

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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HELD AT: Council Chamber - City Hall

B E F O R E: COREY JOHNSON
Speaker

YDANIS RODRIGUEZ
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Mark Levine
Andrew Cohen
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Ruben Diaz, Sr.
Peter Koo
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Robert Holden
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Trent Lethco, Principal
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Unidentified

Carlo Scissura, President and CEO
The New York Building Congress

Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation

Steve Delisse, Inspector
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Jeremy Siegel, Associate Urban Designer and
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Kate Slevin, Senior Vice President
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Ken Fisher, Brooklyn Heights Resident

Amy Breedlove
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Hillary Jager, Cofounder
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Martha Bakos Dietz, President
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Mark Wouters
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North Heights Neighborhood

Frazana Prisi, Student

Doreen Gallo
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Eric McClure, Executive Director
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Downtown Brooklyn Co-op Alliance

Pia Scala Zenkel [sp?]
North Heights Neighbors

Cindy McLaughlin, CEO
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Roy Sloan
CB6

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Testing. One. Two.
One. Two. Today is February 25th, 2020. Today's hearing is on transportation being recorded by Keith Polite.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quiet, please. Silence your cell phone. Conversations outside.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Good morning and welcome to today's hearing of the Councils Committee on Transportation. I am Ydanis Rodriguez, the Chair of the committee. Today we will be conducting an oversight hearing entitled The Future of the BQE. Before I turn it over to the speaker for his initial comments, let me introduce also we have been joined by Council member Levin and Council member Koo. And now we pass it to the Speaker of the City Council, Corey Johnson.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair Rodriguez. I want to thank everyone this morning for coming to this important hearing and I want to, of course, thank Council member Koo, but also Council member Levin for being here today. He has been so involved in all of this. Since the construction of our modern highway system, we have tried to reconcile

the often anti-urban and disruptive impact of high waves with the dense and vibrant city neighborhoods that they go through. The history of leveling neighborhoods to make way for highways has been well documented. But since they have been built, we have done little in New York City to rethink the relationship of our highway infrastructure to our neighborhood. Portions of the Westside Highway fell down in 1973, which forced rethinking of that roadway and, eventually, the construction of what is now the Hudson River Park. It's difficult to imagine the construction of this beautiful green space is that highway hadn't fallen down. We were forced to think creatively and we were left with something that is now an essential part of New York City. In West Farms and Soundview in the Bronx, the community has worked for years to dismantle the little used Sheridan Expressway and create a boulevard which, again, helps to connect those neighborhoods with new open spaces. But the vast majority of the New York City Highway System remains in place just as we built it at the height of the auto era in the first half of the 20th century. It doesn't have to be this way. Over a year ago, we learned that the New York City

Department of Transportation-- from the New York City Department of Transportation, that a stretch of the Brooklyn Queens Expressway, the triple cantilever which runs through Brooklyn Heights, was in desperate need of repair. That had been known for a long time. DOT proposed two options for rehabbing the BQE. One would put a temporary highway on the Brooklyn Promenade in the other would involve closures of the BQE in phases, diverting significant traffic through Brooklyn neighborhoods over the course of several years. Neither of these approaches deliver in the long term policy value and both would, essentially, would replace the highway as is the cost of several billion dollars. Both of those approaches are unacceptable and the Council will not support either one of those approaches. Part of the challenges that DOT was working with a set of constraints, namely, staying within the right-of-way of the existing roadway and then created a very difficult set of challenges to solve. New York State Department of Transportation had studied this stretch of roadway almost a decade earlier, but has since abandoned most of the work, leaving the city and the communities around the BQE with a lot of unanswered questions.

The silver lining is that the city's DOT proposal sparked a lot of creative thinking. The community and others have developed a set of very credible and serious proposals. A project of this magnitude will always be incredibly complicated and a lot is riding on the results. The outcome is something we will have to live with as a city for generations. The Council realized early on how important it was to get this right, as well as the value of additional expertise to analyze the options so that we could make-- and when I say we, I mean all of us, not just the city Council, but the community and policy makers at every level, we could make informed decisions together. To guide this analysis, the Council commissioned Arup, a leading engineer and design firm that brought an expert eye and a valuable perspective working on similar projects across the world. Thank you all for your incredible work. Our goal is to figure out a way forward that reflects our understanding of transportation as a climate change issue. We want to get cars off the road and rebuild the communities impacted by the construction of the BQE. Today, we are going to talk about ways the BQE can better address and adapt to the needs of our city

and how we can reduce the size and scale of the highway. And our key question is how do we ensure we end up with something better than what we started with? Working with Arup, we have arrived at a set of options which presents a picture of different paths we could take and the advantages and disadvantages associated with each one of these paths. The decisions we have to make as a city going forward won't be easy, but we need to make an informed choice. Continuing to kick the can down the road and spend billions of dollars to prop up the BQE will not help address our long-term challenges. We need to seize this moment to finally create a plan for not only improving this stretch of the BQE, but more broadly a set of strategies for rethinking the relationship of highways in our city. I have not endorsed any plan. This report and today's hearing is about moving the conversation forward, getting all the information out there publicly, and then making the best, most informed decision possible. Arup will discuss in more detail the trade-offs associated with the options, but it is clear that we need the help of our colleagues and the state to resolve the future of the BQE. As a city, we have serious challenges

maintaining and upgrading our infrastructure currently. We need innovative thinking and informed debate of all the options and we need to fundamentally rethink the role of highways in our city. I look forward to hearing from many engaged stakeholders today in continuing this work. And one other thing we will talk about is setting up-- needing to set up-- a clearinghouse. A public authority. Someone who will be charged with overseeing this process for years to come outside of the City Council. Outside of the city DOT. Outside of the state DOT. A public authority that can manage this process the entire way through over multiple state administrations, city administrations, city Council speakers, local councilmembers. We need a set of folks involved in this process to manage it in to make sure they are keeping their eye on the prize in getting this done appropriately, incorrectly, responsibly, and informing the public and working with the community and working with stakeholders at every level of government along the way. Look forward to this conversation this morning. I want to thank you, Mr. Chair, for your help in making this hearing possible and I turn it back to you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Speaker Johnson, and thank you for your leadership on transportation and many other issues. This Counsel has taken a leadership role on transportation because we know how much it affects the lives of every day New Yorkers and we want to turn our city has the most walkable and pedestrian friendly in the whole nation. From pushing for funding for public transit to rethinking how to support our taxi medallions, I am proud of the work of this counsel. As we continue the conversation in the Council, I would like to add that we should take into consideration expanding mass transit and alternatives modes of transportation. By stepping away from our traditional car culture, mentally, we will see many benefits to air quality, vehicles, congestion, and much more. I would also like to highlight and importuned date on April 19th. The city will be celebrating car-free day, and entire day dedicated to environmental justice. Across the city, we have many areas that are heavily polluted by cars, much like that the BQE. We, as a Council, and the Speaker has not shied away from the difficult and challenging conversations. The future of the BQE lies in our hands and what we decide as a Council and

as a city well impact many people going forward. As a city, we have some difficult choices to confront. Portions of the BQE, in particular the triple cantilever which runs through Brooklyn Heights, are in desperate need of repair. It's working on three times over the capacity. Do we want to continue to spend millions of dollars on band-aide solutions or do we want to finally develop a plan that moves people and good safely while reconnecting neighborhoods, creating safer communities with better air quality and new open space? That is what New Yorkers need. That's what New Yorkers deserve. The Council feels that is strongly that the latter is the only approach and hired Arup, a leading engineer and a design firm to help us explore how we might translate our values into action. If we are going to rethink the way the highway is cut through our city, we are going to need to be bold and think outside of parameters. The options the Council laid out in its report are areas for further study, exploration, and debate and we look forward to the discussion and feedback we will hear during today's hearing. There's one thing that I've got to say before ending. Underserved communities need to be part of this

conversation. New York City has more than 35 percent of the 8.6 million people who live under poverty, who are working class. They need to be on the table. Their voices. Their ideas. They are input on this plan has to be included. I will now call up our first panel, which will consist of representatives from Arup that will be followed by the New York City Department of Transportation.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Council member Levin wants to make some opening remarks.

