$15 per trip. This model is consistent
11 with the structure of on-demand service in peer
12 cities like Boston and Chicago. And we believe it is
13 a good start for the next phase of the pilot. Of
14 course Access-A-Ride customers will continue to have
15 unlimited access to our traditional ADA-compliant
16 paratransit service. The zero denial mandate remains
17 a core tenet of our service. The on-demand service
18 will provide another option for participating
19 customers to take truly spontaneous trips or just
20 when plans change. We hear our customers when they
21 say how life-changing the on-demand service has been
22 for them. But it's important to note that we view E-
23 Hail as another type of service for paratransit, not
24 a replacement for traditional service. Our own data
25 shows us clearly that customers need different

2 service modes. Even on-demand pilot customers still
3 take trips on our primary carrier service and we have
4 an obligation to continue providing these options.

5 We need to continue testing on-demand service to best
6 determine how it fits into our full-service picture
7 and how we can offer this valuable service to more of
8 our customers. It is absolutely our goal to continue
9 to expand on-demand service in the future. We remain
10 equally committed to all the other service

11 improvements we have discussed today. However, to
12 get there we need the city to come to the table as a
13 partner. Expanding access to on-demand service and
14 offering more flexibility for all our customers will
15 have a cost and that will mean expanding our budget
16 envelope. So we are here today in part to continue

17 that conversation. We know all of you will be
18 interested in seeing what we learn from the next
19 phase of the on-demand pilot and we are happy to
20 share that information as we have it. We appreciate
21 all the city has done to support paratransit service
22 to date and we ask you to seriously consider the
23 request from our chairman to reevaluate the 1993
24 cost-sharing agreement. Finally, as this discussion
25 develops, we will continue our investment and focus

2 on improving the user experience for all our
3 customers whether they use on-demand, broker service,
4 dedicated carrier service, or all the above. We
5 look forward to a continued dialogue about how we can
6 work together as partners to provide this vital
7 service for tens of thousands of New Yorkers, and to
8 do so in a sustainable, responsible manner. And I
9 just want to highlight again, as Craig has mentioned
10 and I am mentioning, the Access-A-Ride program of
11 today has made tremendous strides in service and
12 performance over the Access-A-Ride service of
13 yesterday, as evidenced by the unprecedented growth
14 we've seen and all the metrics we presented today.
15 Yes, once in a while you may hear a story from a
16 constituent about a negative experience with one of
17 our trips. But that is the exception, not the rule
18 today, and I say that with full confidence. We are
19 now happy to take your questions. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. I want to
21 acknowledge that we've been joined by Council Member
22 Jimmy Van Bramer and Mark Levine, Deutsch, Lander,
23 Cohen, and Koo. OK. So I have a couple of questions
24 regarding the E-Hail program. Can you tell us what
25 the average cost of an on-demand, well the average

2 cost of an on-demand taken per pilot participant per
3 month and how does that compare to those taken by on-
4 demand through a, through the Access-A-Ride program?

5 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Yeah, hi. So the
6 average cost of the on-demand trip is about \$37.
7 That's the average cost. I'm not 100% sure what
8 you're referencing to on demand via the AAR program.
9 That's the average cost in the AAR program.

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: In the AAR program?

11 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: What about in the,
13 through the E-Hail? What is the average cost of a
14 trip?

15 CRAIG CIPRIANO: The broker program, is
16 that what you're referencing? Right now we have
17 three modes. We have the dedicated carrier, we have
18 the broker, which are the green and yellow taxis, and
19 we have the on-demand E-Hail. Those are the three,
20 the three parts of our program.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And are they all
22 similar in cost?

23 CRAIG CIPRIANO: No, no. So the, so the
24 dedicated carrier cost is about \$85, and the broker
25 cost is in the range of \$35 to \$37 per trip.

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: OK. How much, how
3 much has the pilot cost in each year since it was
4 launched?

5 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So I'm assuming you're
6 referencing the on-demand pilot? Is that correct?

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yes.

8 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Sure. So in 2018 the
9 1200 customers that are enrolled in the on-demand
10 pilot took about 220,000 trips and it cost about 8
11 million dollars. In 2019 the number of trips
12 doubled. It's projected to reach 400,000 trips and
13 it costs roughly 15 million dollars. So, I mean,
14 it's important to note, I mean, we've recognized the
15 flexibility and what our customers are saying, you
16 know, the value of the on-demand, but what we're
17 trying to do is we're trying to expand it in a
18 sustainable manner.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Now is it cheap, is
20 it still cheaper at that rate than the regular
21 Access-A-Ride rides?

22 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So, yes, the broker and
23 the E-Hail is cheaper per trip. Yes, that is right.

24 ALEX ELGUDIN: And I just want to add
25 something. It is, on a per-trip basis it is cheaper,

2 I mean, you hear \$85, you hear \$35, obviously that's
3 cheaper. But when you look at the volume of trips
4 and the demand that it has pushed, um, if you take
5 our projections for, if we took 1200 customers and we
6 made 100,000 or 150,000, you know, the rest of the
7 customer base, it would increase, ah, the cost of the
8 program by several hundreds of millions, if it was
9 unlimited. Even if it wasn't unlimited and it was,
10 um, you know, even it's on what we're suggesting,
11 which is right now the 15 trips, the 16 trips with
12 the \$15, it still will have a cost potentially
13 upwards of 100 to 200 million, and any higher
14 parameters will come with higher costs. So on a per-
15 trip basis it, it very well may be, very well is less
16 expensive, but to the overall program significant,
17 significant cost increases.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: So Alex, I mean,
19 where did you conclude that 15 was the number? Like
20 where did that cap come from?

21 ALEX ELGUDIN: Ah, in terms of the 16
22 trips per month and the \$15 per-trip subsidy, ah, we
23 did a, we looked at what other cities have done in
24 terms of how they've expanded, ah, their on-demand
25 programs, and you take Boston, for example, when

2 Boston was first experimenting with this kind of on-
3 demand service, ah, they started with a similar
4 number of \$15 per trip as a subsidy. They studied,
5 they saw how it worked in their region, and now
6 Boston has several different tiers that go up to
7 about \$40 per trip, so.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: How long did it take
9 to get there?

10 ALEX ELGUDIN: Ah, I believe Boston did
11 that within a year and a half to two years of
12 starting at the \$15. Ah, the 16 trip number is right
13 around the medium number of trips that we see in our
14 pilot. So when you see the 1200 customers, ah, the
15 median number of customers, ah, about 50% of
16 customers took less than 16 trips and about 50% of
17 customers took more than 16 trips. So 16 trips is
18 right around what we saw from a utilization number in
19 the two years that we have the pilot right now. And
20 the \$15, again, was us kind of looking to see where
21 we could start. Again, we've always said this is
22 just a pilot. There's absolutely possibilities and
23 opportunities to go up on both of those parameters,
24 but we want to do it gradually and in a sustainable
25 way because if this does expand, you know, too much,

2 too far uncontrollably, ah, we're gonna have, we
3 ultimately have to pay the bill and, um, our, the
4 MTA's current fiscal operating crisis is something
5 that has been well documented.

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I understand. I just
7 think that, I think that the difference of Boston,
8 and I mentioned this to you yesterday, I think that
9 the difference is that they started at 15 and worked
10 their way up, whereas in New York City we started at,
11 you know, no cap and now rolling it back becomes, you
12 know, pretty difficult.

13 ALEX ELGUDIN: Right.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Understandably, you
15 know, there's a cost attributed to this but, you
16 know, individuals have, you know, become accustomed
17 to using it and, um, it's very popular, it's a very
18 popular, you know, um, way of getting around the
19 city. Um, the MTA, so let me ask you a question. So
20 the MTA's overall budget this year was 16 billion.
21 Access-A-Ride budget was 614 million. That means
22 that paratransit represents less than 4% of the MTA's
23 overall budget. Given the significant population
24 that relies on paratransit, do you think that that
25 percentage should be higher?

2 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So what I would say is
3 that if, ah, if I used the bus system as an example,
4 right, so the bus system carries 2.2 million trips a
5 day. The subway system carries 6 million trips a
6 day. The paratransit system does 33,000 trips a day.
7 So actually the subsidy per trip or the amount of
8 money that the MTA is putting towards each and every
9 one of those customers, is actually the greatest on
10 the paratransit side.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Hmm.

12 ALEX ELGUDIN: Yeah, and I just want to
13 add to what Craig is saying. I mean, every customer,
14 whether you're disabled or not, or however you
15 travel, should have a right to this service, even
16 though Access-A-Ride does 33,000, you know, 30,000
17 trips a day, give or take, whereas our fixed route
18 service does, you know, 6 to 8 million, it, it
19 shouldn't make a difference. Everyone deserves good
20 service. But I think that for myself who has the
21 privilege to work for President Byford and oversee
22 accountability across all services, right,
23 paratransit, bus, ah, and subway, um, it's very
24 difficult to extrapolate that number that you're
25 saying and just kind of say the percentage should be

2 higher. Um, when we're focused on our subway
3 station, which is, you know, the major, major part of
4 our fixed route service, we do everything that we can
5 to make that service as, as effective and efficient
6 as possible with customers with disabilities. Our
7 buses, 100% wheelchair-accessible, same thing goes.
8 It's not really paratransit verse bus verse subway.
9 It's about how do they all work together and how do
10 we make it, how do we make it work, right? Sometimes
11 our, our paratransit buses are taking you to our
12 subway and sometimes when you get off our subway
13 you're going to a bus and so on and so forth. So we
14 treat it as an intermodel model and we don't really,
15 ah, compare the budgets in the way that you're, you
16 classified. But we absolutely do understand what
17 you're saying in the way that you mentioned it. It
18 is the thing. I think if we had a bigger financial
19 envelope altogether we'd love to fund more money into
20 paratransit. We have said that.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And does the MTA, um,
22 by any chance document where, do you have a record of
23 like what, what are people using this for, like are
24 they using it to get to work, are they using it for
25

2 social recreational purposes? What are they using it
3 for?

4 ALEX ELGUDIN: So in accordance with the
5 ADA, um, we have to service all trips and the FTA has
6 suggested, and very strongly noted, that we should
7 not be tracking the uses of trips. Whether you're
8 going to a doctor, whether you're going to work,
9 whether you're going to a Broadway show, you have
10 access to all of our services, including paratransit,
11 in the same way. So we generally do not track, um,
12 in any kind of meaningful way. Certainly you hear,
13 you know, personal stories of what people use it for,
14 um, but for us as an operator wherever you want to go
15 we, we are here to serve.

16 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Have you considered
17 ride share, ride share? I mean, would that reduce
18 the cost of the program?

19 ALEX ELGUDIN: The program is currently a
20 shared ride service. I mean, it's not the shared
21 ride service that people have come to know today
22 through TNCs and Ubers and Vias and such. But, um,
23 we do a significant, we do a good portion of our
24 trips on our dedicated fleet that are shared, our
25 broker service, which is shared, and, um, it does

2 provide a cost savings for sure. But we, we try to,
3 um, make sure that any sharing that we're doing
4 doesn't throw customers too far off their trip. So
5 it's a fine line in terms of how much sharing we can
6 do. When you talk about, let's just say Uber, for
7 example, and I only, only, ah, know this from my days
8 at the TLC who's doing 200, 250 thousand trips a day
9 in New York City. That presents massive amounts of
10 opportunity to find, ah, the best sharing
11 efficiencies. We're doing about 30,000 trips a day.
12 Much smaller number, where for us to not put our
13 customers out of the way to much we can only share so
14 many trips, or otherwise we'd be taking them all over
15 the place and making the rides longer. But using,
16 we're in the process of implementing a new, ah,
17 modernized scheduling and dispatching system which
18 will, you know, have much more accurate real time
19 trip optimization, real time traffic conditions,
20 which we hope will allow us to make the current
21 shared ride experience more and also find more
22 opportunities for sharing rides in the future using
23 technology.

24 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: When do the changes
25 go into effect? Is that January 1st?

2 ALEX ELGUDIN: Ah, you mean for the new
3 scheduling system? Ah, the new scheduling system is
4 currently being developed. It's, it has several
5 phases. I think that, um, ah, I think that the, for,
6 ah, it is by 2021, early to mid 2021 potentially,
7 that the system will be, ah, completed in a way where
8 customers will see benefits. There will be certain
9 parts of the system done over the next year, um, but
10 they have more to do with tracking and GPS location
11 of vehicles. The trip optimization portions that
12 will give customers the better trips and better
13 dispatching, will be in 2021.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: OK. I know that my
15 colleagues have a lot of questions and there are
16 three chairs here, so we want to be respectful of
17 everybody's time. So I'm going to pass it over to
18 Council Member Chin.

19 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. I'm just
20 going to focus on two area. One is that in your
21 dedicated, ah, you know, paratransit, how many
22 company and subcontract does Access-A-Ride contract
23 with?

24 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So we currently, we, we
25 had 13 subcontractors. We currently have 10

2 subcontractors today, based upon our carrier fleet
3 reduction efforts.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So they're the, the 10
5 is the one that does the dedicated service?

6 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Yes ma'am.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And you, in your
8 testimony you were saying that by reducing that you
9 are saving money.

10 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Yes, a reduction in it
11 dedicated carriers do, does save money. In fact, in
12 2019, based upon Mike and the team's effort we saved
13 30 million dollars on the paratransit program.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So are you, um,
15 working on continue to reduce the number, um, of the
16 subcontract, of the 10?

17 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So one thing it's
18 important to note, I have to start off with there
19 will always be a need for a dedicated carrier
20 service. You know, based upon certain demographics
21 of our customer base, whether it be their physical
22 disability or cognitive disabilities, there will
23 always be a need for that type of door-to-door
24 specialized service that the dedicated carriers
25 provide. But over time, I mean, looking back at when

2 the MTA first took over the paratransit service from
3 the city, it was really a 100% dedicated shared ride
4 model. Today it's a 60% non-dedicated, 40% dedicated
5 model. We want to continue to offload some of those
6 trips onto the non-dedicated side and Mike and Alex
7 are working hard to do that, and as we do that we're
8 looking, yes, to right size the dedicated fleet.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So how often do you
10 renegotiate those contracts? And also making sure
11 that they train their, their staff and also evaluate
12 their on-time schedule, and making sure that they're
13 doing a good job?

14 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So, ah, prior years we
15 would renegotiate those every 10 years. But we
16 recognize that that was way too long. So recently we
17 went to a five-year contract term. Actually, as we
18 speak right now there's a request for proposal
19 procurement for the next contract on the dedicated
20 side.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So are you going to
22 still focus on five years or are you going to do a
23 lesser time than that?

2 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Yes. No, we're still
3 looking to focus on the five-year period. I think
4 that's the right period.

5 ALEX ELGUDIN: And can I just add
6 something, Council Member? In terms of, ah, having
7 controls over our providers, I mean, one of the
8 things that having numerous providers allows us to do
9 is to see which ones are performing the best and
10 shift trips when we need to. Some of the providers
11 that we've terminated was for, um, performance that
12 we didn't believe was up to par. We do track all our
13 trips. All the Access-A-Ride vehicles have GPS
14 locations on them, ah, GPS locators, which means we
15 know exactly when and at what time vehicles arrive,
16 um, according to what's scheduled. Um, and we help,
17 we hold carriers accountable. It is very possible,
18 we've gone down from 13 to 10, um, in this new RFP
19 that will probably be coming to a close when we pick
20 new providers, ah, in early 2020 that we'll have even
21 less, that it may be five, six, or seven and that,
22 that determines how many vehicles that, that they
23 will have and how many trips they'll perform. Um, if
24 you think about, you know, the testimony I gave at
25 the board just on Monday, three years ago 75% of all

2 our trips were done by dedicated carrier. Today 40%
3 of our trips are done by dedicated carrier. 60% are
4 done by some kind of taxi or FHV. We believe that
5 there is another 10% to 15% that can be shifted,
6 which we are doing gradually. Because we're working
7 with customers with disabilities, customers who have
8 different needs. So, ah, um, we slowly but surely do
9 it in, in, in batches of, of hundreds. So somebody
10 tries a broker trip. For some people the taxi, the
11 level of service presented by a taxi or for-hire
12 vehicle totally adequate, great. They love the
13 service, flexible, wonderful. Some people they take
14 it, it didn't work for me, my wheelchair didn't fit,
15 the driver doesn't really know how to, you know,
16 properly guide me, door-to-door service, not just to
17 the curb. All kinds of nuances. But if we get to a
18 place where let's say it is 65% or 70% of all our
19 service done by broker service, by taxis, um, our
20 dedicated fleet will go down even further. We
21 believe there's another 25 to potentially 30 million
22 dollars that can be saved by that reduction. And one
23 of the main reasons for five-year contracts, um,
24 aside from, it has to do with the fact that, um,
25 there's so much facility and vehicles that go into a

2 program like this, if we were turning it over every
3 two or three years we wouldn't even be getting the
4 useful life out of a vehicle or out of a facility
5 that we put together to run the program. So the
6 longevity is kind of, helps us to account for costs.

7 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Yeah, and I would just
8 like to add one thing that wasn't covered that was
9 kind of in your question there. So the driver
10 training isn't tied to the contract term, all right,
11 so when drivers are hired they undergo 80 hours of
12 initial training, ah, which 32 hours are behind the
13 wheel and 48 hours are of a combination of classroom
14 training and vehicle training and sensitivity
15 training. And there's an annual refresher program
16 for every driver of another 25 hours going back over
17 that training program, as long as they're operating
18 under our service.

19 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Um, the
20 other question I have is that in September of this
21 year the City Council released a report on zoning for
22 accessibility. So generally how are the conversation
23 surrounding zoning and accessibility coordinated, ah,
24 between MTA, DOT, because we want to use that as a
25 way to make more our subways, I mean more accessible

2 because even though in your capital plan you talk
3 about another 70, but the majority of the stations
4 are not accessible. So can we work together since
5 there are so many rezoning and all this going on in
6 the city, because in my district, I mean, I got a
7 building that's taller right on Broad Street, but
8 they promised to make the Broad Street Station
9 accessible. Um, so, I think that's, that's something
10 that I want to see like how is the discussion going,
11 how we can work together on that.

12 ALEX ELGUDIN: Ah, sure, happy to address
13 that question. I think discussions are going great.
14 I mean, primarily working with DCP, the Department of
15 City Planning, on this. Um, we've been meeting
16 regularly every since the report came out. Ah, the
17 Land Use division for City Council has been really
18 championing this. Ah, we're really, really excited
19 about some of the things that are in this proposal.
20 It takes some of the very successful rezonings, like
21 the Midtown rezoning or the Inwood rezoning, and the
22 goal is to make that citywide. So whenever there are
23 rezonings or upzonings, um, we'll have opportunities
24 to get accessibility improvements in our subway, and
25 as part of a person in the discussions I really think

2 that the Land Use division here is doing a fantastic
3 job in getting ready for that. It will have to go
4 through environmental reviews and other things for
5 zoning, but I believe there is, ah, over the coming
6 years, once this is in place, while we work over the
7 next 20 years, if not more, to make our system
8 accessible, numerous accessible stations that we're
9 are going to get through this. And if you think
10 about it, um, accessible stations anywhere from 50 to
11 70 million dollars, let's say this accounts for 10
12 stations, I mean, which would be fantastic, that's
13 potentially 700 million to a billion dollars in cost
14 that we were able to get through zoning. So, ah, I
15 think the conversations are going very well, and stay
16 tuned for updates when they come out.

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Great. Thank you.

18 Ah, I'll pass it back to the chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Council Member
20 Rodriguez.

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: How many, what is
22 your expectation and if you think about the next
23 five, 10 years, when you look at the demand of people
24 who need Access-A-Ride, what is your projection on
25 that?

2 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So like I had mentioned
3 in the testimony, I mean, currently we have 170,000
4 registrants. Again, we recognize that New York City
5 has one million, over one million elderly, over the
6 age of 65, and one million disabled, ah, disabled
7 residents. So there is an opportunity really for the
8 program to expand, you know, at a great rate. You
9 know, currently what we've seen over the last two
10 years, as I mentioned, is actually a 7% increase in
11 our customer base, in our registrants, yet a 30%
12 increase in the number of trips that, ah, that we've
13 provided. So it's not only, ah, the potential for
14 the registrants to go up based upon the New York City
15 demographics, but for the trip, ah, the trip counts
16 to go up. So, again, while I mention that it's
17 because we're really looking to see the [inaudible]
18 we're here and we really want to engage the city, New
19 York City, because the paratransit program is for the
20 residents of New York City, and we're looking for a
21 funding partner and to collaborate together on how we
22 could further improve the paratransit program. We
23 know we've done a lot of great things over the last
24 two years and the metrics are showing it and our

2 customers are telling that, but we really need to
3 engage and have that collaboration as we look ahead.

4 ALEX ELGUDIN: Yeah, and I think, sorry,
5 just to add to Craig, Council Member, I think, you
6 know, the potential of customers out there who would
7 be eligible is huge, it's tremendous. I mean, these
8 two, we had pretty flat growth before 2016. But when
9 you look at 30%, pretty much going from six million
10 trips in 2017, 2018, to 2019 now being at eight
11 million trips, I mean, it's an incredible number. I
12 mean, we're happy people are using the service, but
13 we need to figure out what to do, because on one hand
14 we are being challenged to make improvements to the
15 service. On the other hand we're also being asked to
16 shoulder the cost of the service. And just to give
17 you an interesting stat, I mean, our approval rate to
18 customers who apply to Access-A-Ride are very high,
19 well over 90%, so customers who apply go through a
20 rigorous assessment at our assessment centers and,
21 again, at a clip of greater than 90% they are
22 approved. It's our job to follow the ADA guidelines.
23 If somebody needs the service it is a requirement for
24 us to give it to them. But there is certainly a

2 level of unpredictability as to, you know, how many
3 people could potential join the program.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, I just
5 remember from the time when [inaudible] used to chair
6 the Committee on Transportation and we know that the
7 discussion about Access-A-Ride, you know, to continue
8 addressing a lot of red tape, a lot of loophole
9 there, and it's like from 2009 to today, we've been
10 in this whole situation about, you know, sometime
11 mismanagement, sometime lack of funding, sometime,
12 you know, how to make the program better. And from,
13 you know, the role that we play here in this
14 Committee on Transportation, we know how important it
15 is from the perspective of the whole, from the
16 perspective of the aging. But I just think that,
17 first of all the discussion shouldn't be about that
18 the municipality, New York City, is the one that give
19 more other services because they, I'm not a lawyer,
20 but if I would be a lawyer I would say, OK, how many
21 city are under the MTA and which municipality
22 contribute most to the MTA, and we know that as we as
23 the City of New York is the one that use more, most
24 of the train to run our people, you know, from the
25 different borough and we are like a 24-hour system,

2 but also we are the municipality that contribute the
3 most from those who have in Long Island, Westchester,
4 Connecticut, upstate. So I feel that we need to
5 maintain the conversation about the need, first of
6 all the contribution of people that have physical
7 challenges, that's the first thing because we need to
8 approach it not as we're doing a favor. This is
9 about we need to pay back. This is about human
10 rights. This is about, we have one million
11 individual with physical challenges, tomorrow, and I
12 know that I'm not the one that I had to tell you
13 about all the challenge that you go through because
14 you live that experience, and, you know, and we get
15 there because of age, we get there because, you know,
16 we had, we can have in a crash, you know, like
17 there's different reason. But I, I think that, you
18 know, we need to fix it, we need to improve it. I,
19 just, \$15 doesn't make sense, you know. Because if
20 you live, let's say, in the Bronx and you need to
21 move from the west to the east, and had to take a
22 green taxi, that's like \$25. So we need to maintain,
23 you know, first of all the fear, you know, along with
24 the cost, when someone, the average New Yorkers, need
25 a ride. And I know that you understand it. You know

2 that, you know, it will take decades for us to say
3 that 24% of the stations are accessible or
4 accessibility that we have right now, we know that
5 there's a plan and that will improve in the next
6 five, 10 year. But still we will not make it 100%
7 affordable. I mean, accessible. You know, we are
8 not there yet. And, but the \$15 doesn't make sense.
9 I mean, I think that that number as a call for you to
10 look at the numbers and see if at some point, and
11 when you go back and talk to the chair, you know, to
12 [inaudible] and others, you know, let's look at that
13 formula based around the price. You know, if you
14 talk about someone, say in northern Manhattan, and
15 someone is moving from Inwood through City College,
16 you know, if you go from Dyckman to New York Hospital
17 there's [inaudible] \$15. But someone who uses
18 Access-A-Ride because they want to go, and it is
19 their right to say we'd like to go to, to take care
20 of other need, and that costs \$15, \$25, \$30, how can
21 we deal with that? How can, what is your plan on
22 those cases when the riders need the service for
23 something that is more than the \$15 average in that
24 area?

2 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So, so I think what I'd
3 like to say is, I mean, we fully recognize the
4 spontaneity that the on-demand pilot has provided for
5 our, you know, 1200 persons, pilot participants. But
6 I think it's important to also recognize that it's
7 not the core of our paratransit program, right? The
8 core of our paratransit program, which is a zero-
9 denial program, ah, zero, you know, with no trip, we
10 don't ask for trip purpose, go anywhere you want, you
11 know, within New York City, is our, you know, 24-hour
12 advance reservation system and provide that service,
13 today 60%, as we said, via taxi, and green and yellow
14 taxis, right? And, you know, it's also important to
15 note that today two-thirds of all trips on
16 paratransit are non-shared ride, because we know
17 that's what our customers prefer, a direct trip point
18 to point. We're at two-thirds of our trips provide
19 that. So I think, you know, we've done a lot of hard
20 work over the last two years to improve this service.
21 It's showing and I think it's, the discussion is just
22 not around, you know, the paratransit of yesteryear.
23 You know, with that recognition we believe that there
24 is a place, and important place, for a spontaneous
25 on-demand type of service. We know that other cities

2 have availed themselves of that. We know that our
3 customers are telling us that they really appreciate
4 the service. Now it's up to us in collaboration to
5 figure out what is that next step. So, as Alex said,
6 this is a starting point, not necessarily an ending
7 point. But what we really recognize we need to do is
8 we need to expand this current pool of participants.
9 You know, 1200 customers is less than 1% of our
10 customer base. Like we said, it's over 160,000 of
11 registrants. We need to expand that. And then
12 another important piece that we need to learn from we
13 recognize that when we first went into the on-demand
14 pilot we just wanted to test the waters per se. We
15 wanted to see how the taxi and limousine industry
16 would be able to support this on-demand pilot, right,
17 in terms of the wheelchair-accessible vehicles, in
18 terms of whether this would work for our customers in
19 the outer boroughs as opposed to right here in
20 Manhattan. So we went in there on a volunteer basis
21 and what happened was because it was a volunteer
22 basis and we work closely with our advisory, ah,
23 paratransit advisory committee and other advocacy
24 groups, we recognize that it's some of the more sort
25 of avid users. It's not representative of our full

2 170,000 customer base. You know, one example of that
3 is that on the full 170,000 customer base about 80%,
4 a little less than 80%, are what we would consider
5 lower and active users, meaning they take from zero
6 to four trips in any given month. Yeah, 80%. On, in
7 the 1200-person pilot it's closer to 40%, right. And
8 the reason why I say that is because that's really
9 where the most trip growth has occurred in this
10 pilot, you know, tenfold, as Alex said in his
11 testimony. You know, if we were to extrapolate that
12 over the full 170,000 registrant base, you know, it
13 would just not be sustainable for us. So, again,
14 we're looking to expand. We put a starting point of
15 the 16 trips and \$15. We're going to expand in a
16 random way. In other words, the next 1200 customers
17 to be entered we're doing a random sample, so that
18 the 2400 is a representative sample of the entire
19 population and we can really learn from trip patterns
20 that evolve and in regards to the next step. And,
21 again, it will be a collaborative effort.

22 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: My last question,
23 and before I ask the question I just want to
24 apologize because when we were working to schedule
25 this hearing we already have a hearing, a meeting,

2 for the yellow, for the Medallion Task Force that I
3 also had to participate as a cochair, together with
4 Council Member Levine. So after asking the question
5 I will be excusing myself to go to the other meeting.
6 But what, I feel that first of all with the six
7 providers that you have, how many of those providers
8 are women, black, or Latino?

9 CRAIG CIPRIANO: I'm sorry, the six
10 providers?

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: The providers,
12 from those six...

13 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So...

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: ...that are
15 already doing contract with the MTA.

16 CRAIG CIPRIANO: You mean the dedicated
17 carrier? Well, because we have, we have, just to
18 clarify, we have 10 dedicated carrier providers, we
19 have three broker providers, three E-Hail providers,
20 we have six assessment centers, we have a call
21 center, so we have a number of subcontractors. I'm
22 not sure what you're referencing. I'm sorry.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: From all those
24 service providers in this area.

2 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Oh, what does it
3 present?

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: How well are we
5 doing [inaudible] challenge that we still have in
6 order to be sure that also there is the opportunity
7 for women, black, and Latino to also provide those
8 services?

9 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So we'll have to get
10 back to you on that question.

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: OK. And my
12 [inaudible] is about, you know, I love my friend
13 [inaudible] could be from any app company, but this
14 is not about we creating the opportunity for now to
15 that company here to be the only one that take
16 advantage for any program. I feel that we as, you
17 know, we got here in 2019 at a point where livery
18 bases they closing, ah, yellow taxi medallion value
19 went down, ah, the green taxi, there's like 6000
20 still, you know, tag and permit that they have not
21 been sold. So I feel again, you know, I would like
22 for to see how when you internally run this process
23 also having in mind we want the best quality and for
24 me the services for the individual, those who are
25 today and whoever [inaudible] this group that still

2 are not there we need in the future, we just need to
3 be sure that whoever provided do the best services.
4 But the same time I think it is important to be sure
5 that in those who are the first one leading, you
6 know, proposal, putting plan together, that there is
7 an effort also to have diversity because we have seen
8 the City of New York many time talk about the M/WBE
9 and it's about, it's a good way of how institution
10 make those number that doesn't necessarily
11 translating into the faces in this case of women and
12 minority have been the one also having a fair share
13 of providers.

14 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Yeah, and we will get
15 you that exact number. But, I mean, as you are
16 aware, I mean, the MTA has very aggressive women and
17 minority business enterprise goals on all their
18 contracts. I mean we, you know, the State
19 Legislature, Governor Cuomo, has put forward, you
20 know, the 30% goal and, you know, our chief diversity
21 officer, Mike Gardner, you know, is very active. As
22 a matter of fact, I think the MTA is the number one
23 agency in New York State as far as the percentage of
24 money that goes to women and minority, ah,
25 disadvantaged business enterprises. But the exact

2 percentage in the paratransit program we'll get back
3 to you.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Council Member
5 Holden.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you, Chair.
7 Um, I just want to focus on some of the feedback
8 you're getting in your surveys. Who performs those
9 surveys?