[background comments]

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, Speaker.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Sorry, Council member.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: No, problem. Thank you, Chair. Just very quickly, I just want to acknowledge the important work that all the stakeholders have put into this process. To the Department of Transportation who raised this issue and took it on when the state abdicated their role, I acknowledge the city's Department of Transportation for really stepping up and taking responsibility here. And in a clear eyed way. I want to acknowledge the communities that stood up and said

that we want to have additional options. We want to seek a better way, to quote the name of the organization and also the Brooklyn Heights Association, Cobble Hill Association, the Dunwood Neighborhood Alliance, and other, the Fulton Ferry Neighborhood Association, as well. This is an enormous project that is going to have, as the Speaker in the Chair said, a generational impact. We have one chance to get this right. We should and need to be building infrastructure that will be for the 22nd century and it presents a unique set of challenges. The BQE, as an interstate highway, serves as an essential freight, transportation route for trucks that is an essential part of the economy here in New York City, not easily replaced by other modes of transportation for freight, and we have to be clear eyed about this. But, at the same time, we can be ambitious. And, in fact, we can't afford to not be ambitious. And I want to thank the Speaker and the Land Use staff for giving this issue to the attention that it deserves and the resources that it deserves by hiring Arup and I want to thank the team at Arup for the work that they have done because all options should be on the table and we should be

having a court or wide conversation about the future of the BQE that involves all the community is all up and down the line, but-- and the cost can be staggering, as we know, but, the costs are going to be staggering under any option. We should be doing the type of visioning and long term planning that we would be proud to hand off to future generations. Then, with that, I'll turn it back out of the Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Council member Levin. And sorry that I didn't call you before. [speaking foreign language] reflect, and now I will, again call out--

[background comments]

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quiet, please.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: for our first panel which will consist of the representatives from Arup. Please introduce yourselves as you would.

TRENT LETHCO: Thank you, Chair Rodriguez. And thank you Speaker Johnson, for this opportunity to share with you on the findings. My name is Trent Lethco. I made principle with the firm Arup and we appreciate this opportunity to work with all of you on the question about what to do with the

BQE. Before I began, I do want to note that we are very fortunate to have a body of work to draw upon that was contributed by the design community, the local community in Brooklyn Heights, buys city DOT. And I think one of the things that we took away from all of the work that has been done is that we all agree that something needs to be done and the question is how should it get done and what is the right way forward? But the fact that so many different aspects of New York are in agreement that we need to move and that we need to move in a direction for positive change, I think, is a good sign for a positive direction moving forward. And, lastly, I would like to acknowledge working with your staff. It has been a true pleasure to work with dedicated, very concerned and very thoughtful people who really want to do the right thing for everyone in New York. So, thank you for that. You know, when I think about this project and I think about why are we at this juncture, and what are we struggling with, I think we have to really acknowledge that this project evokes a lot of things from our past. During the highway building era of New York City, we went all in on highways and cars, often to the detriment of

communities all across the city and the displacement of thousands of people. At some point, we also said no to that effort and we stopped the highway building era in our city and we reached a point of detente, if you will. We were building more. We weren't removing, but we still had that legacy infrastructure. And now, is reaching the useful end-- the end of its useful life and the question we have to ask ourselves is what are we going to do with it? Do we want to keep it? Do we want to remove it? Do we want to transform it? And how do we answer those questions if we don't look at what is going on right now in this moment? New York has really changed the conversation about mobility on our streets. We are thinking about multimodal solutions. We're thinking about place spaced design. We are thinking about putting people safely first. So, how does this come to bear in this corridor or on this project where we have regional needs and local means that, in some ways, conflict? And even though we are thinking about regional needs and mobility, we are asking almost 400,000 New Yorkers to live with this facility and live with the impacts of a highway running through their communities when we look at the

corridor end to end. What about them? So, how do we meet the needs of people who need the BQE to move, but how to we meet the needs of the people who live along the corridor? And then, so we ask that question, we can't answer it without thinking about our future. We've talked a little bit about the city that we want to be in terms of mobility, but we also need to think about climate change. We need to think about different travel choices people are making. So, all of that mixes together to make the decision making around this particular project quite challenging. But I think with the motivation and the engagement of the stakeholders across the spectrum of groups we have been speaking with, we can get to solutions that work not just for this functional utility that we need to have from the BQE, but for all New Yorkers across a whole different spectrum of issues and a whole different type of places. I think because of the state of the BQE, we have a pretty firm deadline. And it is been my experience on projects that New Yorkers, once they have a deadline, are pretty good at moving to deliver against that deadline. So I am know that we will move forward and I feel confident that we can find a solution that we

can all endorse. And we're going to take if you a little bit of introduction to who we are because we may not be known, so why should you take our word for it? So, giving people some information about who we are as a firm, we're going to talk about our assignment. What we were asked to investigate, the scale of the challenge that is in front of us, what we learned in this process, which was quite a bit-- it was a significant amount of learning-- and just some concluding thoughts about where we would go next.

So, who is this firm Arup and who are we? We're a privately owned firm governed by a nonprofit charitable trust. Because we aren't owned by shareholders or equity partners, it gives us a level of independence to work freely and to advise you in a fair and unbiased way so that we can weigh trade-offs and weigh different choices and do so in a manner that is truly in your best interest. We are not worked with 15,000 people around the world, which matters in this particular case, because many cities around the world have struggled with this question, what do we do with our highway infrastructure? Even though we would all like to go all in and be 100

percent active, walkable, transit friendly, bike friendly in terms of our thinking around mobility, we have cities and systems that depend on cars for mobility to get to and from work. We need trucks to get goods to market. So, cities around the world have been trying to weigh these trade-offs. So, when we worked in San Francisco, how can we shrink the Doyle Drive connecting the Golden Gate Bridge to San Francisco, which is now known as the Presidio Parkway, or in St. Louis with their downtown highway, how can we transform that into a park? The Gardener in Toronto is facing the same challenges we faced. It's in a state of decline and an ever present threat of structural problems and operational problems, so what do we need to there? All of this experience has come to bear for us thinking about this project and we've been able to tap into our network to get lessons learned and information for all of us to consider as we weigh the different choices that are in front of us so that we can make fully informed choices that take into account the holistic nature of the problem that we are trying to solve because it's not just about mobility. It's about community health. It's about place making and it's about our

city's future and it needs to be a future that is inclusive and no future that is socially just. So, we draw on those lessons as we look at our assignment and try and understand where is the answer? What should we be doing? The first thing we were asked to do is come in and advise on whether-- on the best practices for assessing the triple cantilever structure and to review structural assumptions around the health of the structure. As we did that, working in consultation with DOT, we also needed to develop an apples to apples comparison because each of the alternatives is slightly different in terms of its depth of analysis, slightly different in terms of what is looked at and in terms of a physical footprint. So, making them all as similar as possible so we could weigh them fairly against one another was another thing that we needed to do. So we did some work around that. And then we also looked back in history to see what body of work exists that others have done in the past that might inform us now. And what case studies should we look at that will help us understand what other places have done and how might we do what other places have done here in New York City. So we brought that

altogether. And, as we did so, we didn't do it in isolation. We really appreciated the time that people gave us and listening sessions, the time people gave us in workshops, and the time people gave us in one-on-one consultations so that we could make sure that the concerns that were being voiced by the community, the concerns that were being voiced by DOT, the concerns that were voiced by members of the advocacy and wider public world considered as we went through this evaluative process. So we worked with all of you on Council. We worked with you both directly and with your staff. We had a briefing with DOT at the beginning. We also went through a site visit together and updated DOT staff on our progress as we went through this process. BHA, A Better Way, and Cobble Hill, thank you. Thank you for the time you've made to come and meet with us, to share your materials, and to tell us your thoughts, your concerns, but also your aspirations about what you would like to see in the corridor. The elected officials who worked with us gave us invaluable insights on what may or may not be possible and what they are hearing in their day to day. And then the designers, Mark [inaudible 00:24:16] were very

generous with their time to walk us through their thoughts. And all of that engagement helped us to better understand the challenge. If you look at the triple cantilever in isolation, you are tempted to make a solution for particular site and a much longer corridor. If we look at the BQE corridor, it's an extensive corridor that touches the lives of 450,000 residents who live along the corridor every day. It cuts through communities, disadvantaged and wealthy communities that are active and vibrant that our industrial. And understanding what those communities are should inform what we are doing because, once we read Bell the triple cantilever, it will set a lot of other decisions in style North and South along this corridor. So what does it actually mean, this wider corridor of the BQE. And then we look at lives in the corridor. 50 to 60 percent of the people who live in this corridor, and from what we call environmental justice communities. They may be low income, they may be minority, but they are communities that are often left out of the planning process. And with the history of highway building in New York City, they were often the communities that had to pay the price as we built our infrastructure.