10 CRAIG CIPRIANO: We have staff at
11 paratransit headquarters that reach out and they call
12 customers that have driven and used the broker
13 service the day before, and they speak to them about
14 the service and run through a series of questions
15 with them, about the overall quality of the service.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Could we get a
17 copy of that, those, the questions that are asked
18 and, um...

19 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Sure.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: ...from, from
21 locations, I mean, because, I'm here, to tell you the
22 truth, I go to senior centers and they don't want to
23 use Access-A-Ride, to the person. I mean, I haven't
24 really, you know, done a scientific survey, but many
25 people have given up using it. So I know that may be

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2 from years ago, the perception, and I think that the
3 reality may be slightly different, I don't know. But
4 I'm sure we're going to hear horror stories today...

5 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Right.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: As we do, you
7 know, as council members, and...

8 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So, if I may,
9 Councilman, and I, you know, I understand that you
10 hear those stories, and even Alex said there will be
11 those occasional stories. But I just want to
12 reiterate, you know, that the numbers that we, ah,
13 shared today speak for themselves, meaning two
14 million more trips were done on the program in the
15 last two years and those two million more trips were
16 done because of tremendous hard work that has been
17 put into the paratransit program.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: No, no, I didn't
19 say that.

20 CRAIG CIPRIANO: No, I, I hear, I just
21 want...

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I'm just saying
23 it takes time to change people's perception. That's
24 what, it might not be reality. We all know that,
25 that if somebody had a bad experience five years ago,

2 that's it. You know, I'm done, I was stranded. So
3 we, I understand that. I understand that, and that's
4 why I just want to look at if I could change, go to
5 senior centers and, we have a new Access-A-Ride, it's
6 wonderful now, it's, you know, try it. Let's try it.
7 You know, if I can do that and feel confident I will
8 do that. But I know that it takes time to change
9 people, and that means I have a lot of seniors that
10 are shut-ins now because they feel they have no
11 options. So I need to go out and tell my
12 constituents do it and here's what we've done, and
13 here's how it's improved, and I appreciate all your
14 efforts and I'm sure there is an improvement.
15 However, we talked about like GPS. They're on the
16 all the vehicles now?

17 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Go ahead,
19 somebody wants to say something?

20 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Well, so, in the
21 interest of transparency we are publishing a public
22 dashboard now that has all our operating statistics
23 on it and those operating statistics are being fed by
24 GPS on the vehicles. So there's no manual
25 intervention there. It's all coming from data and

2 feeding into the on-time performance. And I'm going
3 to add that we've been putting up on-time performance
4 figures to the best that that system has ever had,
5 and consistently.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yeah, it looks, I
7 mean, I know the challenges in New York City to be on
8 time for anything is getting more difficult. We all
9 see that on our roads. And the customers with
10 disabilities or the customers in wheelchairs, they
11 all have an app to track? No, and that's the thing.

12 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So the MTA, the MyAAR
13 app is available to every customer. They can, they
14 can available themselves of the app, yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: They can?

16 CRAIG CIPRIANO: They can, yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: And how many
18 have? Do we have a, you know?

19 ALEX ELGUDIN: So I'll just take one and
20 I'll highlight it. Just recently we had our highest
21 day of trips books via the app, which was 3000 trips
22 on any given day, which is about 10%. So we hope to
23 see continued uptick of trips being booked via the
24 app and trips being tracked via the app. Because the
25 booking, obviously, reduces our call center volume.

2 The tracking allows customers to know right away.

3 But even if, um, customers aren't using the app they
4 are getting calls. They're getting notifications.

5 They're getting text messages from our brokers to let
6 them know when their vehicles are close, when they're
7 not close, and this really speaks to our work to make
8 Access-A-Ride more user-friendly, so even if a

9 vehicle is running late how do we let you know? Even
10 if a vehicle is downstairs and you don't know about
11 it how do we let you know? So the other part is just

12 that while we're modernizing our scheduling system
13 and while we continue to develop, ah, our new

14 dispatching system we are, ah, tweaking and changing
15 how we do our automatic vehicle location and GPS

16 tracking, so we're right now in the process of

17 development. We've had a couple, you know, issues

18 over the last few months on certain days, but overall

19 that's because we're developing a brand-new system

20 that is going to be much more accurate, much better,

21 and give customers pretty much real-time information

22 as to where their vehicles and trips are.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: And as more

24 people use the app do you get a higher percentage of

25 people actually satisfied with the service? Are you

2 seeing that? Are you comparing the data, like let's
3 say people get the app, they use it, and they feel
4 better about the service because they know where it
5 is, they know they're tracking it, and then your
6 customer surveys improve, is that?

7 ALEX ELGUDIN: We don't have enough data
8 yet because the app came out just a little bit less
9 than a year ago. So in terms of comparing better,
10 we've just started to add those questions into our
11 surveys because there are so many factors that can be
12 determinate of what makes a customer happy about
13 their trip. It could be a taxi picked them up and
14 got them there directly and they used the app or they
15 didn't. So we have to extrapolate that within, more
16 granularly within the surveys that the app and the
17 tracking and the notifications made their experience
18 better. So that will hopefully be in our surveys to
19 come in early 2020.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: So what I would
21 ask if you could send me something where I could use
22 these talking points, because I'm always talking to
23 seniors, I'm visiting senior centers, I want to
24 promote it. I want to say how great it is now, and
25 then, you know, and then we'll certainly spread the

2 word and we'll change the perception. But I
3 appreciate your testimony. Thank you very much.

4 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Yeah, you know, I'd like
5 to just add one thing. You know, we do extensive
6 outreach and if you would like us to go to any of
7 your senior centers with you, for you, you know, in
8 response to questions we'd be happy to do that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: That's even
10 better. Thank you very much.

11 CRAIG CIPRIANO: You're welcome.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thanks so much.
13 Thanks, Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I mean, I think, I
15 want to acknowledge that we've come a long way, um,
16 in terms of the delivery of service for Access-A-
17 Ride. You know, we've even, the new pilot, it wasn't
18 a pilot, the new rule that allows the use of bus
19 lanes as a means of getting, um, these vehicles in
20 and out of traffic as quickly as possible towards
21 their destination. But I think that, you know, we
22 had a press conference just a few minutes before this
23 hearing and, you know, life-changing is a word that
24 came up time and time again. The freedom to pick up
25 the phone and say, you know, I have a spontaneous

2 need right now. I had a death in the family. You
3 know, I have to show up in school because maybe my
4 child, you know, had an emergency. These are, these
5 are life, you know, issues. These are things that
6 are unpredictable. And so I think that as, as, you
7 know, as great as any improvement to the existing,
8 um, Access-A-Ride system are I think that they don't,
9 they will never really meet the expectation of an
10 individual who's just looking for the freedom to be
11 able to, you know, do what the rest of us do so
12 freely and get up and go on demand when we need to.
13 And if you're saying to me that in your testimony
14 that you're basing the number of rides to 16, it
15 doesn't seem like there's an abuse of, of the system,
16 but rather people just using it, um, for day to day.
17 And I think that that's something that sometimes, you
18 know, and I get that, you know, the fact that we have
19 to fund these programs is a reality, ah, because
20 nothing comes for free and so that's something that
21 we have to figure out but having to plan your day a
22 day in advance doesn't always work out the way that
23 we intend, um, and that is, that's a real issue for
24 many of the individuals in this room today. Not
25 having the luxury of driving to and from

2 destinations, like I do just about every single day.

3 I couldn't function without my vehicle as we are
4 moving, you know, in the city to, ah, a city that's,
5 ah, less dependent on vehicles being on the street.

6 There have to be alternative options for those of us
7 that don't have the ability to just, you know, go
8 down the stairs to the local train, um, grab a bus
9 easily on the corner, you know, as close as possible
10 to our place of residence. It would also help, I
11 believe, get more people, ah, employed. If people
12 are able to get to work, you know, I think that
13 [applause] that's always a benefit, we can, so, so,
14 you know, I, I appreciate, you know, the efforts.

15 But I think that until Access-A-Ride is not as
16 spontaneous it's never really gonna meet, you know,
17 the expectations of those individuals that utilize
18 those, that, that service. And so, you know, I, I
19 will definitely be looking at this for the next, you
20 know, few weeks just trying to better understand of
21 where, as a council where we can kind of, you know,
22 put our two cents and see how we can be helpful
23 because it's a project that I would like to see, um,
24 continue, but I also am cognizant of the fact that we
25 need to make sure that it is financially sustainable.

2 And so I appreciate your, your being here today. And
3 I think Council Member Lander had a question.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you, ah,
5 Chair Ayala. I just really want to assistance myself
6 with those remarks. You know, this is just
7 heartbreaking because for many years, you know, I've
8 been in office for 10 years and for so many years,
9 um, Access-A-Ride users approached us with this is
10 just such a broken system. It doesn't work, we can't
11 schedule it, we can't count on it when it's supposed
12 to come and then meanwhile it costs so much money,
13 just like making it impossible for people to
14 participate as full and equal New Yorkers. And then
15 you try a pilot and it works stunningly, you know,
16 it's like one of the best things that's been done in
17 government in my time in office. I remember when we
18 had the first hearing about you talking about it,
19 because 10 years ago there wasn't, weren't Lift,
20 there weren't on-demand services, we were still kind
21 of thinking through the yellow taxis. And then this
22 happens and you guys agree to do a pilot and it works
23 almost as well as anything in government I've ever
24 seen. A set of people who are locked out of equal
25 participation in our city now have equal

2 participation in our city, like magic, and its per-
3 trip cost is dramatically cheaper than the old system
4 that was totally unequal, and like that was so
5 hopeful and everyone was so happy, and I was like,
6 great, this will be an opportunity for disabled New
7 Yorkers to participate. And then you just like pull
8 the rug right out from under it. And I understand
9 that you're cost-constrained, but we gotta find a way
10 to do better than that. So, um, I guess to want to
11 ask a couple of question. So folks in the
12 traditional Access-A-Ride program, just for today,
13 remind me what's the average cost per trip and what's
14 the average number of trips per monthly customer?

15 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So the average cost per
16 trip for the dedicated, as we said earlier, was about
17 \$85. On the broker side, which we do in 60% of the
18 trips, it's about \$35 to \$37. The average number of
19 trips that customers are taking, now, again I'll go
20 back. We have 170,000 registrants. On any given
21 month about 60 to 70 thousand take a trip. So if you
22 look at that average it's about 10 trips per month.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: OK. So the
24 average person in the traditional non-broker program,
25 \$80 bucks a trip, about 10 trips a month?

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2 CRAIG CIPRIANO: No, so 10 trips is over
3 the entire customer base, even taking broker...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I know it, but I
5 need some averages here, because...

6 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Yeah, 10 yes, 10.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So those
8 customers on average are costing us \$800 a month, if
9 the average is steady across that you just gave.

10 ALEX ELGUDIN: But, I don't, the average
11 would have to be split by we're doing 60% of our
12 trips on broker. So 60% of all our trips are coming
13 in at that \$34, ah, \$35 rate, and 40% of our trips
14 are coming in at that \$80, \$80 rate that we quoted
15 you. As we mentioned a little bit earlier...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Yeah, but what's
17 the average across the two, if you want to give me
18 that? Because either way, I mean, 80 times 10 is
19 800, and 15 times 16 is 241. So, and 34 times 10 is
20 340.

21 ALEX ELGUDIN: \$51, \$51 is average.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: \$51 on average.
23 So the average customer right now we're spending \$510
24 a month on? OK. So why is this new program you're
25 proposing limiting people to \$241?

2 ALEX ELGUDIN: Well, a couple things.
3 First of all, it's not limiting anybody. Everybody
4 still has the ability to use our traditional service.
5 But what we've seen, if we take the 1200 customer
6 base, right, take the other 150,000 out of it for a
7 second. As an average, and I will say that we've,
8 there's a lot of different trip patterns, right?
9 Even within the pilot there is customers that aren't
10 taking any trips. There are customers that are
11 taking two, and there are customers that are taking
12 more than 100 on-demand trips a month. So I'll speak
13 as kind of like the average range. Even when you
14 talk about our low customers, customers between zero
15 and four trips a month, they are now taking, um, at
16 many outcomes, 10 times that. They're now 20-trip-a-
17 month customers, 15-trip-a-month customers. In the
18 medium range, customers who take five to 15 trips a
19 month. So the volume that we've seen as an increase
20 per these customers has created a real challenge for
21 us to implement this program in a cost-effective
22 manner. So all the cost savings you talk about...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: It hasn't, just
24 to be clear, it hasn't created a challenge to
25 implement the program in a cost-effective manner. It

2 costs a lot of money. It's actually pretty easy to
3 implement, right?

4 ALEX ELGUDIN: Sure enough.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Much easier to
6 implement than the current Access-A-Ride program.
7 It's just much more expensive.

8 ALEX ELGUDIN: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: OK. But even
10 just sticking with the average, like if you offered
11 people the \$500 worth of trips a month, that would be
12 double what you're offering here. So you could do 30
13 trips a month at \$15 a trip...

14 ALEX ELGUDIN: But I think...

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And they would be
16 the average customer in the system. I mean, I don't
17 know, maybe people, I'd like to hear testimony, maybe
18 people would tell take that...

19 ALEX ELGUDIN: Not many.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I won't use any
21 more of the on-demand Access-A-Ride service if I had
22 30 trips a month that I knew I could use from, you
23 know, on demand.

24 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So if I may just take a
25 step back for a second, ah, recognizing the

2 calculations you're trying to go through, I think
3 it's important to also, again, going back to 2017
4 when we were looking to improve the paratransit
5 program, the paratransit, the on-demand pilot was a
6 very, very small portion of what we did to improve
7 the program, right? We invested a lot of money in
8 the program. We went from a 475 million dollar
9 program to currently in 2019 a 614 million dollar
10 program, right? So if, that's 150 million almost,
11 right, somewhere in that neighborhood? Maybe a
12 little bit less? And our 160,000 registrants are
13 really enjoying the benefits of that program. And
14 how do I know that? Because two million trips have
15 been done over those last two years, right? Those
16 150, 160 thousand registrants are taking two million
17 more trips. They're enjoying the current paratransit
18 program. A small piece of our improvement program
19 was the 1200-person pilot. And I recognize that
20 people really appreciate the spontaneity of that. I
21 fully recognize that. But that's not...

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: It's not the, I
23 mean...

24 CRAIG CIPRIANO: ...that's not the core of
25 the program. I just...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I just want to
3 object there. Spontaneity makes it sound like, kind
4 of like a whim that you might have on like a once on
5 a while on a Thursday afternoon. I mean, it is the
6 difference between people being able to, to lead more
7 full and equal lives in our city like I am able to do
8 and I, I mean...

9 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So if I may...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I really want to
11 understand what the cost of it is, because if you
12 would come in here and say here's the cost of the
13 program we would like to implement, you're right.
14 What would, what would feel more honest to me, and
15 I'll just leave it here because I don't go back and
16 forth and take any more. Like if you came in here
17 and said, look, we accept that what we've been
18 hearing from people is true. This is a dramatically
19 different, ah, the pilot works so well, people are
20 able to participate in the life of our city in full
21 and equal ways, but it's very expensive. So here's a
22 few choices. Um, if we were to really do it in an
23 unlimited way it might cost us, I don't know, two,
24 three billion dollars. Tell us what the cost would
25 be. Or here's a set of choices for how we could

2 limit. You know, we could say to people you can
3 either have 30 rides a month in the on-demand
4 program, in the on-demand program and that would cost
5 X, or you could have unlimited access and that would
6 cost Y. Um, like you're right, there's a hard choice
7 to make. But mostly it's just money, you know, it's
8 like we know this thing works well and we have to
9 figure out what we're willing to spend for it.

10 [applause]

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Guys. You, yes, you
12 can wave your hands, but we can't clap. There's a
13 hearing next door, so we're interrupting them. Thank
14 you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And I'll just, I
16 wasn't, I mean, yeah, I'm trying to do the math on
17 the fly and I guess I'll ask how do you get to this
18 16 on-demand trips with the \$15 a month, like where
19 does that number come from?

20 CRAIG CIPRIANO: So I think Alex had
21 spoken to that and I'll let him continue, but, ah, 16
22 was the median, the median number of trips that the
23 on-demand pilots were taking, um, participants, I'm
24 sorry, on-demand participants were taking.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: That's the median
3 they were taking when they had no limit at all?

4 ALEX ELGUDIN: Yes.

5 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So if we limited
7 them to 16 then actually the median would go down to,
8 we don't know what.

9 ALEX ELGUDIN: That's what we're hoping
10 to study and see. And I want to address a couple of
11 things that you said, if you don't mind, Council
12 Member Lander.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And I know you
14 care passionately about this issue, so I don't mean
15 to....

16 ALEX ELGUDIN: No, no, no.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: But I want us to
18 get to the right place together.

19 ALEX ELGUDIN: Of course. And, you know,
20 one thing that we said before you came in, I mean, we
21 do believe this is a start, right, this is a start at
22 the parameters. There's a lot of room to grow. But
23 I would say is even if you think about, you mentioned
24 \$500 a month, um, we have seen a very significant
25 modal shift. Pick any customer who used to be

2 traditional, right, service all the time. Now
3 they're in the pilot. Um, very significant modal
4 shift, maybe 70%, 80%. But some trips, even
5 customers in the on-demand pilot, are still using
6 traditional service. You may ask yourself why would
7 they ever do that, right? If you've got an app and
8 on-demand why would you still call the day before?
9 We know that a lot of trips are still not being
10 completed in the on-demand pilot. If you're in
11 Staten Island, if you're in certain parts of Queens,
12 you can go on that apps for hours and there's just no
13 taxi coverage there yet.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: We're working
15 very hard to get the TLC to expand...

16 ALEX ELGUDIN: Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: ...Uber and Lift
18 and for-hire vehicle, accessible vehicle coverage to
19 the whole city. That's an obligation that we have.

20 ALEX ELGUDIN: Yes, we're 100% on the
21 same page.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And I'm, if you,
23 if people want to schedule, great. Like I'm not, I'm
24 not against people scheduling their trips in advance.

25 ALEX ELGUDIN: No, nor am I. I'm...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: ...that sometimes
3 I like to schedule mine in advance, too.

4 ALEX ELGUDIN: I'm just saying that the
5 \$500, ah, to on-demand is never the whole picture,
6 right? There's still some trips that are being done
7 on traditional service that also needs to come into
8 that factor. You know what I mean? So there's a lot
9 of different, um, a lot of different, ah, factors
10 that go into this. And we want to see it expand.
11 Look, the 16 trips that we mentioned is a median,
12 right? There was half the customers taking more,
13 half the customers taking less. The numbers were
14 unbelievable. There were some customers still in the
15 on-demand pilot having this at their disposal, still
16 taking zero to two trips. There were other customers
17 taking over 100 trips. So for us to be able to in an
18 ADA-compliant way, ah, manage to offer services to
19 such wide scale and to do so in a fiscally
20 responsible way is very difficult. As I explained,
21 the \$15 subsidy is something that we looked at, at
22 other cities, where they started and have grown. So
23 that's kind of how we got here. If in phase 2 the,
24 the, two things may happen. The trip patterns we
25 observe, um, are, you know, let's say more modest

2 than we've seen for the high users in the current
3 pilot, we might be able to, to expand. That would be
4 the number one thing that would help us raise the
5 parameters. The number two thing would be another
6 source of funding, whether it's the city or something
7 else comes together with some money, we would
8 absolutely love to throw it at this and [crosstalk]
9 [inaudible].

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So I'm just going
11 to conclude by asking that for the future, if you
12 could give us, um, some cost parameters, I get that
13 money doesn't grow on trees and that you've priced a
14 program here, but if you could follow up with us and
15 maybe give a couple options of what expansion in this
16 program under some different conditions would look
17 like, whether that's different from the \$15 or
18 different from the 16 trips or different from the
19 2400 people, and help us know what they cost, then I
20 think both in our budget process and our
21 conversations with the state we can, you know,
22 recognizing that doing this costs money but hearing
23 how much it matters we can try to figure out what
24 ways we might move forward, so. Thank you for the
25 indulgence, Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: You're lucky I like
3 you, Brad. [laughter] We've been joined by Council
4 Member Cohen, who I like just as equally, but
5 hopefully you won't be as long-winded.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I'll be very
7 brief, in fact, you know, I worked closely with the
8 members of this panel on a variety of issues,
9 accessibility issues in my own district, and I do
10 feel good about that. So I really am, and I don't
11 want to beat anybody up, and I also think that, you
12 know, a lot of the things I judge by are our
13 constituents complaining to my office about X. And I
14 will say I feel like complaints about Access-A-Ride,
15 which were, in my first term were a lot, and, you
16 know, were some of the, really the toughest cases,
17 people who were, you know, couldn't, who missed a
18 doctor's appointment or couldn't get home from a
19 doctor's appointment, or were really, or who were on
20 a vehicle for a ridiculous amount of time, like were
21 really horrific stories. And I will say that those
22 complaints that I've gotten have gone down, I guess
23 significantly. Ah, but the services are just, I just
24 really just want to make the point that the services
25 are so vital, are so desperately needed that, really,

2 you know, it's the difference between being able to
3 participate and not participate, to be between, you
4 know, just taking advantage of everything that the
5 city has to offer. So like I'm not going to belabor
6 the point and I know that, and again, we have a good
7 track record of working together. I'd like to
8 continue and build upon that. But I just want to go
9 on record on behalf of the people I represent, how
10 important these services are. So, thank you, Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: You're welcome.

12 Thank you, gentleman, for coming today. It was a
13 pleasure having you and I look forward to continuing
14 the conversation in the weeks to come.

15 ALEX ELGUDIN: Thank you very much.

16 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Thank you so much.

17 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: If somebody can stay
18 behind and hear from some the panelists.

19 ALEX ELGUDIN: Yes.

20 CRAIG CIPRIANO: Yes, we will.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. So the
22 first panel is Ya Ting Lim, Joanna Clamenco, Dustin
23 Jones, Valerie Joseph, and Brittany Wilson. OK.
24 Justin, do you want to start? Dustin.

25

2 DUSTIN JONES: Thank you. Um, thank you
3 for having me, for giving me the option to speak
4 today on this very important situation. I've been a
5 part of this E-Hail almost since the beginning, um,
6 and that's what I'm here to talk about today. It has
7 been a very big help. It has been life-changing, as
8 we've said. I can't think of many ways how I would
9 be able to travel without it. You know, whether it
10 comes with bad weather, um, the distance. I have
11 family who lives in Far Rockaway, my mother who is
12 sick. You know, I work. I can't imagine having to
13 travel and hearing bad news and I have to have at
14 least \$50 to go and come back, you know, just to make
15 sure that I can come back, um, back home safely or
16 wherever I'm going. I want to also call out things
17 the way it's supposed to be called out, and I want to
18 say shame on MTA again. Shame on all of its
19 leadership in every aspect down the board. This is
20 absolutely criminal to sit here and first of all come
21 here and you don't even have the, at least the
22 leadership to say, you know, we understand that
23 there's problems, there's, we understand what's going
24 on. None of these people know what it's like to have
25 to travel and plan out your day. None of these

2 people take the train. None of these people take the
3 bus. None of these people are on Access-A-Ride. But
4 they're all making choices about what we need to do.
5 All of them have the luxury to drive and move around
6 the way they want to. We don't have that option. I
7 am not a rich person. I cannot afford \$15 a trip. I
8 don't understand how is it that I could ride Access-
9 A-Ride every single day, four times a day, at \$2.75
10 per trip, but I can't sit here and ride E-Hail for,
11 you know, under how many times? It doesn't make any
12 sense. Also, in conclusion, I want to, I'd also like
13 to say is the MTA is quick to claim that they don't
14 have any money, but just recently I saw that they
15 have 1.4 million dollar to buy 15 buses exclusively
16 for the M14 line that are air compliant or whatever,
17 I don't know, but retract your spending, stop coming
18 up in here and lying, and give us what we need, what
19 we want. This is a civil right.

20 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

21 VALERIE JOSEPH: Good afternoon. Thank
22 you for having me have the opportunity to speak here
23 today. My name is Valerie Joseph. I'm the Access-A-
24 Ride advocate for the Brooklyn Center for the
25 Independence of the Disabled. We are a core member

2 of the Access-A-Ride Reform Group, also known as ARG.

3 We are pleased to be here with so many advocates with

4 the same message. The Access-A-Ride pilot program

5 has been life-changing for 1200 people in the

6 program, and the MTA plans to drastically limit its

7 usefulness and that'll be a huge mistake. I plan to

8 touch on why this program is so important to me and

9 why it needs to be expanded in a smart way. Not the

10 way the MTA is doing it. Over the last two years

11 I've used on-demand to go to and from work, to get to

12 meetings during work, and to visit friends and family

13 without the hassle of regular Access-A-Ride van

14 service. For the first time in my life I am able to

15 ride in the same way everyone else is in New York

16 City. When I want and where I want. I don't have to

17 call for a ride a day in advance. I don't have to

18 wait two hours between rides. I can go straight to

19 where I want to go without making stops that take me

20 far out of my way. I also recruited dozens of people

21 to join this program, so as the MTA encourages us to

22 do, encourage us to do, excuse me. And many of them

23 use it regardless to go to and from work, to get to

24 appointments, and just to have fun. But now the MTA

25 wants to cut back the program without testing it to

2 see how the general Access-A-Ride ridership will
3 respond to on-demand. Only that way can tell us how
4 the on-demand will cost and if it offers all Access-
5 A-Ride users the chance to us it, not limit.

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, Valerie.

7 BRITTANY WILSON: Good afternoon.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Can you press the red
9 button? Yes, thank you. There we go.

10 Good afternoon. My name is Brittany
11 Wilson. I'm a civil rights attorney, a native of
12 Brownsville, Brooklyn, and I've been an Access-A-Ride
13 user for approximately 18 years, since I was 11 years
14 old. So I can tell you about the bad old days and
15 today. I use it five days a week, twice a day, to
16 travel to and from work, Brooklyn and Manhattan, and
17 I've seen and experienced many things that illustrate
18 the need for change. For example, one day after work
19 in June of 2017 after we'd arrived at my house my
20 Access-A-Ride driver informed me that he had to pee
21 and then proceeded to urinate into a coffee cup in
22 front of me on the bus before assisting me off the
23 vehicle. This experience made me painfully aware of
24 my vulnerability based on my disability and gender,
25 among many other factors, to the whims of drivers who

2 hold my life and well-being in their hands. I also
3 realize that as someone who's been responsible for
4 monitoring other public officials' training in
5 compliance with the United States context and federal
6 civil rights laws I have absolutely no idea whether
7 and what training the drivers I encounter on a daily
8 basis receive with respect to these same issues, as
9 well as on issues of ableism and other types of bias
10 that might affect their work performance, and because
11 I heard the MTA representative here today, I'm not
12 talking about sensitivity training. No one knows
13 what that is. Also, with respect to E-Hail and
14 broker vehicles, I've never used on-demand, although
15 obviously it would be a huge help as someone who has
16 meetings and has to work late to have that level of
17 flexibility. I have used broker vehicles that, for
18 example, drivers won't help you get into the vehicle,
19 um, I actually got out of a broker vehicle a few
20 months back because there was another passenger in
21 there, we'd been riding around for a while, he wasn't
22 able to tell me where we were going and when. There
23 was a significant language barrier between me and the
24 driver, and to illustrate the extent of the language
25 barrier, um, someone called him over the radio to

2 relay a complaint that someone else had filed about
3 him. In order for him to understand that complaint
4 he called someone to translate what the person over
5 the radio was saying to him. So he definitely
6 couldn't communicate with me about my needs as a
7 customer. So I have questions about the mechanisms
8 for training and observing the drivers who function
9 as E-Hail vehicles as well. Um, I had a plan. I'm
10 going to deviate from the plan just because some of
11 the stuff I heard today about the improved GPS
12 systems that are supposedly coming into the vehicles.
13 I've been on some of the vehicles with the new GPSs.
14 I can tell you that the problem is not the GPS. The
15 problem is Access-A-Ride routing. Um, if you're
16 going to take me from East Brooklyn through Queens to
17 Midtown before dropping me off in lower Manhattan,
18 that's not a GPS problem. The GPS can tell you how
19 to get there faster and most efficiently. But that's
20 not the source of the problem to begin with and we
21 need to address the root of the problem. Similarly,
22 um, we talked about caps on on-demand and cabs and
23 things of that nature. Um, I've been on both side of
24 the equation because, like I said, I've been using it
25 since I was 11, and so I've been that student who

2 can't afford to pay \$40 to get back home to Brooklyn
3 and I'm now the attorney who literally budgets \$200 a
4 month to be able to take taxis when Access-A-Ride
5 doesn't do what it needs to do. And I should note
6 that that, that rule about if they're 30 minutes or
7 later they'll give you your money back. I'm still
8 waiting for money back that I spent a year ago. So
9 that's important. Um, I wanted to raise those
10 points. I'll let other people speak. Thank you for
11 your testimony.

12 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, Brittany,
13 thank you.