So, how do we factor that reality to the work that we do? But we can't forget who is on the BQE. It's a very important vital link in our regional economy. It connects New Jersey, Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens. We have 153,000 vehicles a day. We can't take that as a fate [inaudible 00:25:52] in terms of we need to accommodate that amount of traffic. But we have to recognize that it is they are. We also can't wish it away. We have to acknowledge that there needs to be some level of accommodation in order to keep our city moving, and order to allow us to get to work, in order for us to get to school. And I think most of us, when we go to the grocery store, we like to have our groceries. When we go to the electronics store, we like to get our electronics. And trucks that moved back and forth across this corridor are getting good to market and they are getting is the things we need to live our lives. So we have to understand any change and how it affects that mobility. I think what is interesting, however, when you look at the triple cantilever and who is crossing it, about half of that traffic is actually going into Manhattan, so we have people who are coming up the triple cantilever and

going across the Manhattan and Brooklyn bridges into a city that has the richest transit network in the Western Hemisphere. So, where are those opportunities to serve those trips differently? We also have to understand that a lot of the tracks that are moving on our highway are going to parts further afield. This is the primary link from Port Elizabeth in New Jersey to points and Queens and Long Island and that function needs to be maintained and if our economy is going to grow and if our economy is going to be healthy. So, you can see how there are a lot of tensions in this project that force us to think in a broad way and in a holistic way about mobility solutions that can solve some of the problems and the corridor and leave us all in a better place. So, when we looked at the triple cantilever and looked at the work that has been done, you know, we are-- no surprise there isn't news [inaudible 00:27:33], that the BQE is reaching the end of its useful life. It needs to be repaired and it needs to be rebuilt. The question is how might one do that? We can do that and a way that gives us more time, so we may need to make some temporary fixes and improvements so that we can get the time we need to make a thoughtful and

informed choice so that we can get a solution that is functional, that works for the community, and that solves our regional problems, but that also positions us for the future in a way that is grounded in the values that we hold so dear to ourselves today. When we look at the work, 2026 is out there as a year to think about in terms of replacing the triple cantilever. There is some uncertainty as to whether or not that is a fix state. There are ways we can buy ourselves time through temporary repairs, maintenance, and upkeep. Also, management of vehicles on the roads. The mayors expert panel also noted that, with temporary repairs and management, we can extend the life of this facility and use that time to think more broadly about what we should do and the a thought all and community driven and well-designed solution. It's a conservative, reasonable estimate and we saw nothing wrong with that as an estimate to put out there. There is been further work. Looking at the integrity of the structure-- excuse me-- and there's some management techniques that have been suggested to be employed and repairs to be undertaken right away so that the BQE can continue to do what it does and that help people move

across the corridor safely and effectively, as recommended by the mayors expert panel. For the DOT solutions that have been put forward, they do meet the need of replacing the triple cantilever and they do meet the need within the rules set for that assessment. As you decide you're not going to move outside of your right-of-way, if you can't go down and if you can't move to your right, there's really only one place to go. You either repair it and leave it an operation as is or you can think about going up and over. But if you go up and over with an elevated highway solution as you rebuild the BQE below it, you have to look to your right and you have to remember that there are communities along that corridor that have concerns that need to be addressed and incorporated into the planning process and the design outcome. As someone said in one of our meetings, we understand that the BQE needs to be replaced, but if we have to suffer for six years through that construction process, we would like to get something better on the other side. And I think that's a fair request for people who have to live with this disruption for so long. And I think the other question is how do these interventions transform

versus replace what is there the day and have we lost an opportunity for transformational change, not just for those segment of the BQE in Brooklyn Heights, but for communities all across this corridor. The features of the BQE make it a complex animal. It is much higher incidence than other part of the highway system in our state because of substandard features. There are narrow lanes. There are no shoulders. There are a lot of problems with merging and exits. So, because of that, we have a lot more crashes and incidents. And because of that, we have ongoing congestion issues that are difficult to solve with the way the BQE is currently configured. The new schemes, any of them, will modernize and address some of those issues and, I think, a thing that we are just coming to terms with is the impact that large trucks, especially overweigh vehicles, are having on the facility today and that will continue to damage any facility we build unless we get a handle on how we effectively manage large trucks, especially those that are overweight, operating on this facility. We think we learn this is in the process. That we can meet the mobility of the corridor into different ways. We don't have to do it the way we are doing it

today. We can do it better. We think this is a 100 year investment. It's multiple generations of New Yorkers that will be affected by this, so we really need to get it right and make sure it aligns with where we're currently going as a city. Plus, there's so much change happening right now. We have the congestion charging program coming online that will fundamentally change the amount of traffic moving on our streets and our highways that will also change where that traffic goes. We have the Verrazano [sp?] split tolling that will also change how much traffic we have and where that traffic goes. We want to address climate change and we want to address the emissions associated with our transportation system. We also have new ways to build things, so a tunnel proposal of 10 years ago is a very different tunnel proposal from today. So, there are new ways to build stuff and there are new ways to do it that is less impactful, that is more predictable, and that is more cost-effective. And we know a lot of people don't want to drive now. We know drivers license uptake is going down, auto buying is going down, shared mobility is going up. Bicycling has become a legitimate, frequently used mode and our city. So,

how do we think about those changing travel behaviors as we assess a multibillion-dollar investment for the next hundred years. We would also know that New York City DOT has led the way in many ways, putting buses first, making streets work for people, building out a bicycle network that is the envy of the nation, if not the world, and we have seen a significant modal shift to other modes of transportation. If we can keep those systems moving well, it is logical to assume that people will continue to use them. And we also have the recommendations from the expert panel convened by the Mayor had a lot of good recommendations around demand management and thinking about different ways to reduce the need for the facility and then demands that it serves every day. This is a big problem can't underestimate how big it is. But the big problem requires big solutions. Maybe we need to stay in our lane and maybe we think more broadly. How does this align with our city's goals? Not just our transportation goals question how does it address public realm? Where has environmental justice come into the process and how if we thought about that as a design outcome? How do we enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity,

remove the public nuisances that people up on the BQE must live with every day, and think about park and open space opportunity and a design that really stands up to our time? Our time of climate change, we know we have to prepare for it and how can we integrate resilience into any design that we put forward? To answer those questions, we think we need a different approach, but not just for this project, and any major investment that the city is making. We need to think about our individual links, but we also need to think about how that translates through networks and how do our networks serve our city and what is our shared vision for the project? And by our, it's community, but our, it's the transportation industry, by our, it's those who are at the table. And how do we get those who weren't at the table in the conversation so we understand what everyone wants? And how does that then get translated into a multi-modal corridor-based solution and how does that get delivered in a corridor that requires a special purpose multi-agency vehicle? Can New York City and New York State come together to solve this problem and how can we think locally and act regionally at the same time and be thoughtful with a diverse group

of people who live along this corridor? And how can policy help us get what we want? And how can we address some of the policy waivers that exist today that tell you you should drive for free into Manhattan and you should drive for free through some of these communities? And what other tools can we use to get more people on trends and then give people better choices and how can all be understood through multidisciplinary lens? We think this approach might have brought us to different outcomes and this approach might've helped us all talk together about where we go next. Where we are in turn of what we evaluated, we looked at sevens schemes. We've looked at both the DOT traditional scheme which would be repairing as we go, keeping the cantilever in place and doing lane closures and upgrades and improvements all along the corridor at different moments in time while maintaining traffic operations. We looked at the DOT innovative solution with the elevated highway that would go above the current triple cantilever while the construction period was underway. We were fortunate that BHA and Mark Wouters [sp?] Came up with a scheme to look at refurbishing the cantilever, some temporary roadways above Furman Street, and

some-- and along the Brooklyn Park Berms. BIG has put forward a provocative idea about taking the highway and burying it in the park and gave us a lot of good material about how that would work, both from the design side, but also from an engineering and a functional side. Comptroller Stringer has said, let's just get rid of the cars and leave it for buses and trucks, so we thought about the two see what that meant for our region. Some of the older reports called for a tunnel. A lot of you heard about the tunnel over the past 24 hours, but when we looked at that option and then we thought about tunneling technology used today versus when that report was written, we realized that tunneling technologies change vastly and that there are ways to build tunnels that are safe, that are reliable, and that are predictable, so we brought that forward. And then we also asked ourselves, if they were to tear down the triple cantilever and just make it with an at grade highway, what would that look like and would that make sense? And if we looked at all of the news and isolation and just used our own opinions, we could tell you what we think. But we felt like first we needed to have an apples to apples comparison so

we could understand what they all were and then look at them. Are there any fatal flaws or anything that keeps the project from moving forward? None of those had a fatal flaw and some of like there wasn't a problem that could be overcome. We felt we needed evaluation criteria to be transparent about our thoughts so that it was a technically based on evaluation, rather than a preference based evaluation. We developed a visual language for all of these options, so we could understand what they look like and what they mean. And then we looked at how they integrated into the corridor and what may have worked and what may have not worked. And then we addressed pinch points for alternatives that seemed to be worthy of consideration, but had some unanswered questions about how they tied into the network. And we kept coming back to policy. What kind of policy solutions should be brought to bear in any of the solutions? We wanted to think about construction state because six years is a long time to live with a major project in your community. So, how do we think about schedule and construction impacts? How do we think about local community impacts and traffic? We also wanted to think about

the end state. What is it when it is built? You know, have we addressed things like safety? Have we addressed bicycle and pedestrian connectivity? What about the lifecycle cost of what's been built and how does that translate into public realm, environmental justice, parks and open space and how does it align with our need to think about climate change and be resilient and are design? So with those seven options, what did we conclude? We concluded that the traditional approach allowed for minimal agency coordination. You could kind of just go out and get it done. It replaces the BQE as is. It doesn't address any opportunities that might be existed with a different approach and it doesn't address some of the impacts and complications that might create in a local neighborhood. The DOT innovative approach also allows for minimal interagency coordination and also just leaves the BQE as it is. But it allows for you to build the replacement project more quickly because you have removed to the need to deal with traffic operations on the cantilever as you move through a rehabilitation process. We were concerned about that because of its impacts on the Promenade. Those are well known, so I won't say more about that here.