14 JOHANNA CLAMENCO: Greeting, um, council
15 members and, and MTA members and fellow advocates.
16 My name is Johanna Clamenco and I wear multiple
17 professional hats. I'm a mind-body psychotherapist,
18 a dance movement therapist, a nonverbal communication
19 analyst. I direct a treatment training and
20 consulting center using these modalities. We work
21 with individuals, families, groups, and systems. I'm
22 a social worker with a specialty working with people
23 with disabilities. I'm also an E-Hail on-demand
24 passenger. It is this program, the on-demand
25 program, that enables me to navigate my professional

2 life and do all the rehab maintenance that allows me
3 to maximum my function and minimize my pain. Beating
4 the red-haired stepchild characterizes how the MTA
5 relates to the vulnerable communities of disabled
6 Access-A-Ride passengers and the endangered species
7 of New York City cab drivers. When the program was
8 conceived in 2017 by former Access-A-Ride director
9 Steve Lopiano it was intended to replace 99% of
10 Access-A-Ride rides, of traditional Access-A-Ride
11 rides with on-demand taxi service. It would then
12 also have the concomitant result of saving the
13 beleaguered New York City taxi industry. To blame
14 the shortfall of the MTA budget on the tiny group of
15 1200 passengers in the E-Hail on-demand pilot program
16 and allied cab drivers is cynical and deceitful. The
17 MTA is notoriously opaque in its operations. The
18 current budget is billions of dollars in the red.
19 The infrastructure replacement and construction of
20 new subway lines, for example, has cost 10 times more
21 than comparable programs in Paris and London. To
22 link this cost overrun to our tiny pilot program is
23 indecent. The program has enabled Access-A-Ride
24 passengers to finally have quality of life to work,
25 to go to medical and physical therapy maintenance,

2 experience New York City's cultural life, and visit
3 with loved one. Translation - current E-Hail on-
4 demand passengers are "heavy users because it is
5 primarily a working population." Therefore, this
6 group is paying city taxes and state taxes. If
7 Access-A-Ride passengers are relegated to van
8 service, there is much less likelihood of being able
9 to adhere to a work schedule. Normal Access-A-Ride
10 passengers often take, transport often takes up to
11 three hours from target pickup time to drop-off.
12 Passengers are required to wait outside for their
13 transportation, regardless of weather conditions.
14 Please imagine that in climate change extremes and
15 travel through other boroughs to get through their
16 destinations. Therefore, there is more likelihood of
17 normal Access-A-Ride passengers relying on fixed
18 income disability support rather than enduring the
19 vagaries of ordinary Access-A-Ride. Maximizing
20 quality of life is what everyone aspires to and
21 transit for able-bodied people is available via an
22 MTA unlimited card. So why will the MTA now make the
23 lives of Access-A-Ride passengers again limited?
24 This is a critical question. The notion that to
25 assess the pilot program objectively by quantifiable

2 variables, it's necessary to be, to totally alter, to
3 totally alter it makes no evaluative sense. If the
4 intention is to objectively evaluate the pilot
5 program let us do that by altering one variable at a
6 time. Let us keep the pilot as it is and then in a
7 research model systematically alter one variable at a
8 time sequentially. The program is working
9 beautifully for disabled passengers and beleaguered
10 taxi drivers, whose fate is intertwined. In sum,
11 this problem is the smartest innovation of the MTA in
12 our era. Let us expand upon it as it was intended to
13 be and study the results empirically.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

15 YA TING LIU: Good afternoon, Chairs
16 Ayala and Chin and members of the committee. My name
17 is Ya Ting Liu. I'm director of government affairs
18 and policy at Via. We are a New York City-
19 headquartered and -founded technology company that's
20 powering public mobility solutions around the world.
21 We're partnering with municipalities and
22 transportation agencies where our technology, our
23 routing system, our algorithms, is helping to make
24 sort of public transportation, um, more accessible
25 and more, um, reliable across the board. That's

2 being used in a variety of use cases from paratransit
3 transit to school buses to first and last mile micro
4 transit and so on. You have my full testimony there.
5 I won't read from it. I'll try to summarize sort of
6 our points and some recommendations that we'd like to
7 share with members of this committee. There's an
8 opportunity here, given that it's 2019 and so much
9 has train, transformed in the technology space around
10 transportation, for the MTA to ask itself if we were
11 to start from scratch with the paratransit service is
12 this the way that we would design it? Is this the
13 way that we would go about procuring services? And
14 we think the answer is no. I think one of the key
15 structural challenges for the MTA leadership and
16 staff is overcoming sort of the legacy and siloed
17 Byzantine procurement processes that's been in place,
18 that's now created sort of these three silo systems,
19 dedicated courier service, a broker service, and now
20 this more innovative solution that they're sort of
21 experimenting with, with the E-Hail pilot. But we
22 think that these three systems and the way that
23 they're procuring for it, Council Member Chin, you
24 touched on the multiple different vendors under each
25 of these categories. It really does create sort of

2 additional administrative layers and costs that we
3 think could be streamlined. Technology companies
4 like Via, we've developed really powerful and
5 sophisticated software platforms that can really
6 single stream and receive trip requests, match the
7 passenger with the appropriate vehicle, create the
8 most efficient route, add additional passengers where
9 appropriate, without deviating too much from the
10 trip, provide real-time locating tracking of
11 vehicles, create greater visibility and
12 accountability, and from a customer experience,
13 customer feedback experience, kind of real-time
14 tracking on all of that. Um, one quick example.
15 Via, ah, recently, starting in 2020, will transform
16 the paratransit system in Hampton Roads, Virginia.
17 It's a region serving more than 1.6 million people.
18 There was a legacy paratransit system. They issued
19 three separate RFPs for the call center service, a
20 wheelchair van service, and an ambulatory sedan
21 service. Rides had to be booked at least a day in
22 advance over the phone, fares paid in cash. Via won
23 all three RFPs with our proposal for a single
24 integrated solution comprising all three existing
25 services. Now the Via paratransit service will allow

2 rides to book same-day or in advance, over the phone,
3 by using an accessible app. Riders can pay with
4 credit cards or other non-cash payment methods.

5 Rides could be booked with smart phones or over the
6 phone, and all of these vehicles could be tracked in
7 real time. So essential we're kind of bringing all
8 of the sort of customer experience and convenience in
9 the ride share space into the paratransit space. We
10 think that could be done. Lastly, I do want to just
11 say that, you know, we do applaud MTA's efforts to,
12 trying to seek new ideas. They last week just held a
13 whole conference inviting technology companies to
14 come share ideas on how they can modernize the subway
15 signal system at lower cost. We think that the MTA
16 should do that as well for paratransit and companies
17 like Via would really welcome the opportunity to
18 really rethink the whole system.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

20 YA TING LIU: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. Council
22 Member Ampry-Samuel?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Thank you
24 for your testimony, everyone, and to Brittany and the
25 other customers, have you officially ever logged a

2 complaint and what was that process like for you, and
3 was there like official responses? I know you
4 mentioned the reimbursement. But you also shared
5 with me a story about one of the drivers even asking
6 to go into your home and heat up food.

7 BRITTANY WILSON: Yep.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Is that
9 something that you, um, you know, relayed back to...

10 BRITTANY WILSON: Absolutely.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: So can you
12 just talk about that process?

13 BRITTANY WILSON: Yes, um, I'm very
14 familiar with the Access-A-Ride complaint process.
15 For the driver who urinated, I, I immediately picked
16 up the phone and called and pressed the number eight
17 to file a complaint, um, and that driver was
18 ultimately fired. Um, I spoke to Access-A-Ride
19 representatives. We had interviews, um, and he was
20 fired. With respect to my other complaints, I did
21 file a complaint about the driver who asked to come
22 into my house to heat up a cup of porridge. Um,
23 usually when you file a complaint you go online, or I
24 do, I go online to the MTA website. There's an
25 Access-A-Ride specific button and you sort of type

2 out what happened to you and they send you like a
3 form response, like thank you for submitting your
4 complaint, or something of that nature. Um, and then
5 I believe, I don't remember if they got back to me on
6 that specific one, but it doesn't matter, because
7 it's usually some sort of form response, like we're
8 so sorry that happened to you, we're working to
9 improve the system, something of that nature. Um,
10 and so I, I have tons of it. If you search my
11 Access-A-Ride ID number you'll see that I have filed
12 tons of complaints in that way, um, and with me in
13 particular I should say, probably as a result of my
14 other advocacy and my stories about the urination and
15 the fact that they know that I'm a civil rights
16 attorney they, they're tracking me now. Um, and I
17 should say that's not what I want. Um, I don't,
18 actually when I came in here today an MTA
19 representative, whom I've never met, said oh,
20 Brittany it's good to see you, we've spoken by phone.
21 I don't how she knows me. I don't know her. So
22 they're tracking me and I think that's sort of their
23 political way of, of addressing these programs.
24 We're going to get to the renegades, the problem
25 people, and that's not a systematic policy change.

2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. Council
3 Member Vallone?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, first I
5 want to thank our super chairs for conducting this
6 very important hearing. Sorry I was late, but there
7 was many hearings going today. For those on the
8 panel and those who came today, please have your
9 voices. You are not renegade complainants. You are
10 the number one complaint that pretty much council
11 member gets. And so we will continue to have these
12 hearings and when you have council members like
13 Council Members Ayala and Chin you are in good hands
14 to do that. So I thank you for having this hearing.
15 Ah, keep your advocacy going. I'll tell you, there
16 are, I love hearing Via's ideas. I think those are
17 the type of technological advances and ideas that we
18 need to embrace going forward, streamlining the
19 system, making it more accessible and easier for
20 people to navigate, especially for our seniors and
21 those with disabilities, which are the hardest to
22 navigate and the most important to provide those
23 services. So I thank you for that. And I know one
24 of the council members are coming up with innovative
25 ideas on their own with their own districts to try to

2 circumvent that. But that's not the answer. That's
3 just another Band-Aid to try to help our number ones.
4 So I just wanted to thank today's panel, those who
5 came today, and the chairs for continuing the fight
6 to change this system. Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. Thank
8 you, panelists. Thank you. The next panel is
9 Kathleen Collins, Jean Ryan, Michael Ring, Lucia
10 Merit, Vincent Padulla, and Jose Hernandez. Is
11 Kathleen?

12 UNIDENTIFIED: I'm here.

13 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Yes, OK. OK, no, I
14 just wanted to make sure that you went first because
15 I know you had a time sensitivity.

16 KATHLEEN COLLINS: OK, I'm ready to
17 start.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, go ahead.

19 KATHLEEN COLLINS: Great. My name is
20 Kathleen Collins. I'm an attorney. I worked for the
21 Port Authority for 30 years and retired in 2012. I
22 have an accounting background. I passed the CPA exam
23 though I'm not a certified public accountant because
24 I haven't done the public accountancy part, the
25 internship. But, so I know about finance. I know

2 about money. I know about the law. And I know about
3 government agencies. I know all about everything.
4 And the first thing that strikes me here today is
5 that everybody that's talking and everybody that's
6 talking, even up there on the podium, doesn't use
7 Access-A-Ride and may not even be using the regular
8 transportation system of the subways and that.
9 People that use the system aren't represented here,
10 except here now that we're talking. I don't
11 understand that. The people that are making
12 decisions need to use the system. Need to use the
13 subways. Need to use the buses. Need to use Access-
14 A-Ride. We don't need any more people being
15 appointed just because they look like us. We need
16 people that actually do what we do, experience what
17 we experience every day. Second, we talk about why,
18 what do you use this for? I don't ask anybody up
19 there what do go in your car every day. Why do you
20 go on the subway? Why you go on the bus? I don't
21 ask you that. That is a total affront to me that you
22 should ask them why am I using that system. That is
23 disgraceful. It shows you don't even understand the
24 legislation. That this is a civil rights
25 legislation. You would never even think of asking

2 that of any other minority. But you ask that of us.
3 That is disgusting. I vote and I have voted since I
4 was 18 years old. I was born this way. And when I
5 first voted I had to use an absentee ballot because I
6 couldn't even get into the voting location where I
7 had to vote. I have friends that have heard that
8 they actually climbed up the stairs to get to their
9 voting place. I wouldn't put myself through that
10 indignity. But I just don't understand this whole
11 system. You talk about money. Do you ask others, do
12 you ask subway riders how much it costs for each
13 subway ride for the MTA for them? No. Do you ask
14 bus riders and the MTA how much does it cost for each
15 bus ride that you take or you take. No. But you ask
16 how much does it cost for us to take Access-A-Ride.
17 That's outrageous. Next. I've been using Access-A-
18 Ride and now they use this brokerage system and you
19 say it's all the MTA's fault, MTA, MTA. Well you're
20 at fault, too. Because I'm using them and you
21 license the brokers and you license the taxis, and
22 when I go in them they don't have seat belts or
23 shoulder belts. What are you doing about that?
24 That's your obligation to be deciding and finding out
25 the answers to. Not just theirs, yours. I want you

2 to find out why are there no seat belts and shoulder
3 belts. And if they show you a seat belt or shoulder
4 belt, ask them how they fasten it. Because I've only
5 had one or two rides where I've had an actual
6 shoulder belt. Actually I think it was only ride
7 where I had a shoulder belt. I was ready to kiss the
8 driver. That he had a shoulder belt and a seat belt
9 for me. I think I maybe had two other rides where I
10 had a seat belt and all the rides I don't get a
11 shoulder belt, I don't get a seat belt. They look at
12 me like I have three heads and they sometimes bring
13 out a belt but they have no place to fasten it.
14 That's your obligation to find out why the Taxi n
15 Limousine Commission is derelict in their duty in
16 making them have seat belts and shoulder belts.
17 That's your obligation. And I'll tell you one last
18 thing. I didn't use Access-A-Ride when I was working
19 because I could never have been an attorney and
20 traveled as an attorney because I had no spontaneous
21 ability to move about. I used a car service and it
22 cost me a lot, a lot of money, and I was a Port
23 Authority employee. I didn't make booga bucks like
24 they, you know, if you're a private attorneys, and,
25 you know, private attorneys here, they make a lots of

2 them, they make big bucks. But Wall Street wasn't
3 coming knocking on my door to hire me because I don't
4 look like their normal, you know, Wall Street
5 attorneys. So I just want to know that, too. That
6 really, come on, get the money up.

7 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

8 KATHLEEN COLLINS: Get things going. I
9 worked for, I worked for them..

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Ma'am we have to...

11 KATHLEEN COLLINS: And I paid taxes all
12 my life.

13 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

14 KATHLEEN COLLINS: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, Kathleen.

16 KATHLEEN COLLINS: And now I gotta run
17 because Cinderella's calling Access-A-Ride.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

19 JOSE HERNANDEZ: How ya doing? My name
20 is Jose Hernandez. I am the New York City advocacy
21 coordinator for United Spinal Association, and I'm
22 one of the commissioners of the Civic Engagement
23 Commission appointed by the mayor, um, in 2019. Um,
24 I wanted to talk a little about the Access-A-Ride
25 program, and it does, definitely needs an overhaul

2 because as it stands right now, um, it's very
3 inefficient, no real time, and they spent 680 million
4 dollars on the program, it looks like, in 2019. And
5 there's no reason why even the traditional blue and
6 white broker service, the regular Access-A-Ride
7 program, doesn't have a real time component and a
8 tracking system, and it's 680 million dollars. If
9 companies like Uber, Lift, and Via can do it, there's
10 no reason why the MTA can't do it. As far as the E-
11 Hail program, ah, right now they're using the yellow
12 and the green cabs. If you get into a yellow and
13 green cab, \$3.50 is already accounted for, and if you
14 have to cross into one of the other boroughs that's
15 \$6.15 that you have to account for, um, the toll. So
16 before you even get in the cab and go anywhere you
17 have to account for \$9.65. So you're relying on
18 \$5.35 to travel from Queens through Manhattan. And
19 where are you going to travel for \$5.35? Outside of
20 that you're going to have to cover the remaining
21 cost. So the average number of \$15 per ride is
22 actually ridiculous. Um, the Boston system, like he
23 stated himself, is \$40 and they use, you know,
24 regular Via, Lift, and Uber, and they cover up to
25 \$42. So limiting the system to 16 rides per money

2 and \$15 you're completely destroying the program and
3 you're going to shift the members from the yellow and
4 green cabs back to the blue and whites, which cost
5 \$85 per ride. So it's kind of counterintuitive. I
6 think a better solution would be round trip per day
7 \$50 per ride. That would give the average consumer,
8 you know, a real opportunity to use the system and go
9 travel to work, um, to and from work and, you know,
10 recreational and use the ride however they want, at
11 least. And if they have additional ride needs they
12 can use the traditional, you know, blue and whites,
13 so. That's it.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. We still
15 have a couple of panelists, so if we could keep to
16 the two-minute rule. We don't want to, we want to
17 make sure that people are not here longer than they
18 should be. Thank you.

19 JEAN RYAN: Hi, I'm Jean Ryan, president
20 of Disabled in Action. It seems that every time
21 something is working better in Access-A-Ride and they
22 are providing more meaningful service, ridership and
23 number of trips go up. Ut-oh, they must say to each
24 other, they don't want to increase ridership because
25 they say it's too expensive. Never mind that people

2 with disabilities have to get places to work and
3 school and medical care and social events or
4 whatever. Nope. They want to stop this from
5 happening so what can they do to reduce and
6 discourage ridership this time? Last time they
7 instituted in-person testing, lowered appeals success
8 rate, and then they put a lot of people on feeder
9 service, whereby Access-A-Ride riders would be driven
10 to a bus stop or a train station for the rest of
11 their trip. Never mind that there was no shelter or
12 the trip took extra long or the person could not ride
13 without a seat. Not their problem. Many people get,
14 got so discouraged because they could not get places
15 that they didn't even reapply for Access-A-Ride when
16 it was time. And at meetings I would hear people
17 from Access-A-Ride say, hmm, a lot of people didn't
18 reapply. I wonder why. Fast forward to 2019. The
19 MTA has a popular taxi pilot program which allows
20 people with disabilities, us, to call a cab and take
21 rides spontaneously without having to book trips a
22 day in advance and try to guess when we will need
23 transportation, when the City Council hearing or
24 meeting or doctor appointment or concert will be
25 over. When we need, ah, when we need plans to allow,

2 only allow 16 trips per Monday and we'll pay only \$15
3 per trip, guess what? That will have the same effect
4 that the feeder service had on people with
5 disabilities. It will again make us stuck in our
6 homes and doing way less because we cannot get around
7 quickly or spontaneously the same day. We're being
8 punished for having a disability and for wanting to
9 be productive. Who is the sick one? The MTA. We
10 want to be able to take same-day cab rides so we can
11 be productive and accomplish things. We do not want
12 a cap on distance or amount or our number of trips.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

15 MICHAEL RING: Hi, my name is Michael
16 Ring. Hi, my name is Michael Ring. I'm with
17 Disabled in Action. I would say I'm one of the lucky
18 1200 who got into the pilot program. But it wasn't
19 luck. I was picked because I'm one of the people who
20 can give feedback. There was a waiting list of
21 active people who the MTA wanted feedback from. I
22 was told about it by a friend who's going to the
23 Olympics in June. He's a blind athlete who's running
24 the marathon. They picked active people who use the
25 service a lot. I was probably one of the people who

2 went from four rides a month to 50 or 60, because the
3 old system was useless to me. It got me to the
4 doctor, either an hour an a half early or right on
5 time, and it was, you know, it was a day killer. And
6 now I can volunteer, I'm looking for a job. It is
7 something that's useful to me. A \$15 cap doesn't do
8 anything. I live in Brooklyn. \$15 doesn't get me to
9 Manhattan, where my doctors are. It doesn't get me
10 to where I volunteer. They are clearly trying to
11 sabotage the program by making it useless. If
12 they're having an experiment, which is what this is,
13 they should change one variable. Add 1200 people who
14 aren't super-active people. You know, put my mother-
15 in-law in it, who's, you know, teach her how to use
16 an app and see if she's gonna use and how often she
17 uses it. You know, people like that as opposed to
18 people like me, and they'll see how she uses it. I
19 also want to talk about two words that got thrown
20 around here a lot today, um, life-changing and
21 spontaneous. Um, I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for
22 this on-demand app. I can't go home by subway. My
23 hands don't work. I can't hold that pole. And no
24 one knows when this meeting is gonna end. So I have
25 to use the app to get home. If it wasn't for the app

2 I'd be walking to Park Slope. So that's life-
3 changing, that I could be here. It's not like I want
4 to go see the sun set, like the spontaneous thing.
5 It's that kind of, spontaneity is what normal people
6 do. Thank you.

7 VINCENT PADULLA: That's good? OK,
8 perfect. Good afternoon everyone. Ah, just, ah,
9 thank you for having this opportunity to speak to the
10 council and everyone here, and I share my testimony
11 with my brothers and sisters and if one thing we see
12 in a disabled population in the community is that we
13 have diversity. We don't have to work and try to
14 make it happen. It just, we all face different
15 challenges in life and we overcome them. And mine is
16 a visual impairment. I am a teacher of the visually
17 impaired and I'm a chapter leader. I work for the
18 UFT as a rep and I represent teachers. And I've been
19 an Access-A-Ride patron for the last 20 years, and
20 the last two have been the most successful for me.
21 The last four years I've been a chapter leader and
22 have to make quick changes in my schedule, when I get
23 a message from a member saying I'm being called in
24 for a disciplinary meeting. Or even as a consultant
25 for technology, I'm an adaptive technology

2 specialist. Somebody tells me this is not working,
3 can you come and help me? And I'm not going to the
4 doctor. All of us who are disabled don't live
5 typical lives. We're not typical. We're human
6 beings. I'm a father. I have five children at home.
7 I own a home. I pay my taxes. I'm contributing to
8 society. My students, their parents tell me thank
9 you for getting out there and living your life and
10 showing us that we can have a life, my child can have
11 a life with a visual impairment. So I'm asking, this
12 is a win-win, and I'm asking the council, the MTA is
13 asking for more money. So what if the city puts up a
14 little bit more and supports the cabbies, the yellow
15 and the greens who are having trouble with Uber and
16 Lift, and even maybe even expand the program, but if
17 we're getting citizens out, paying good money for
18 services and contributing to the, to the
19 infrastructure, I think it's, I think it's just a
20 win-win for everyone. And this would help the
21 program. I'm hearing, like my colleagues here, or
22 fellow riders, of saying it's sort of a sabotaging
23 system. We're getting more time, we're getting more
24 vehicles. They're willing to pay \$85, throw good
25 money after bad, or throw bad, you know, the idea

2 being that they're going to invest in that old broken
3 system, but when broker services don't work and we
4 have new services, at the same average, the cabs are
5 costing the same as the broker, they'll invest in the
6 brokers but they won't invest in the cabs. So add
7 the 1200 and, like my brother here said, let's see
8 what happens. Why broke, why break something that
9 finally is working? Thank you for my time, thank you
10 for your time. My name is Vincent Padulla.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, Vincent.

12 UNIDENTIFIED: Um, my girlfriend, Jessica,
13 she is a participate of the pilot program. And she
14 doesn't take advantage of the system. Since she
15 joined the system she started working and uses the
16 system in inclement weather and uses the subway. And
17 she rolls from 29th to 14th Street because that's the
18 next of, um, of available subway station with an
19 elevator. And she takes that into Brooklyn and
20 sometimes gets stuck in the system because where she
21 gets off at, um, the elevator goes out a lot. So
22 those are the situations that, um, I guess, she has
23 to face, you know, going to and from work. And if it
24 wasn't for the pilot program and working for
25 disability rights organizations she would not be able

2 to work. So, you know, that's where that life-
3 changing, you know, thing comes in.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I understand. Thank
5 you guys for coming today. Thank you so much. Is
6 there a Lucia? Lucia, were you here? We missed you.
7 OK. Um, Denise Richardson, Helene Shawshenberger,
8 Sasha Goldenson, Daniel Ross, and Jackie Cohen. We
9 called you, Lucia, you missed us.

10 LUCIA: Huh? I can't find the light.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [laughs] [pause] OK,
12 want to start from the left to the right?

13 SHASHA BLAIR GOLDENSEN: Hi. So I'm
14 Sasha Blair Goldensen. I've lived my whole life on
15 the Upper West Side of Manhattan. I'm a software
16 engineer by training and by trade. But about 10
17 years ago I had a giant piece of a tree fall on me
18 and I had a spinal cord injury..

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: I'm sorry, just a
20 minute, I think there's some sort of advisory. What
21 is happening in the world outside? There's a
22 snowstorm. OK. OK. OK. [laughs] Sorry about that.
23 OK, 4:15, the snow is coming, so.

24 SASHA BLAIR GOLDENSEN: All right, all
25 clear, I hope? OK. So, right, yes, the giant tree

2 branch fell on my head, spinal cord injury, so I've
3 been 10 years in a wheelchair, and man, the city
4 looks pretty different. Um, I wanted to speak
5 actually about diversity within the MTA and on the
6 board and I was incredibly moved by Kathleen Collins'
7 testimony earlier and what she said I double and
8 times 10. It takes a lot of temerity for the people
9 who set these, for people to set these rules on the
10 MTA and I don't think they mean harm, but when they
11 are not using the service every day or ever to come
12 in and do things, like she said, it's a, it's really
13 hard to say anything other than an insult, not
14 meaning to be, but to say what are you using these
15 rides for? What? What? That's, and I mean, when
16 does an oversight become an insult, and I would say
17 this might be a pretty good time for it. It's going
18 to be 2020, 30 years after ADA was passed, and we're
19 still talking about barely 20% of subways are
20 accessible, subway stations in the city are
21 accessible, and more than 20 of the stations which
22 are accessible go out every day from an elevator
23 outage. So it's really an unusable system. And
24 what, I know this is about Access-A-Ride, but there's
25 a very strong connection between the huge demand for

2 Access-A-Ride and the out-of-service and inaccessible
3 subway stations, and we have to connect those dots
4 and they have to improve in tandem, and frankly, as
5 Kathleen said, it will not improve until we, we are
6 represented in the room where these decisions happen,
7 which is the MTA boardroom. We all know the story.
8 The governor controls the show, but the mayor can do
9 a lot and I believe that you guys have some traction
10 with the mayor. Tell him he has two open vacancies
11 that he hasn't nominated, get people with
12 disabilities in that room so at the very least when
13 they make these decisions, like cutting back on E-
14 Hail, there's someone in the room to hold their feet
15 to the fire and say no, that's wrong, we can't vote
16 it down because we don't have the votes yet, but at
17 the very least we can make sure our voices are in the
18 conversation. So please, please talk to the mayor,
19 do what we can to get our representation there so we
20 don't have another 30 years of this.

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

22 JACKIE COHEN: Hi, my name is Jackie
23 Cohen. I'm with the Straphangers Campaign, a riders'
24 advocacy group, and I'll make my remarks brief. I
25 don't think I can articulate any better our support

2 of the on-demand pilot program that other fellow
3 advocates here have. You've heard from folks that
4 have taken the service and called it life-changing.
5 We've heard the same. We're deeply concerned with
6 rollback of this problem. Um, you've heard that the
7 MTA plans to expand to another 1200 riders while
8 significantly gutting the pilot. Um, this can be a
9 real opportunity for the MTA to get something right
10 and we think that it can, by achieving better
11 paratransit service the MTA can provide a shining
12 example to other cities throughout the country what
13 paratransit service can look like. Ah, in addition
14 to what all our fellow advocates said, I want to, um,
15 bring up one additional point is that the fare
16 payment system, there is no fare payment system with
17 Access-A-Ride. Riders are expected to pay in cash
18 and this is a problem not simply because of
19 convenience. There's a real inequity here.
20 Paratransit riders aren't eligible for the same kind
21 of fare payment discounts that many other riders are
22 on subways and buses, and so this extends to weekly
23 and monthly Metro cards, and you heard from riders
24 here that are taking more than 47 paratransit trips
25 per month. Um, that is the number, that is sort of

2 the cap that in which the unlimited trip goes into
3 effect, and riders are not eligible for Fair Fares.
4 So low-income Access-A-Riders, because the program is
5 administered through Metro cards, these riders do not
6 have access to that program and that's really
7 concerning to us, um, so we think that in addition
8 paratransit be included in the rollout of the Omni,
9 the new fare payment system, the city needs to come
10 up with some kind of way to make sure that Access-A-
11 Riders aren't being exempt from Fair Fares, because
12 over, almost 100,000 New Yorkers have already
13 enrolled. Open enrollment starts in January and we
14 would like see Access-A-Ride as a part of that.
15 Thank you.

16 LUCIA: Yes. I am in favor of keeping the
17 on-demand program as it is. Do not add caps on how
18 many rides we can take and do not limit the amounts
19 of money the MTA will cover. And also the other
20 thing is you got 16% of disabled people, 16% above
21 poverty level. With the on-demand program a lot of
22 disabled people were able to work. Now what's it
23 gonna be, they're not going to be able to work
24 because they're not going to have the pilot program.
25 If you want to save some money, what you gotta do,

2 OK, is cut the recertification program every five
3 years. People don't need to be recertified. Give
4 them continuous eligibility. To insinuate and to
5 imply that a person's disability might change is
6 insulting. That's insulting to say that. We have
7 disability pride. We are here to be treated with
8 dignity and with respect. What do we want? Justice.
9 When do we want it? Now. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And what is your
11 name, ma'am?

12 LUCIA: My name is Lucia. Somebody say
13 yay. [pause]

14 HELENE SCHWARTZENBERGER: My name is
15 Helene Schwartzenberger. I appear today as an
16 individual person who is disabled and, though I'm
17 loathe to admit it, elderly as well, and as the
18 executive director of the Association for Rights of
19 Disabled Consumers. I'm going to speak on three
20 issues that others have slightly touched on. I'm
21 grateful they did. Ah, I don't mind using Access-A-
22 Ride as it stands. I'm not lucky enough to be in the
23 on-demand program. I would like it, would like to
24 see, ah, some percentage of the on-demand be allowed
25 for every rider. But barring that, I think that the

2 costs of the on-demand are perhaps higher than the
3 one for Access-A-Ride, because Access-A-Ride fails
4 and refused to reimburse people for their taxi
5 authorizations. And they discriminate against people
6 with visual disabilities, which I am one. Because I
7 can't check to see if the taxi driver, or the cab
8 driver, or the car service driver is giving me a
9 receipt that's properly filled out. Every single
10 time I've submitted my taxi receipts they've declined
11 it. So I'm out hundreds of thousands of dollars
12 because I wasn't able to get reimbursed. And now I
13 have two days to prepare my taxi authorization
14 receipts and I have nobody to help me. So the whole
15 issue of taxi authorizations may be putting money in
16 the coffers of Access-A-Ride because they're failing
17 to reimburse people. But I feel that that's
18 discriminatory and against the ADA. Secondly, the
19 drivers, some of them don't even speak English. So
20 I'm not talking about Access-A-Ride drivers, but I
21 mean car service drivers. So the MTA should require
22 any persons or companies that are licensed to drive
23 in the City of New York that be, that their drivers
24 be able to read, write, and speak English. Ah,
25 third, they should require them to have paper

2 receipts so they can give them and fill them out
3 properly, not just, you know, hand a person a paper
4 receipt that's improperly filled out. And I guess
5 I've used up my time, but basically, um, the whole
6 taxi authorization plan could work very well if these
7 changes were made. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, Helene.
9 If there's anything that we can help with those
10 receipts, any way that we can be helpful, let me know
11 after the hearing.