When we looked at the BHA Mark Wouters scheme, and very similar to the DOT alternatives, but what it offers us instead is an off board solution. So, instead of going above, we go out. So, we would need to work with the park. But once it's been done, that infrastructure remains. It's a pity to the Belmont highway above the highway and then to demolish it once the project is over. The Mark Wouters scheme allows us to have something close to the BQE cantilever that would remain afterwards as parks, open space, transit corridor or, whatever we decide to make it. The BIG Mark [inaudible 00:40:56] Baker's scheme optimized local neighborhood conditions. And actually simplifies a lot of the traffic operations on the BQE itself. It gives you a much better operation from a driving point of view. It also gives you an at grade solution that is lower cost to maintain, lower cost to build, and it gives you a much more reliable roadway for those who need to use it. And then it gets them buried underneath a park, so many of its impacts are removed. The Comptroller's plan is interesting from a freight logistics insurance point of view, but the unanswered question of traffic is a significant one. What

happens with those vehicles? What happens for all the people who still want to come through this core door? Where do they go and how into the communities respond to having that traffic on their streets instead of on the BQE itself. The tile allows us to remove the BQE in its entirety and move traffic more quickly and efficiently along a three mile tunnel getting over to the K Bridge. We recognize that project carries significant costs, but the costs are commensurate with the benefits we think it delivers for the city and it is worthy of further consideration. The teardown solution gives says a more human scaled solution for a roadway. It can allow us to better connect with pedestrians and cyclists, but it would requires a significant level of policy intervention so we can get the traffic levels to a point that we would find acceptable and to find design solutions that allow us to make that work, perhaps, in a similar fashion to the West side Highway we know today. So, what these drawings are intended to show you is a bid of what the cross-sections might look like. So the DOT tradition all really solves the need to stay in the right-of-way. It does require a lot of BQE closures, a lot of

disruptions for Brooklyn Heights, and a lot of challenges for BQE operations during the construction. And quite a bit of uncertainty about when that project might actually come to its end. The DOT innovative solution, a cross-section in the upper left shows you the relationship between the Promenade and the elevated highway and the Brooklyn Bridge Park. The drawing to your right shows you a rendering of what this might look like during the construction stage. It, again, lets us stay within that right-of-way. Is more efficient. We could probably build faster and it minimizes disruptions to BQE operations because we separated those things. It might introduce some construction risk based on building below highway that is actively in use. And then the signif-- The issue with is that there are significant impacts to the Brooklyn Heights community all throughout the construction period. The BHA Mark Wouters scheme, you see here, it allows us to have an off board solution that can becomes a greenway, so it minimizes BQE operations again. It doesn't address, necessarily, some of the impacts on Brooklyn Bridge Park or in the local community. In those would be something that would need to be thought about

further. So the BIG Mark Baker scheme or scheme, if you might call them that, have many different permutations and there are lots of ways to think about solutions in the corridor. Coming down to grade for highway design is actually a really elegant solution. Unstacking the highway offers a lot of operational safety and efficiency for drivers and it allows us to transform the BQE and hide underneath a park. So, that, then, lets us have a roadway that is easier to build, easier to maintain over time. It gives us a park. And it makes the operations a lot simpler for drivers. We will need to think about the tie-ins on Atlantic Avenue. We will need to think about the Columbia Bridge Park-- Columbia Bridge and Park, but when we look at those things, we think those are solvable. And there's a whole host of infrastructure elements that need to be solved for, but we believe solutions exist for all of the infrastructure in the corridor identified as BIG as meeting to be modified or moved as a part of this design intervention. The Comptroller plan has the trucks and buses off on the BQE. One of the levels converted into a Greenway and like I mentioned before, traffic, auto traffic for private cars, where

does it go? The tunnel scheme, which would be a three mile tunnel, allows us to think about transforming five miles of the BQE without the need to more traffic along the BQE with the benefits of the congestion charge, could the BQE become something different? A green, multi-modal, community friendly, park friendly boulevard that traverses the corridor and allows communities along the corridor to choose for themselves what kind of infrastructure they want to see in their community. Of course, we need to think about construction impacts. Of course we need to think about costs. But we think there are a lot of opportunities here that should be explored further before we quickly rule it out because it seems like it might be too big to take on. The teardown structure also offers us that opportunity to get rid of the highway that runs through our community, but the question of the impacts on the network performance and the question of the impacts of where does the traffic go are questions that were unresolved with the solution that we think offer cause for pause and offer concern about what happens with this type of solution. So, at the end of the process, we are light, what should we carry forward?

What would we want to share with you today based on her evaluation criteria and everything that we have been hearing? Like the expert panel that was recently released their own report, operations of the Promenade level and taking out the Promenade seems like an unacceptable nonstarter. There are better ways or other ways to do this. We think of the concepts we have concerned-- a capped BQE through the Mark Baker approach is a good solution for a local area if we were going to think at a site level. If we want to think at a network level, a transformed BQE through a tunnel and a reconceptualization of what the BQE corridor could be is a good thing to consider and to investigate further. We recognize that there are complexities with the. We also recognize that, you know, in New York, we often have a hard time seeing eye to eye and reach consensus amongst all of our different stakeholders. And that there may be a possibility that we need to have a fallback position. And we think, what the Mark Wouters BHA option offers us is an ability for the Promenade to stay intact and an ability to get the functional performance that DOT is looking for with the elevated solution and the difference between the

DOT innovated in the Mark Wouters game is, when we aren't on, we have something left. We are tearing it down. We are keeping it and we can repurpose it into some other type of use. So, it's an investment that reaps benefits beyond the life of the construction project itself. So what are those opportunities? You know, with a capped BQE, BIG, the Mark Baker scheme, we can rethink Atlantic Avenue and do something very different there that is more humane and more urban. We can unify Van Voorhees Park and really solve for some problems that the traffic infrastructure creates there. And we can get through Brooklyn Bridge Park, as discussed and we can really rethink the Columbia Heights Bridge entrances to the Brooklyn Bridge Park and really focus on a safer operation on the BQE itself. It lets us have direct connections to the bridge s for that movement that needs to go into and out of Manhattan and it will remove some surface traffic from local streets and it gives us opportunities for public radio and improvements for [inaudible 00:49:13] along Parks Avenue. And it would look something like this. A tunnel in a box. A roadway in a box. So the roadway would get built. A box would be built around it and

we you would basically roll Brooklyn Bridge Park up the triple cantilever connecting Brooklyn Bridge Heights to the park itself with new public space with very little awareness of what is happening below grade and opportunities to put the utilities all in one place for easier access and maintain. The transformed BQE looks at a shorter connection between the traffic that is come off the Gowanus and that's traveling through Cobble Hill and gets us over to the Cay Bridge in a much more direct and efficient way near the Brooklyn Navy Yards. This, like I said, eliminates the need for a five mile stretch of highway and give us a three mile tunnel. And tunneling technologies today allows us to make that tunnel a fairly unknown presence in the local area. So, it's a bypass route. It's a more efficient route for get trucks and traffic out to Queens and Long Island. It lets us transform things across the corridor and we can think about doing something else with the triple cantilever and doing something else in the corridor all along the former route of the BQE. It lets us address the safety improvements at the Columbia Heights Bridge. It lets us get direct connections all across the corridor. And it lets us

think about what else we might do to reconnect communities that have been divided for decades by a piece of highway infrastructure that has reached the end of its size. This proposal would give us 15 acres of opportunity in downtown Brooklyn. It would give us opportunities for additional public space and Cobble Hill. It would have additional opportunities for public space along the Park Avenue corridor. And imagine Brooklyn that no longer has an elevated highway running through it.

[applause]

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quiet.