12 HELENE SCHWARTZENBERGER: I will. I will
13 let you know. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

15 DENISE RICHARDSON: Good afternoon. In
16 the interest of time I'll summarize my remarks. I'm
17 Denise Richardson, from the Citizens' Budget
18 Commission. And we've heard a great deal today about
19 the value of the Access-A-Ride program and
20 particularly the on-demand program, and in your
21 remarks, Council Member, you did talk about the
22 challenge becoming how to pay for this. And so in my
23 brief time I'd like to point out some cost factors
24 that I think we should all be aware of as we look at
25 expanding Access-A-Ride and making it more efficient,

2 because it is such a vital service. In 2017 the
3 Access-A-Ride program provided six million rides at a
4 cost of 474 million dollars. Fare revenues from the
5 Access-A-Ride passengers was 17.5 million and the
6 city paid 134 million toward the operating deficit.
7 In 2018 the city's share was 150 million. This year
8 it's projected to be 173 million. By 2023 at the end
9 of the projected MTA financial plan, the projection
10 is that the city's share would be 199 million, and
11 that's at the current fare sharing, um, the cost
12 sharing formula. The MTA has requested that the city
13 increase its share of the cost to 50%. By 2023, what
14 this is means is that the city would have
15 cumulatively owed 361 million from 2020 to 2023. I'm
16 not arguing that this isn't a vital service. But, as
17 you all acknowledged today, the challenge will be how
18 we continue to pay for this and how we make the
19 program more cost-effective to serve the needs of the
20 riders. But in fact this is a significant change in
21 cost and it's something that needs to be considered
22 in the budget. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

24 DANIEL ROSS: If I sit here does it get
25 picked up enough? Is that good? OK. So my name is

2 Daniel Ross. I'm a senior staff attorney at
3 Mobilization for Justice, which is a member of the
4 Access-A-Ride Reform Group, known as AARG. Access-A-
5 Ride's on-demand pilot program is life-changing for
6 people with disabilities who cannot ride the bus or
7 the subway. Many Access-A-Ride users have been told
8 for decades, both by the MTA and city officials
9 alike, that their transit needs are just too
10 expensive. Now with the rollout of a program that
11 actually gets them where they need to go they're
12 being told the same thing. But it's not too
13 expensive. In 2018 the cost of the on-demand was a
14 little less than nine million dollars. And this
15 year, now that usage has plateaued, the MTA expects
16 the pilot to cost about 15 million. That's
17 affordable and the program is important. But the MTA
18 has announced severe trip and distance caps for the
19 on-demand pilot that at a maximum will cost half of
20 what it costs this year. But it's unlikely to cost
21 that much, because \$15 on a taxi meter doesn't get
22 you very far. It gets you about two miles. A \$15
23 cab ride doesn't get you to Manhattan central
24 business district unless you already live there. So
25 it doesn't get you to work. It doesn't get you to

2 your school. It doesn't get you to the city's major
3 medical centers. In Brooklyn it barely gets you from
4 one side of Prospect Park to the other. The MTA
5 doesn't limit anyone else's trips like this. And it
6 shouldn't turn this life-changing service into an
7 irrelevance. The current participants were the
8 first line motivated users. Even those who didn't
9 use the service before were people who signed up
10 because they saw how great it would be. Even so,
11 they average less than one trip per day. An expanded
12 pilot to measure costs with a representative sample
13 of Access-A-Ride users, based on age, past usage, and
14 geographic distribution is needed to project costs
15 and to plan for future expansion. We expect, and the
16 MTA, I think, agrees that our proposal for a phase 2
17 of the pilot would cost between 23 and 33 million
18 dollars. That's 5% of Access-A-Ride's annual budget
19 and a minuscule amount in the city's budget. You can
20 find more details in the finances in our written
21 testimony. In conclusion, I will say that the
22 continuation expansion of the pilot without
23 artificial caps on rides and distance is critical to
24 participants who rely on it and it is essential to

2 building tomorrow's paratransit system. This program
3 is worth your investment. Please support it.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. Thank you
5 so much. The next panel is Frederica, um, sorry,
6 Bapler, Edith Prentice, Jean Padulla, Iman Ramari,
7 and Liveryn Andrews, Laverne Andrews, sorry. [pause]
8 Great.

9 IMAN RAMALI: Good afternoon Chairs
10 Ayala, Chin, and other City Council members. Thank
11 you for holding an important hearing on Access-A-
12 Ride. My name is Iman Ramali and I'm from New York
13 Lawyers for the Public Interest. Since 2017 I have
14 been using Access-A-Ride's on-demand pilot program to
15 commute to a full-time job, to healthcare
16 appointments, to social events with my family,
17 friends, and my partner. I also use traditional
18 Access-A-Ride, for which I have to book a trip one
19 day or more in advance. While there are bumps and
20 snags in the pilot program, such as a small number of
21 taxis and wheelchair-accessible taxis in the outer
22 boroughs, there's a huge difference between the two
23 programs, and I truly hope that an on-demand service
24 is in the future of paratransit. With the
25 traditional service it is impossible for me to know

2 whether my trips will take up to an hour or more.

3 I've been on for six hours, that's the longest I've

4 been on Access-A-Ride. And I don't know how many

5 other rides we'll pick up. Sometimes there's one

6 more, sometimes there's four or five more. Or how

7 many will get dropped of before me, possibly in other

8 boroughs or other neighborhoods far from my route,

9 which happens often. When I use this service I am

10 routinely late for work, despite having to wake up at

11 6:00 a.m. most mornings to catch a ride, and I tell

12 you, having lupus that makes it hard to wake up that

13 early every single day. And I can't alter my

14 schedule to accommodate these meetings, events, or

15 even impromptu gatherings with colleagues and

16 friends. The on-demand pilot program has changed all

17 of that and could truly be liberating for paratransit

18 riders like me. Our coalition, AARG, has three

19 simple demands to ensure the survival and success of

20 the on-demand service over time. Gradually expand

21 the number of riders who can participate in the on-

22 demand pilot. Eventually all Access-A-Ride users

23 should have access to on-demand, but to allow the MTA

24 to plan for the expansion the program needs a

25 representative sample of the Access-A-Ride community

2 to achieve a proportional mix of high, medium, and
3 low frequency users, riders of different ages and
4 geographic distributions across the boroughs. Two,
5 do not impose artificial limits on the number of
6 trips or lengths of those trips, and for example I
7 saw how much an on-demand trip took me from our
8 office on 43rd and 6th to my pharmacy on 39th and
9 3rd, and that was \$15.30. So that's not going to
10 take me anywhere if I have to go farther than that,
11 and that was not during rush hours, in the afternoon.
12 Some might need longer trips. Some might need
13 shorter trips. And we need a variety of them.
14 Imposing caps and limits before accurately measuring
15 the true need for and the cost of the on-demand
16 program is just a constraint on people with
17 disabilities excluded from buses and subways. And
18 three, work with the drivers and vendors to ensure
19 that on-demand service is available throughout the
20 city. For on-demand service to be truly
21 successfully, it needs to be available across the
22 boroughs, which means having sufficient vehicles.
23 And I can't use on-demand that much because I'm in
24 Throggs Neck in the Bronx and I'd have to wait over
25 an hour to get a ride. So I use traditional Access-

2 A-Ride probably 70% of the time and I'm still late
3 for everything and I'm still on the buses for a long
4 amount of time, and I still have to wait two or three
5 or four hours for my rid. So either way, whether I'm
6 using on-demand or using traditional, it doesn't work
7 for me simply because I live all the way out in the
8 Bronx and I have metal legs, and that's just not fair
9 and that's not right. Also, the Manage My Trip app
10 does not work the way it's supposed to, and I love
11 how they said it's awesome and it's great, except
12 most of the time it's not accurate. You can't really
13 track your trips. It crashes all the time and
14 doesn't work the way it's supposed to, and it's kind
15 of terrible. And lastly I'll say that I spend about
16 \$400 a month to use Access-A-Ride because we're not
17 part of Fair Fares and we can't use Metro cards, and
18 it's not fair to me as a taxpayer, regardless of
19 whether I'm a taxpayer or not, it's not fair to me to
20 have to pay \$400 a month to just go to work and, and
21 mind you, \$350 is four trips a day. So if it's \$400
22 it's six trips a day, and most days I do have that
23 for my meetings all over the city, and that's not
24 fair and that's not right to me as a taxpayer and as

2 a customer for the MTA. So, thank you so much, and I
3 look forward to hearing the rest of the people.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

5 FREDERICA BEPPLER: Ah, thank you for the
6 opportunity to testify. My name is Frederica
7 Beppler. I am intern at Live On New York and a
8 graduate student in social work at Fordham
9 University. I'm a lifelong New Yorker and also a
10 caregiver for an elderly parent. Live On New York's
11 members include more than 100 community-based
12 organizations that provide more than 1000 programs to
13 serve older New Yorkers. I'm going to append my
14 testimony just because of the time. I just want to
15 affirm the fact that Access-A-Ride users deserve the
16 dignity of a transit system that meets their needs.
17 Um, we think that the E-Hail program is great. We
18 think it should be expanded and that its funding
19 should be made permanent. Um, but we think that the
20 \$15 subsidy is wrong. Um, it runs counter to the
21 needs of the population that Access-A-Ride is meant
22 to serve, disabled and elderly New Yorkers who cannot
23 afford to regularly hire cabs or drivers. In Pat
24 Foley's letter to the mayor about Access-A-Ride he
25 stated that the new subsidy, mirror subsidies, in

2 cities like Boston, Chicago, and D.C., but all three
3 of those cities had something in common that New York
4 City does not. They have accessible subway systems.
5 In Chicago the subway station is 67% accessible. In
6 Boston it is 74% accessible. In D.C. it is 100%
7 accessible. In New York City it is 24% accessible.
8 A long-time employee from our benefits outreach
9 program recently underwent ankle surgery and
10 experienced Access-A-Ride and E-Hail firsthand. She
11 called the E-Hail program perfect and the best thing
12 ever, and said that she found her rides to be
13 convenient, well organized, and efficient. But when
14 she used traditional Access-A-Ride she described
15 disorganized rides in vans that were often filled to
16 capacity, showed up late, and would take her far out
17 of her way, in one instance driving from Manhattan up
18 past her neighborhood in the West Bronx, into the
19 East Bronx, before doubling back to drop her off.
20 She said that many people she knows refers to as A-
21 Stress-A-Ride. Given the divergent experiences
22 between a traditional Access-A-Ride and the new E-
23 Hail program, expanding on-demand E-Hail and
24 establishing its permanency should be a priority for
25 the city and agency. I'll just also take a moment to

2 recognize that Council Members Vallone and Koo came
3 together to provide transportation service for older
4 adults living in eastern Queens by providing
5 discretionary funds to Live On members' self-help
6 community services and that that has been a great
7 program for that community and the users have raved
8 about it. So there is a potential for funds for
9 community-based organizations. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

11 LAFERN ANDREWS: Good afternoon. My name
12 is Lafern Andrews. I'm a project director at
13 Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens, for a new
14 initiative they embarked on about two years ago
15 called the St. John 23rd Senior Services. On behalf
16 of Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens, I
17 represent a vast majority of the 22,000 seniors we
18 serve across Brooklyn and Queens who utilize Access-
19 A-Ride. During the latter half of 2019 we embarked
20 on the initiative to create three advocacy councils,
21 one in Brooklyn and two in Queens, where seniors are
22 involved in advocating for things that improve their
23 quality of life. At the first meeting the Brooklyn
24 group started discussing different activities they
25 would like to get involved in, and one theme keep

2 coming up over and over, issues with Access-A-Ride.

3 So we decided that we are going to embark on an
4 initiative to petition Access-A-Ride because most of
5 them described the service as being horrible and
6 unreliable. Seniors across Brooklyn and Queens have
7 complained about the tardiness in service, often
8 having to request transportation via Access-A-Ride to
9 pick up them at least an hour before their actual
10 time to leave, to ensure timely arrival. There are
11 numerous instances when transportation shows up late,
12 an hour, two hours, or three hours, with a number of
13 calls made to the base to inquire about the arrival
14 of their transportation. Many times having to wait
15 outside, sometimes in the cold. Instances were also
16 described that transportation via Access-A-Ride may
17 not show up at all, leaving seniors stranded and
18 having to cancel important appointments with
19 difficulty of rescheduling on a date sooner rather
20 than later. There are so many stories. A lady from
21 Howard Beach who is in a wheelchair was dropped off
22 by an Access-A-Ride van equipped for a wheelchair,
23 but when it was time to pick her up she got a taxi,
24 which she had difficulties getting into and very
25 uncomfortable trying to get home. This is not an

2 isolated situation. Many of our seniors express so
3 many stories, horror stories about their experience
4 with Access-A-Ride. Seniors also report that their
5 complaints are usually not taken seriously by Access-
6 A-Ride and at times patrons feel retaliated against
7 when they call to complain, quote unquote, too often.
8 One senior came to one of our meetings in Queens and
9 she talked about how she was retaliated against by a
10 dispatcher in Queens for having a certain tone. The
11 advocacy council of Brooklyn and Queens are working
12 tirelessly to obtain signatures for a petition
13 against Access-A-Ride and they are connecting with
14 partners to assist in drawing awareness to the
15 efforts of our seniors to bring about change in
16 customer service, dispatch, operations, and other
17 areas that impact the overall quality of service that
18 Access-A-Ride provides to its patrons.

19 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: We're going to need
20 you to wrap up, if you could summarize.

21 LAFERN ANDREWS: Yes. Um, we solicit the
22 support of this body to represent and assist us in
23 holding Access-A-Ride accountable and to take steps
24 that would require Access-A-Ride to significantly
25 improve the services for their patrons. Access-A-

2 Ride is a much-needed service for our seniors and
3 improvements need to be made. Our seniors demand
4 change and they intend to effect change for all who
5 currently use Access-A-Ride and potential users of
6 Access-A-Ride. Catholic Charities Brooklyn and
7 Queens is committed to the efforts of our advocacy
8 councils and support the efforts of our seniors in
9 demanding better service for Access-A-Ride. Thank
10 you.

11 JOHN PADULLA: All right, so good
12 afternoon, ladies and gentleman. My name is John
13 Padulla and I'm a supervisor with the Department of
14 Education. Ah, specifically I work with educational
15 vision services. We are the department that provides
16 services to over 750 blind and low-vision students
17 throughout the five boroughs. And I'm here today,
18 the first thing I want to say is it's important to
19 realize that nobody should ever mistake disability
20 for inability and within the legally blind community
21 itself we are faced with a 70% unemployment rate, and
22 a major barrier to unemployed is transportation, and
23 this is why it is so important that Access-A-Ride not
24 only evolve, but it's got to be viable and it's got
25 to afford disabled citizens the same autonomy and

2 access to opportunity as every other citizen in this
3 city, and Access-A-Ride has been an absolute debacle
4 since the inception of E-Hail program that afforded
5 us that autonomy. Traditional trips, we know the
6 numbers, everybody's been saying them, \$80 a trip.
7 Carriers are making piles and piles of cash on the
8 backs of marginalized, disabled New Yorkers. Curb
9 trips, \$36 a trip. So I don't know where the MTA's
10 getting their math, but \$36 is less than half than
11 \$80, I taught high school math for 10 years, just
12 saying. Um, I lost my spot here. I'm trying to
13 summarize, too. I'm just skipping around. So, yeah,
14 they're complaining that the E-Hail program is too
15 expensive because people are booking too many trips.
16 Yeah, well, 'cause it works. And the data is biased,
17 because it wasn't a random sample. 1200 users,
18 highly motivated, power users, and what are we basing
19 this data on, what are we basing this decision on?
20 Bad math? So the bottom line here is we need to
21 enable our city's disabled. And as, I am asking that
22 City Council support this, but what is the city gonna
23 get for their money? So you guys do put your money
24 behind this. I hope that, number one, the money does
25 go to on-demand E-Hail service because it's

2 supporting your taxi fleet. And number two, is the
3 Access-A-Ride command center, is it accessible? Do
4 we have any disabled people working there? Are my
5 blind children gonna get jobs? I hope my blind kids
6 get jobs there. That'd be nice, too. So I'd like
7 the city support it, yes, for us for our
8 transportation, but the city should be making a good
9 investment in it as well, 'cause at the end of the
10 day wouldn't it be nice to have some more
11 contributing taxpayers. Thanks, thank you for your
12 time. My name is John Padulla.