TRENT LETHCO: So, if we went with the BHA Mark Wouters scheme, it does a lot to help us achieve the performance outcomes by the DOT innovated scheme. We will need to go work with the park to make this work for the park, as we would with the BIG scheme, but it lets us refurbish the Brooklyn Heights Promenade. It lets us address safety on the BQE in the construction stage. It also lets us get the better design for the end state. We can improve ramp connections to the branches and it allows us to think about a piece of legacy infrastructure that is not just away, but it is a park in an open space. These

are investments. They're not costs, in my opinion. We have costs every day when we ask people to live along this highway and when we ask people to drive along this highway. Costs that are unaccounted for. By rebuilding the highway, we are addressing safety concerns of the highway itself. But if we rebuild the highway differently, we can invest in other things in our community. We can invest in a new park with a new open space. We can have a better operational experience for people who is still need to use the facility. We can invest in a tunnel that would allow us to create new community experiences all along the corridor or we can invest in a different way of building the BQE that allows us to have public around the end of the process. And I think when we think about the costs of 450,000 people living along a highway day in and day out, the blading affects elevated structures have on the communities around the, I think the costs and benefits my just stack up, but I can't tell you that because this level of investigation and this level of study has not been undertaken. And I think that is our message. We need to evaluate these things further. The lifecycle for most of these proposals

is six to eight years. The tunnel proposal is seven to 10 years. Weighed against its hundred year lifecycle for whatever we build, that seems like a timeframe we can live with, provided the maintenance and temporary fixes will allow us to have the design process that we need. And if we were to do that, can we follow a different approach? Can we be different in how we approach our major projects? Can we have a governance approach that allows the city and the state to work together in partnership to solve the issues in the corridor and will they do that with a shared vision that's not just agency-driven, that's not just elected official-driven, but that is driven by the communities along it and the people who use it. How do we get to a shared vision that then builds the momentum to keep this altogether. And that would come through genuine community engagement throughout the process and, frankly, good design and a good design can do a lot to help overcome a lot of barriers. So, sophisticated physical planning and also sophisticated engineering. And also thinking about new funding approaches. I think everyone involved doesn't want to stop progress. We want to move this project forward. We don't want to be back

in this room in two years time and we want to move the project forward in a better way. Governance and delivery models are developed all the time in our region and around the country to solve infrastructure problems. The Gateway project has been created to help overcome the state line that exists between New York and New Jersey. The Alaskan Way viaduct, which is now been torn down, had a multiagency governance model overseeing its development. The trans-Bay transit Center, which generated 7 billion dollars in development in downtown San Francisco. Again, multi agency. Local, regional, state. And the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge also deployed a special purpose vehicle, a governance model to get that bridge built in the rapid about of time it was constructed in. And official public authority is the right vehicle to do this, and to overcome all the differences in the corridor and to help bring this all together and unite us behind one vision, we must be engaged to pass legislation that was ever to happen. And we need a vision that we all subscribe to. Time and again, when communities have a strong vision grounded in ambition, that vision comes to fruition. And we have a choice today we can make. We can continue

along the path that we were on and end up where we were expecting to be or we can think a little bad about what type of hybrid approach we might want to consider where we can think about going in an aspirational direction that really sets forth the vision commensurate with the opportunity of rebuilding our infrastructure for the next 100 years and commensurate with the challenges we face when we think about the future. And if we did that, what could we think of? Connecting communities through public realm enhancements, not just in Brooklyn Heights, but all across the corridor. Maybe we need a regional freight strategy that solves some of the demands for freight movements in the corridor and maybe we need to reduce demands through travel demand management, transit service provision, different types of policy regimes that help us change our behavior. Change our behavior to do what we all say that we want to do with respect to addressing the climate challenge before us. How does this then trickle down to the Gowanus and what happens there? How does this trickle up north to what happens in Queens? And how can we think about the relationship with the Hugh Carey tunnel and how can we connect Red

Hook better to Sunset Park and the rest of the city? These are all questions we could ask and, if we did ask, we might have a different project. And I know, you know I'm a New Yorker, too, so the cynicism helps and inevitably creeps in. You know, can this actually be done? But I also ask myself why must we accept this? Why is this something that we consider appropriate for our city? Why can't we aim for something more like is that is consistent with people living, working, and thriving in urban environments free from the burden of cars that are imposed upon us through a highway building the era that was done at a time with little consideration for the communities that host to those highways? This is one of those times when you don't want to be the first adapter or the person that is never done it before. We are in good company. We've done it ourselves. We've done it on the west side and I think most of us, when we go down the west side today, would recognize a vibrant bicycle and pedestrian trail, new development all along this corridor and would see it as a really successful example of harmonious design balancing the need of different user groups. In San Francisco, the link to Golden Gate Bridge was considered too

important to disconnect, but we recognize that, if we designed the parkway and not in interstate, we can create an opportunity to build a park. And I'm happy to say the park is now funding and moving in the construction. So the impact of that highway is minimized on the only urban national park and our country. In Seattle, they can do it, too. They had this viaduct for decades. The viaduct was listing for years and, as it listed, people debates what should we do? It was going to be a tunnel. It was going to be replaced. It was going to be a tunnel. And now it's a tunnel and Seattle is reconnected to its waterfront and there are opportunities for growth, development, and new kinds of mobility today. Everyone throws up the big dig-- throws it up as a problem and a warning that we might find ourselves in the same boat. We would say that we have learned lots of lessons, not just from the big dig, but urban time following projects for real and for roads all across the world. And I think the transformative impact of the big dig today is without question and the lessons learned from the big dig of 20 years ago can be applied today so some of the mistakes of the past can be avoided. And even when we're thinking

about not doing anything to our highway, if we prioritize public realm, we can give our cities back to our people and still keep our cities functioning and meet the needs of the highway networks that exist within them and help us travel through them. To get there, though, to decide whatever we might do in the future, we really think it's important to think about the governance strategy. We really think it's important that a vision be articulated for the corridor. We really believe that the community has valuable things to say all across the corridor and those contributions will make for a better project. In that sophisticated planning, engineering, and design can overcome a lot of the challenges that we face. And then, that all comes to a head with finding new funding sources to help pay for the things that we would like to see so that when we replace the triple cantilever in some form, we have positioned the local neighborhood, the boroughs of New York and Queens, the city of New York, and, frankly, our region, for 21st century future that is more about public space, people, sustainable mobility, that also addresses our climate change challenge. And so, with that, that is the summary of

our work and I can turn it over to questions. But you.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Trent. I really appreciate it. I want to give you a round of applause all the--

TRENT LETHCO: Thanks.

[applause]

SPEAKER JOHNSON: work that you've done on this.

[applause]

SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, I'm going have just a couple questions because I know there are other members here and I want to hear from [inaudible 01:01:10] next and then Polly Trottenburg and there's a host of folks that we want to hear from. So we're going to not be here all day asking you questions. I want to hear from a lot of the stakeholders who have been involved in this process. I want to start off with something which may sound like something you may have already addressed, but I want you to game it out a little bit more. No one likes having a highway in their backyard or their front yard. Why can't we just tear it down? If you could just help me game out what those impacts would be.

TRENT LETHCO: I mean, if I could, I'd tell you to get rid of it. You know, it doesn't belong in the city on sort of a first principles basis, but the reality is we have to recognize this is one of the busiest highway links in the state of New York. I mean, it was a significant amount of traffic and, absent some very heavy handed policy measures, we will still have to deal with that traffic. And we have a term in transportation planning like traffic will find its way, but when you look at the network that would be left behind if the BQE weren't there, the traffic will find its way through the neighborhood's that would probably find that intolerable. It would introduce a lot of safety risks on our local streets because now we will have more vehicles, more large vehicles operating on them and we are replacing one problem and probably replacing it with a myriad of other problems on our local streets and roads with all of that movement of vehicles through the communities. We can't wish a way that traffic. We also can't wish away the fact that home deliveries of parcels, packages, and things have tripled and we show no sign of wanting to shop less on Amazon, which means more and more-- and

other online sellers, let's be fair. Sorry for that. So that we will continue to see truck traffic growing. And I think when we go to the grocery store, we want the things we want to buy for dinner, we want our paper products. When we go to the store to buy our computer or we go to again the various things we want, we need-- we expect to have them. And those things come to us on trucks. And so, we need to understand that these activities, while I am sure everyone would like to see New York to be the utopia of sustainable mobility, and I think we are moving in that direction for sure, this moment in time, we have to understand that that traffic will still be present and we will need to serve it in some other way.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: How do we reckon our city's sustainability goals and need for climate adaptation with rebuilding a highway?

TRENT LETHCO: Well, it cuts both ways a little bit, that question. Because I think, on the one hand, if you have an efficient highway operation, then your highway is less environmentally problematic than if you have stop and go traffic and a lot of problems on the highway. At this moment in time, our

city, through congest-- well, our region through congestion charging, can bring down the level of traffic. We can think about travel demand management strategies to, again, bring down the level of traffic. We can think about new transit services and new links in the corridor to, again, bring down the level of traffic. So, I think the question about climate change, as it relates to the missions, comes through the management of demand so that there is less of it. And there are a number of ways we can do that. DOT has a number of policy documents about how to reduce truck activity, how to reduce auto use. And so, going bigger on transit expansion, going bigger on bicycle expansion, helps us make things more sustainable. And, at the same time, it allows us to recognize that we aren't giving up our cars tomorrow. We are giving up our cars in five years from now, for those of us who own them. So we have to have this careful balance between doing things that we believe are the right things to do, doing things that are practical and feasible in the moment, and slowly moving towards the future where those things aren't necessary. And so, you look at the adaptable, changeable evolution of infrastructure

over time. And I think, if you look at how the highways were built in New York, we just decided we were going to do it and we did it. And I think about was probably an irresponsible way due to major infrastructure investment. So I think we can decide to do things thoughtfully and carefully and get better outcomes if we think about the multiple different things that need to be considered before we rebuild something or rebuild something in a different manner.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: In the recommendations that you presented, you say that a bypass tunnel, which has been studied in the past by DOT, deserves further consideration as a viable alternative. You walked us through that. But tunnel projects in New York City the, such as the second Avenue subway expansion, the seven line extension, Eastside access, have all been famously over time and way over budget and there is a good and healthy amount of skepticism and hours city and state's ability to build complicated infrastructure projects. How can this project be different?