13 EDITH PRENTICE: Hello [clears throat],
14 excuse me, I'm sorry. Hello, my name is Edith
15 Prentice. I am the chair of the Taxis Roll Campaign,
16 which as you all have heard us testify about is the
17 only thing that has made this program work. In the
18 days when we had two taxis, four taxis that were
19 accessible there was no feature in this. I have only
20 applied for Access-A-Ride and have applied three
21 times. Because I always fall off when it comes it
22 the recert time when I'm leaving rehab. I live in
23 Washington Heights, which amazingly enough has pretty
24 good accessibility to the subway, at least on the A,
25 and we have one stop on the 1. We have seven

2 stations with 15 elevators and one escalator that are
3 completely being redone. But not a single one of
4 those stations is accessible, other than the dead
5 escalator. Ah, and it's really important that when
6 we start talking about Access-A-Ride usage that we
7 realize that we also have to look at the distribution
8 of these elevators. How many people in the community
9 would use the subway if they could? I have on more
10 than one occasion gotten to 177th Street and the
11 elevator is out. You know what? I call Curb. I
12 don't have time to play around. I don't have time to
13 wheel to 168th Street. I know better than to waste
14 my time. It's really important to also question the
15 legal ramifications of \$15 and 16 trips. Is that
16 equivalent service? Every lawyer I've asked sort of
17 goes, yeah, no. How can the MTA decide to do this?
18 We all agree it's a major problem. But you know
19 what? Maybe the MTA needs to look at where it's
20 putting it's apples in baskets. I personally use
21 Access-A-Ride on either I'm very sick, my chair's
22 very sick, or it's I have no idea where I'm going.
23 For a friend's funeral in the far reaches of the
24 outlands of Brooklyn, I know that was at least \$130
25 one way. I managed to figure out getting back by

2 mass transit. When the, ah, when the mayor did his
3 executive order we were in the far reaches of
4 Brooklyn, that was another killer ride. And from 2
5 Broadway to 168th Street was over \$100, and I only
6 did that because I was having an asthma attack. Who
7 is going to be able to pay this? It was like \$120.
8 It certainly is going to cost more if I call EMS.
9 It's an unrealistic expectation for any of us to be
10 able to use that. And I have to tell you that
11 Access-A-Ride runs better than my train, than my, my
12 bus service. If I need to get to the emergency room
13 at 1 in the morning, buses don't run up Broadway.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, Edith.

15 Thank you so much.

16 EDITH PRENTICE: It's fun.

17 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, I

18 understand. Thank you guys. Next panel, Frank
19 Senior, Marissa Flores, Jessica Murray, CN, Torea
20 Mitchell, and Ray Wayne. This will be our final
21 panel. [pause] Thank you, thank you John.

22 RAY WAYNE: Me?

23 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

24 RAY WAYNE: Good afternoon. I'm Ray
25 Wayne. I'm with the National Federation of the

2 Blind, New York City Chapter. I want, I want to hit
3 on the on-time issue. I don't know where they got
4 this number, but the MTA said that their on-time
5 performance rate, this is for traditional Access-A-
6 Ride, is 97%. Even if that number is correct, a
7 person who works and uses Access-A-Ride every day,
8 five days a week, would be late to work once a month.
9 That's 12 times a year. Well, I don't think I'd keep
10 my job if I were late for work 12 times a year. And
11 that doesn't even take into account the 30-minute
12 window, which is the driver can be 30 minutes late
13 and that still counts as being on time. Um, I won't
14 go through what people have said about it, you know,
15 we support it, it needs to be expanded, it needs to
16 be used, without any cap. It would cost, if I were
17 working at my last full-time job it would cost \$25
18 each way to go to and from work with E-Hail. Also,
19 taxi authorizations should not be restricted to, you
20 have to, to get a taxi authorization you have to be
21 traveling within the same borough. So if someone who
22 lives in Brooklyn or Queens and the ride doesn't show
23 [alarm goes off] and they need to get, all right, I
24 didn't do it.

25 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Sorry, one second.

2 RAY WAYNE: I'm glad they're telling me
3 there's a snowstorm, I would have figured it out.

4 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [laughs]

5 RAY WAYNE: Someone needing to get to
6 work and having their ride not show from one of the
7 outer boroughs to Manhattan can't get a taxi
8 authorization. They need to be citywide, um, and I
9 touched some other issues in our written testimony,
10 um, again, I don't want to take up time repeating
11 things that other people have already said, but I
12 think the system needs to be fixed. E-Hail is the
13 solution, and it needs to be upgraded and not have
14 limitations placed on it. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

16 FRANK SENIOR: Hi, my name is Frank
17 Senior and I'm a sightless jazz vocalist here in the
18 city. And I had a speech already for you and
19 everything, but I forgot by now. But I'm here to say
20 that I'm a prime example of unemployment going down
21 because of this same-day on-demand taxis. I gig at
22 night and I can't tell you how many times I've been
23 left behind after the clubs are closed, stranded in
24 the snow, waiting for a ride, lonely, dangerous. I'm
25 telling you, ah, I can accept same-day gigs,

2 different nursing homes, I can socialize with my
3 coworkers after work if I want to, and if I'm home
4 just knowing that I have this on-demand taxi, if I'm
5 home it's because I want to be there, not because I
6 have to be here. It makes me appreciate that even
7 more. This same-day taxi thing has changed my life,
8 huge way, and to put this cap on this, this \$15 cap,
9 you're just really telling the program good-bye.
10 It's ridiculous. So, ah, all we want and all we're
11 talking about is the right to freedom. That's what
12 you people take for granted. We're just talking
13 about to be able to come and go as we please. What's
14 wrong with that? I don't see nothing wrong with
15 that. I'm just telling you please, please, find it.
16 When you go to work after, ah, or you go to dinner
17 after you leave here to talk about this, at least you
18 can do that. The people that are on this Access-A-
19 Ride thing, that's just a dream to them. This same-
20 day taxi has made a huge difference in our community.
21 We have pride, we have dignity, and, ah, let's keep
22 it that way, please. I plead with you.

23 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: Hi there, everyone. What
25 hasn't been said is that what costs the MTA so much

2 money with the paratransit is insurance,
3 administration costs, and the price of fuel. And I
4 do believe if the MTA was to switch to electric buses
5 for their bus fleets, um, that would really save them
6 a lot of money because, um, you know, the price of
7 fuel, you know, is very expensive, and the on-demand,
8 ah, taxi service, ah, saves them so much money
9 because they're not paying the drivers', ah, fuel
10 costs or even a wage. They're just reimbursing for
11 the, ah, price of the ride. And I am concerned that
12 the MTA is focusing on the wrong issues when it comes
13 to their budget. They're going to spend 249 million
14 dollars on 500 police officers in the subway system.
15 There's 469 subway stations, over 6000, ah, trains
16 that are, you know, traveling in the system on a 24-
17 hour cycle and, um, I just don't understand how 500
18 police officers is going to be able to prevent crime
19 from happening. What would prevent crime from
20 happening is cameras in the train cars, such as in
21 the Chicago transit system, which cost them 14
22 million dollars, which is a lot less, and helped them
23 to, ah, um, actually they were able to arrest one
24 thousand, three hundred, and eighty-something
25 offenders between 2011 and 2017 because of those

2 cameras that are in the system. They have 32,000
3 surveillance cameras in those Chicago Transit
4 Authority and we hardly have any in the New York City
5 subway system. No wonder crime is, ah, you know, so
6 prolific. So, like I said, 500 cops is going to do
7 nothing. That money should be spent on the
8 paratransit system and so should the five billion
9 dollars that is earmarked to make the subway systems
10 accessible because it's really hard to make such an
11 ancient, ah, system to be accessible. It's just, I
12 think, nearly impossible to do that architecturally.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

15 MARITZA FLORES: Hi, my name is Maritza
16 Flores and I wanted to say that this pilot program
17 has been a very helpful thing to use. It has helped
18 me out a lot and I think it would be important for it
19 to improve and to not be limited. That's about it.

20 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, Maritza.

21 JESSICA MURRAY: Hello, my name is
22 Jessica Murray. I'm not a paratransit user, but I'm a
23 researcher, I'm a Ph.D. candidate at Community and
24 I've been studying transportation accessibility
25 issues for the last seven years, um, and, you know,

2 I'm here today to kind of talk about the MTA's
3 financial reasoning behind why they cut the larger
4 advanced reservation program. Um, I kind of looked
5 at little bit close, more closely, at their
6 presentation from April after the program had ended,
7 and it seems like they kind of forgot to mention the
8 fact that the traditional carrier service trips, um,
9 increased by \$11 to \$12 per trip over the course of
10 one year, um, and then, you know, now they say that
11 the budget keeps going up. There was also about a 40
12 million dollar increase in the administrative costs
13 this year. So while, you know, there are, um, some
14 reasons to be concerned about, um, you know,
15 expanding this program in a fiscally responsible
16 manner, I think that they've kind of been
17 misrepresenting the facts and so, um, I've given you
18 my analysis so you can kind of see why, um, why I
19 came to my own conclusions. I'm using the only real
20 information that's available, which is on their
21 dashboard, that shows the number of trips per carrier
22 type and compared it to the numbers that they
23 presented in April and then earlier this week. Um,
24 and so I think since they were using that rationale
25 to justify ending this larger E-Hail program, um,

2 it's really important to go back and look at that
3 analysis a little bit more closely before determining
4 caps, um, on this other program. Um, so this idea of
5 like, OK, 16 trips per month is the median usage, um,
6 you know, we, they won't really tell us what the
7 upper limit is, like what the, we know what the
8 average is, it's around 30 trips per money. They
9 claim that, you know, usage is going up and up and
10 up, but you can see the last six months on the
11 dashboard where's the only the 1200 E-Hail
12 participants, where previously they had combined it
13 with the larger E-Hail program, and it's pretty flat,
14 it's like around 30 trips per month, um, I mean, you
15 would obviously want a longer history to see what the
16 trend is, but, ah, generally it's about 30 trips per
17 month. So I think, um, basing it on the average it
18 would still have the intended effect of reducing some
19 of the usage without being so extreme, and also
20 getting the facts from them about the actual, um,
21 average trip cost for that, um, on-demand program is
22 also information that we don't really have. So those
23 are my only points. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

2 TARAYA MITCHELL: Um, hello, my name is
3 Taraya Mitchell. I'm not representing any
4 organization per se, but I am an organizer activist
5 in the movement for black lives and, ah, contrary to
6 fake news and rumors we don't get George Soros money.
7 We don't get any funding at all. So I'm basically a
8 volunteer. Um, I'm going to share my own, I didn't
9 know if I wanted to share this, but I decided I might
10 as well before, um, I was assaulted, ah, at Barclays
11 Atlantic Avenue Station in July. I was pushed and
12 shoved by a, I don't know how old she was, but I'm
13 guessing it was like late 30s, early 40s, um, woman.
14 And I was traumatized. I didn't want to take the
15 subway because I felt it was a hate crime. People
16 that observed it, you know, they asked me did I want
17 to stay and I'm like, you know, they asked one of the
18 officers, it was their video, and they said yes. But
19 after they took my ID and they ran my name, you know,
20 I guess, you know, because of my group I guess is,
21 um, if you haven't heard, is listed SRG and there was
22 a FOIA request a few, ah, a few years ago. My groups
23 was one of the groups that was targeted by SRG. Um,
24 so then I was surrounded by four or five male cops
25 and the woman that assaulted me, she was a white

2 woman, she had like a female officer and she just had
3 one officer with her, and even though it was clear
4 from the bystander that she assaulted me, you know, I
5 was told, I said why don't you pull the video and you
6 can see what happened and they told me well, if we
7 have to pull the video we're going to arrest you and
8 her. So I don't feel safe taking the subway. So for
9 people that wanted to know about the, ah, 500 more
10 cops, yes, the MTA board did, did pass that budget
11 this afternoon. I don't feel safe with the cops and
12 I also don't feel safe with Access-A-Ride because I
13 was working for the city, I was a city worker for 12
14 years. I didn't use Access-A-Ride because I would
15 always, if I did I would be late for work. And
16 fortunately for me I had the luxury, I could just
17 take the bus home and that's what I did. It wasn't a
18 long commute. But now that I have a medical
19 disability on top of my visual disability I have to
20 use Access-A-Ride. But the thing is I can't sit in
21 those vehicles for a long amount of time. I can't
22 sit in the vehicles for two and half, three hours.
23 And usually if you use Access-A-Ride, at least for
24 me, that's what I'm going to have to, that's what I
25 have to do. I can recount Thanksgiving, this

2 Thanksgiving, I was picked up to go back home at 7
3 o'clock. 8 o'clock I was still on the bus. Ah, or
4 the Omni bus. The driver told me he had to wait 25
5 minutes, hold like till 8:25, 8:30 for another pickup
6 after he had picked someone up and dropped them off
7 already. So 8:30 I just told him, you know, I've
8 been on the bus an hour and a half, I'm in so much
9 pain, and I said can you drop me at the nearest train
10 station. So he called dispatch. He couldn't drop me
11 at the nearest train station, so I had to just get
12 out in the middle of Flatbush, Ditmas Park, Brooklyn,
13 and thank God, I called my brother and he was able to
14 direct me and some strangers helped me to the nearest
15 train station. So I was able to get home. But the
16 next week I was bedbound. So people have brought up
17 the issue with Access-A-Ride, um, it is good when it
18 works but routing is not good. People with medical
19 disabilities should not be on board a bus for two and
20 three hours. It's not safe. It has the potential
21 and it does harm us because we have unfortunate
22 medical crises that occur because of that. So the
23 routing has to be fixed. Also, people were talking
24 about on-demand and E-Hail. E-Hail was a program
25 that was for every Access-A-Ride user, when you can

2 call a taxi the next day. They discontinued that
3 service. Now they leave on-demand and they're
4 talking about 1200 additional folks. Nobody knows
5 how is that process made and why isn't the on-demand
6 or percentage of it, as said before, expanded to all
7 of the other users? Why is it just a select few?
8 It's a pilot program. Pilots usually take what, a
9 year or so. So that's also violating the ADA
10 [crosstalk]...

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Ma'am, can you
12 summarize?

13 TARAYA MITCHELL: ...utilize that
14 accessibility and transportation...

15 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Excuse me, excuse me.

16 TARAYA MITCHELL: ...is a civil right.
17 Transportation is a civil right.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Understood. Thank
19 you so much. Thank you to all the panelists for
20 coming today. Please get home safely, it's going to
21 be snowing, so be careful on the way out. Thank you
22 for your testimony today. We have copies of
23 everything. If you did not submit your written
24 testimony please feel free to email it to us for the
25

1 COMMITTEES ON TRANSPORTATION,
AGING, AND MENTAL HEALTH

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2 record. Thank you, and this meeting is now

3 adjourned. [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 December 31, 2019