TRENT LETHCO: I think that skepticism is well-placed and warranted a man understand them

fall. I think the tunneling technology, with each year, evolves and changes and is much more sophisticated today than even a few years ago. I think the first thing we have to keep in mind, this is a road with a project more than a trans-- it's not a transit project. It's a straight shot and so we can build this tunnel and we are building stations. We are doing a lot of things that we would to with a subway line. And we also aren't so close to the surface. So there are ways that allow was to build the tunnel and are more straightforward and predictable way. Tunnel boring machine or the equipment that build Dave's tunnels over time, they have allowed us to build them faster. They have allowed us to build them more predictably. And so, we can look at that technology and understand how it can help us build tunnels and give people confidence that that can happen. But what I would say lastly, if we wanted to-- And, again, this is aware some humility in New York would be well placed, we can learn from what other people have done in the world. You know, New York has, once again, allowed us to do design build. That's a great way to build projects according the schedule and according to budget. We

can look at what other cities have done in Hong Kong and lends in and Barcelona and apply those lessons learned here, but we would need to understand those lessons and apply them. And then, that would have a reverberation well beyond this project because I think this is a topic we have struggled with for years. Like how do we bring our costs down and still build high quality infrastructure? And so, I think that is how we can do it and I just wanted to check and see if our tunneling experts sitting behind me--

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Sure.

TRENT LETHCO: wants to chime in on this.

UNIDENTIFIED: Sure. Just like Trent said, I'd reinforce, I think, the delays in Second Avenue, seven line, Eastside access are largely around the stations, the systems engineering, and all of the kind of structural out fittings of those. Having a boring machine for a one pass lining from point A to point B, you know, successfully just done in Seattle, which is, I think, a very relevant benchmark for this. When you take the stations out of the equation, it simplifies things greatly. Thanks.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Last couple questions.

So, on the BIG Mark Baker proposal, there's been a lot of excitement for that proposal, but it's also been dismissed as being too complicated. From Arup's perspective, what makes this planned feasible and not substantially more expensive than the DOT plan?

TRENT LETHCO: It is a complicated pro-- All these projects are complicated. They have different complexities. So, the BIG Mark Baker scheme, we have to think about MTA fan plans. We have to think about different parks support buildings that are spread along the corridor, but we've looked at that. We walked the corridor and believe think they are all engineering solution-- engineering solutions exist and they can all be solved for. And we think that sometimes complex results in people ruling now something because the complexity is present. But with engineering thinking, all of those existing pieces of infrastructure can be overcome and we know there are differences of opinions. Some people say that they are all malleable and movable another people say they don't. And I think the way you get to the center for that is to sit down and design things out and confirmed that they do work and

that they do work in a compatible way for the project. I think one of the things to keep in mind with the BIG scheme, we're not building something that we are going to tear down. Every dollar we are spending on the project is invested in the project itself. And so, money that might have been spent on an elevated structure that is temporary is money that we would be spending on moving things around and getting the space we need to build the BQE scheme. Did you want to add anything, Lana, or--?

LANA: Sure. Trent, just to again reinforce what we've talked about previously, the lifecycle costs of putting vehicles on the road are strongly the favor-- you know, the durability and the longevity, the flexibility that option allows you are-- make that option feasible. It's just the key is to unlock the extra land required through the correct governance, you know, to allow this to happen. Then that becomes the national engineering solution, really.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Do you think that the kind of approach that's discussed and contemplated in this plan could serve as a model for other stretches

of the BQE that are also going to need repair in the future outside of the stretch?

TRENT LETHCO: I think that's exactly right. And I think if we can take this moment to find a new model, it will reap huge dividends for New York City. If every infrastructure project would find in a more multi variant way, was designed in partnership with community, and was transparent in both its aims and its outcomes, I think I'll learn of the chair and that we experience because people are surprised by something, people don't understand something. A lot of that can fade to the background. And as all of our agencies work together on problem definition, we will ask ourselves the right questions to solve those problems. So, if we work together and if we think holistically and if we work in partnership with our communities, I think that would be a positive outcome for both this location and this project, but it then could be a template for how to do projects across the corridor and other parts of the city.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. I want to give it to the Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Speaker. First of all, thank you for your contribution in this process. How much do you listen to the community as part of putting together these recommendations?

TRENT LETHCO: So we had a series of meetings with the community is to hear-- first hear from them and understand what their concerns were and then share preliminary-- Well, share preliminary findings, and discuss evaluation criteria. And I think that-- I don't want to speak for the community groups, but I think we had a fairly robust dialogue with how things were going throughout the process. And then, I would also say that Council staff were very good-- when we worked with the community because we didn't want to, you know, it takes too much of people's time, you know, represent in the community voice and helping us understand what we needed to think about to make sure that, as we moved through this analytical process, we stayed true to the concerns that were in the community that they had express directly the Counsel, but also one of the nice things about the BIG scheme is that it also had a lot of community engagement and a lot of community involvement.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And, as you know, you need a project, it is more easier to-- for many reasons to include and get a participation of the middle-class and upper-class. How much of the participation was to include working class, especially Latino members of the community that have been displaced, especially with the whole gentrification of Brooklyn?

TRENT LETHCO: Uh-hm. The conversation that I think needs to be a part of the process. That's a conversation that I would say is probably something that is in the next stage of the discussions that, if we were to move forward, would need to happen. And neither end of-- Not just either end of the triple cantilever, but all across the corridor. Because, as you saw and that corridor map, we have communities all throughout the corridor who are affected by the need to have a voice and how that letter is rethought.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. I just want for-- You know, and this is something that I know-- I know that the Speaker is committed also to leading the hard period to bringing diverse voices. Then, when I look at the room and [inaudible 01:15:15] like

no diversity here. For me, it's a challenge. And I know that if we are white progressive, we also [inaudible 01:15:15] have much more-- how hard do we need to work to be sure that the city of New York that today is 29 percent Latino, 27 percent African-American, 15 percent Asian, when it came to designing the big project for the future, what we should learn from [inaudible 01:15:44] not only about doing a big project. It about, you know, protecting our city. It's learning from Sandy, Maria, Katrina snow storm. Like what is that, too, that we are putting in place so that the future generation will be able to pay safe? So, when you look at-- And I know that this is important for you. When you look at the suggestions, which is the leading city in the world that we think we should be looking at as a role model?

TRENT LETHCO: In terms of engagement and bringing in those that haven't--

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [inaudible 01:16:18]

TRENT LETHCO: normally been in the process--

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: engagement in the project?

TRENT LETHCO: and outcomes.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Uh-hm.

TRENT LETHCO: So, I would point to Los Angeles. I think Los Angeles has learned the hard way about how to, with a thoughtful community-based process, bringing other people in. It was born from some fairly unfair decisions made by both the city and the transit operator at various moments in time. And it resulted in court orders stopping rail expansion projects, forcing reinvestment in buses. But if you were to go to LA today, versus LA in the late 1990s or early 2000's, what you will see is a city that is very committed to hearing from those boys says, integrating those voices in the process, and also making sure that what those voices need and want are actually reflected in the outcomes from the plan. And I think that there are projects in New York that have that, too. I think if you were to look at the Woodhaven corridor, a bus traffic transit project built by a city DOT, you will find that the beneficiaries of that project, a lot of them come from the communities that we are talking about. And

a lot of effort was made to engage with community is in that corridor that benefited from that PRT system. And so I had saying, you know, we need to do that, but, as a city's scale with policies systems and programs in place, you age, Los Angeles has really pushed very hard to make social justice a part of the planning process from the outset. Which means not just different consultations. It means different ways of arrangement. Different people of engagement. Different organizations to bring in the process.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. So my last question-- I know that there are many other questions and also many-- many other members of the public that are ready to testify. It's about how you think we can start the process of rethinking not only that BQE, the highway in New York City, especially when we many places in the city that are so congested. Let's say in the [inaudible 01:18:23] congested in the nation, all the places in the South Bronx and Brooklyn and other places, how do you think that the BQE can be a role model as we as a city should be rethinking our highway?

TRENT LETHCO: I think it starts with the question we want to rethink our highways. How do

we do that? And I think we go through a thoughtful planning process to understand what we are trying to accomplish. If we want to rethink our highways, where are we trying to go with that rethink? So I think some type of either network plan or a master planned looking at the highway system, understanding and wanted it does and does not do for us so we don't make an informed choices, and then moving through a thoughtful vision and goal setting process that then drives us to analysis to decide which ones stay, which ones go. What are their impacts? Like suffers from them? How do we mitigate the impacts on the how do we move from a lot of unknown to knowns. And I think that New York City, the Department of Transportation has a huge body of information about where we are moving and who is on those facilities use and how are they working? And so, we can use that data and use that information to test out alternatives and to figure out which ones are mission-critical, which ones can be reconfigured. Then I went to it all through some model of planning process to say we are rethinking our highway network. We wanted to be different. What should it look like? And undertake that process so that you can actually

have a data driven values based decision making process about what stays and what goes. Because leaving things as they are doesn't mean that that is a good thing. It doesn't mean it's a bad thing, either. But not doing something carries costs just as doing something carries costs. So, if we understand what costs are imposed on our communities through the planning process, we can then decide what investments we want to make to either change that landscape, change the paradigms, and get to a different outcome for our transportation system.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Council member Levin followed by Council member Diaz.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Council member Diaz is next. Council member Levin is not here.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Sorry. Council member Diaz?

COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Mr. Chairman. Sir, are you aware that similar project was present or was proposed in 1996 and it was rejected because it was impossible to vent without removing whole city blocks. Are you aware of that?

TRENT LETHCO: So, tunnel ventilation-- Let me back up here. Tunnel ventilation has changed dramatically over the lifetime of tunnel construction and, you know, part of our-- We weren't real excited about that tunnel either at first, believe me. But when you start looking at how tunnels are built, how they are ventilated, one emergency evacuation procedures you need to think about today, it's a very different animal. And so we can-- a lot of those issues that you are citing are no longer conditions that tunnels need to address. And I'm just going to ask--

COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: If you have to remove city blocks, it will be the upscale of the working area of the poor neighborhoods?

TRENT LETHCO: We aren't remove-- Now, it's not designed, so it's a concept. But what I'm telling you is a tunnel of this type is not requiring the removal of city blocks. We can put a tunnel in and we don't need to deal with that level of disruption.

UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah. So, back, I mean, in the last 20 years, tunnel boring machine technology has really advanced. We can do larger

diameter bores. We can do it under ever-changing ground conditions, through rock, through soil, through interface. All of it is very well controlled by operators and computers, so we are always adjusting the machine parameters to suit the ground. And the real result of all of that is negligible settlement on the surface, negligible damage to any structures that might be above or footings or foundations. There is a high degree of confidence that we can match the right machine to the ground conditions to get that outcome.

COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: And can you tell me why is it that the Ocean Parkway is a state highway and the BQE is a city street? By city street, I mean the city has to maintain it. And they're both 1.5 miles.

TRENT LETHCO: Well, the BQE is an interesting facility because it is owned by the city and it is owned by the state. It depends on where you are in the corridor. So, there's different ownership based on different segments based on the condition of the segment and its design. So, we would need to-- And that's why this real governance model would be so important. As we would need to

work at the city level and at the state level on a project of this type because of the mixture of ownership that exists on the corridor.

COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: No. Yeah. What I'm trying to say-- And this is the last that I want to say. What I'm trying to say or I am trying to understand is Ocean Parkway and the BQE, they both are 1.5 miles, as I said before, long. And the Ocean Parkway is a state highway, but the BQE looks more like a state highway than the ocean Parkway.

TRENT LETHCO: I see.

COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: So why doesn't the state take care of these and instead of the city?

TRENT LETHCO: Well, I think Speaker Johnson got to love earlier when he was talking about DOT state. DOT, at one point in time, was working on this project to try to figure out a solution and then ceded that function to city DOT. At some point, city DOT and state DOT will need to work together on whatever solution gets put forward.

COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council member Levin followed by Council member Menchaca.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I'm sorry about that. Three minutes will not apply to Council member Levin since this also is in his district. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, Chair. So, thank you for the presentation. I want to talk a little bit about governance structure, actually. So you mentioned the gov-- other large projects that have had an authority type governance structure. One of the is the Mario Cuomo bridge. Can you speak a little bit-- Do you know about how out was-- Was that a specific authority that was commissioned just for that or was it a subsidiary of another authority in the state?

TRENT LETHCO: It existed within the Thruway Authority and so a special team was set up and the Thruway Authority to deliver that bridge project. A special procurement process was developed to allow for the Selector of the builder.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

TRENT LETHCO: A lot of was run by Governor Cuomo and the folks in Albany to allow for

an expedited project delivery process. And so, New York State throughway led that process.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-huh.

TRENT LETHCO: They had a very rapid-- I don't want to say the timeframe, but it was extremely short. I can't remember--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yeah.

TRENT LETHCO: now.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

TRENT LETHCO: Procurement process with an alternative way to go through the procurement that forced a lot of people to work together in a very short timeframe to get to the decision to purchase a builder or to hire a builder to then go out and design and build that project.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I also represent Greenpoint and the Kosciuszko Bridge project was a similar timeframe. Do you know what the governance structure was a similar timeframe. Do you know what the governance structure was for that?

TRENT LETHCO: I don't. We don't, but we can get back to you on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Yeah. I mean, that was a-- those were a costly project and, you know, very expansive project.

TRENT LETHCO: Uh-hm.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: It involved a lot of eminent domain.) Different land and Park alienation and staff. So, who is a complicated on its own, so-- and it was done with an, you know, probably a six year timeframe from beginning to end. So, interesting to look at that as an example in the same corridor.

TRENT LETHCO: I think a couple things, since I can speak to the Mario Cuomo branch that were a part of the design build contract and a part of the process, the visual quality panel was established in the contracting documents for the builder that took the design question of how do you design a shared use path? And entrusted to a group of community members and experts to develop that find solution themselves and then they integrated that design with the elders overall project. There was also a creation of a mass transit taskforce that represented elected officials from Rockland and West Chester County, advocacy groups and other stakeholders. It was a 31 member

body and they were given 12 months to come up with a transit solution in the corridor because, at the time, it was commuter rail, it was light rail, it was BRT. It was like, you know-- It was a whole host of things that people wanted and that commission was charged with coming up with the preferred transit solution which is now operating today. The Lower Hudson Transit Link. So there are a couple of different things about that project that the team of people from the governor's office set up so that people could have their voice heard and be a part of the process. And, at the same time, get what they wanted integrated into the project so that it was actually a part of the project as it was first designed and then built.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And you looked at, and I think you made reference to the senior presentation, some infrastructure challenges on a number of the plans. Any plan that would use ground-level roadways for any type of BQE? So, whether that's the BIG plan or, I believe, even the comptrollers plan, there-- Can you speak a little bit about the DAP infrastructure and whether there are engineering ways to address that? They had other

infrastructure, the MTA infrastructure, 360 Furman having an issue around their lobby being, you know, underground under the BIG plan?

TRENT LETHCO: Right. Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED: Right. I mean, the challenges do exist. It's not just the land that is needed. There's infrastructure that needs to be moved. There is the DEP. It can be realigned. The MTA facilities also can be moved. There is a capital expenditure associated with those. If you, once again, just reflect on the at ground solutions and just recognize that putting rehab calls on ground traditionally is cheaper. You look at our nationwide road network, 95 percent of it is road, not bridge. So, that just speaks to the fact that there is a cost relief and putting rehab calls on ground--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

UNIDENTIFIED: and using, you know, a temporary structure 60 feet up in the air that is budgeted for. That could offset some of the capital costs of dealing with moving, you know, things like MTA facilities and DEP pipes. So, there is a balance of challenges, basically, but it requires the correct governance. That's the take away message. Is that

all these agencies, they have to come together and they have to do it and a timeline that is sensitive to the existing structure.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

UNIDENTIFIED: Because it's a lot of coordination and that means to be vetted out, you know, within the timeframe of what we are doing with the existing BQE.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: With regard to the tunnel plan, can you speak a little bit about the infrastructure, the surface infrastructure, that would be needed on a plan like that? So venting, shafts, and the like?

UNIDENTIFIED: So, in terms of vent plants, I mean, at, I think, the length of that we are talking about, we may or may not need an intermediate vent stage, but you've got to think about the approaches to get into it. So, you've got to get the highways, basically, to a stacked configuration. That does take some distance on the approach is both for it actually goes into the-- you know, the official tunnel.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

UNIDENTIFIED: But, once a month tunnel, you know, we would be deep enough that we would avoid any of the existing transit lines. Any of the existing utilities, foundations, piles, things of that nature. So, you know, there would be fans at either end and that, basically, push and pull air through. So--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

UNIDENTIFIED: you've got fresh air being pulled in. You've got multidirectional fans that would suck smoke out if there was a car fire in there. So, there is some piping and ventilation infrastructure the portals that has to be placed. But, you know, but I am large, it's redeveloped green space on top of the alignment.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So, in the existing-- So, for example, at the seven train extension, was there noticeable disruption on street level?

TRENT LETHCO: During construction?

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yeah.

TRENT LETHCO: So, the only thing we had on seven line extension was we had a very short section of ground freezing because there was a buried

Valley of soil and the TBM for seven line was a rock TBM, so it wasn't procured with the ability to, basically, tunnel through the soil. So, that had to be dealt with a different way, which was ground freezing. So, there was a series of pipes that was drilled on the street from the surface to--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And that was to the-- On the kind of approach up?

TRENT LETHCO: Uh-hm. But, no. Otherwise, by and large, there was minimal disruptions. Everything was underground. There were two shafts, I believe--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

TRENT LETHCO: at the site.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And now, just there's been-- And this will be my last question. There's been a critique just over the last 24 hours since the plan has come out about this being, you know, car centric and I'm really missing the opportunity to really move away in a definitive way from cars into other modes of transportation. And I know you spoke about this. I don't know if you could, maybe, delve in a little bit more on the issue of freight conveyance and whether there's-- like

what are the other alternatives? You mentioned, you know, this being a delivery route thorough-- from Port Elizabeth to Queens and to Long Island. You know, are there alternative routes? I don't know if you spoke about the Belt Parkway option, but I don't believe that trucks are allowed on the Belt Parkway. And kind are those considerations look like in the big picture?

TRENT LETHCO: Well, I think if you want to take this in a whole approach, we really should be challenging do we want 150,000 vehicles a day running through New York? That's a fair question, I think, for us to ask. Right now, you can't ask that question and answer it because you can't really study it and understand the implications of question-- the answer to the question. So, part of the thinking is, you know, we weren't-- we're not here to do those studies. We were given people's work and people said, of this work, what works? What doesn't work? What do you think is better for the city? And so, we sense what is been done. And I think if you want to look at a tunnel, if you want to look at the big scheme, you really have to do a serious investigation and understand the trade-offs.

And then I think one of the questions, what do we need to about traffic? A lot of the traffic news going across the BQE into Manhattan probably an opportunity to shift, to transit, put on other modes. We can do other things with that. Same with freight. You know, our region is running a lot of freight through New York City, both through Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. Maybe that is the right solution. Maybe it's not. But I think you have to study it so that you can make a decision fully informed. That if we wanted to do freight management, if we wanted a smart truck management plan for the city that had consolidation and fewer vehicles overall, what would that look like? If we had different freight corridors, what would that look like? I think that, to get to the right infrastructure answer, what policy levels will you play? What kinds of other things do you want to do in terms of regulation and behavior change? And then, once you have done all that, maybe you can shrink this down to four lanes. Maybe you can have a different kind of system altogether, but you have to know what it is that you first want and what are the tools to get there? What do those tools mean?

Because, I think, time and again, when we don't know the full implications of what we are doing, we build something and then there are lots of unintended consequences associated with that building. So, I think you really need to have a robust study in a short amount of time. Because, you know, we have time. We can keep that structure up. We can keep it safe. But we don't have time to spin around year on year. I think we need to--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

TRENT LETHCO: focus on a deadline, understand our choices, and then make a decision.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Thank you. Then I will just leave with one last opinion, which is that, you know, I believe that the first order of business is to get a governance structure that is comprehensive and viable. So, you know, my admonition to the mayor and the governor is that it's time to work together and communicate with one another and have your agency communicate with one another and come up with this structure that actually has the authority to do this type of work correctly. If the city's DOT is operating exclusively within their footprint, they are severely limited in what

they can do. So there has to-- And is this day is to do something there without the city, they would find, you know, a myriad of hurdles in their way because this is running through, you know, dozens of neighborhood throughout the corridor. So, I think that it is a really incumbent upon our mayor and our governor to set aside any difference that they may have and work together on a governance structure immediately. I will leave it at that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [inaudible

01:39:09] Council member Menchaca and--

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Hi, there. Welcome. I know I only have three minutes, so I'll just-- going to go rapid fire, if that's okay with you. So, I just want to get a sense of about why you are here and one is you were contracted to come here to talk to us, right? Who hired you?

TRENT LETHCO: You all did.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay. So, who is your client?

TRENT LETHCO: So we work with Raju [sp?] and Sam in the Land Use Committee.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay. Do you have a sense about how long that kind-- when did you first get this contract?

TRENT LETHCO: July? July. And hence, pretty much, nearing--

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: 2019?

TRENT LETHCO: 2019. Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay. And when does this end? The contract end?

TRENT LETHCO: Right about now.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Now. Okay. So, this is your debut. Wonderful. How much was this contract?

UNIDENTIFIED: 245.

TRENT LETHCO: 245.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: 245,000?

TRENT LETHCO: Yep.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay. Thank you. And then, is-- So, is there any way that we can follow up? You know, I was going to try to create questions, but we don't have copies of this presentation. Did you bring copies of this presentation for us? No. There was a slide that talked a little better about community engagement.

Community engagement is really important for me and how we develop plans. Data and analysis is really critical to some of the things that we do here at the City Council. And there was a list of places that I-- again, I don't know what the slide exactly said. You moved through it quickly about where you stopped along the way to kind of create analysis. And city Council was one of them. Did you speak to the members directly about some of the work? Because I think what was really compelling is that you really want us to look at the whole corridor and not just Brooklyn Heights. To really think about how we can make multiple communities part of this discussion. And so, I know you and I have never met.

TRENT LETHCO: Nope.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: So, Redhook and Sunset Park are about 3.5-- four miles of the corridor and so, is there, in your contract, the ability for us to have conversations about this post or do you just kind of disappear from here on out?

TRENT LETHCO: If you would like us to ca-- Well, I would defer to Land Use Committee, but if you would like us to come out and give a presentation, we are happy to do that.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Awesome.

Super thankful for that. Again, back to expansion of the corridor and what the corridor looks like in different parts, the questions that are going to be asked about and the questions that are going to be solved at Brooklyn Heights and the cantilever issues are going to impact on their neighborhoods. And Redhook and Sunset Park, I think, are definitely a part of that discussion. And so, I would love to figure out how we can think about that. A lot of the stuff we are doing at industries city-- there is a big ULRP happening right now and we are thinking a lot about that kind of private and public property use and Sunset Park that relate to maritime use. You mentioned that and that kind of perked my interest. A maritime components to really solve the truck issue. There's my time. Last thing, maritime. Tell me a little bit more about maritime and how that can really connect to the number of trucks that are going through our streets. We will just leave that as a final departure question.

TRENT LETHCO: That's a complicated answer. Are we allowed to answer that with your time or should we [inaudible 01:42:33]--

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Yeah. Please.

Yeah. Last question. Thank you. Thank you.

Thanks.

TRENT LETHCO: So, I think the question of maritime and logistics always comes up in New York. Right? Like why can't we throw a truck, put it on a barge, somewhere else and then have it go on its way. And I think one of the issues with logistics and freight is every time you move that container, you are adding costs and complexity to the process of getting it from one end to the other. Because you are paying to operate the cranes, to get it on the track, and then the track is getting on a boat and the boat is operated by Captain that goes to the other side and has to get off the boat and like there is a whole cascade of costs back, from a truck not using a highway to get where it wants to go. That doesn't mean that that is not a solution. So, there are solutions being explored right now. Like just like we are all big on automated vehicles, there is automated barging that is being explored as a way to really bring down the costs. Question about how to use the water to move freight is really about how do you reduce the number of transfer points for that

container to get to where it needs to go? And it is worth studying and that is why we are saying a regional freight plan is not a bad idea. Because the regional freight plan could add benefit here. And so I think barging always seems like a really good idea. Sometimes it can make sense. Where it becomes challenging is like how do we keep it from adding so much cost in that process that the private industries that use trucks to get things where they need to get them well actually want to use a barging system instead of our roads. ADC has looked at this question. A lot of people are grappling with it to try and find a viable solution. And I can tell you more about some of that whenever the time is appropriate. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Council member Reynoso?

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you. I want to take you up on a meeting, as well. I represent most of the BQE near the Williamsburg area on the south side and also the trench under Rodney and Marcy Avenue. Rodney Street and Marcy Avenue, so we would love to have a conversation. I asked the mayor of the city of New York about four years ago

how much it would cost to deck the BQE on the south side of Williamsburg. We have the least amount of park space. The park space that we do have is on either side of the BQE which was Robert Moses' great idea. So he asked how much it would cost. They estimate they gave us was 1.2 billion for three blocks. Obviously, the mayor didn't do a good job at studying it because your entire project cost 3.6 billion. So, our three blocks one of costs one third of this project and it wouldn't have taken almost any of this work to be done. So I just wanted ask what is the cost of decking over portions of the BQE, I guess, by block is how I would like to do it. But I want to be clear. The decking over some areas south of my district is three times the size of what we're asking for. So I just wanted to get an understanding. How complicated is decking? How complicated is-- and how expensive it is? Because that 1.2 billion dollar price tag was weird. We did a study and our study, which cost 100,000 dollars, did an economic feasibility and it was only 200 million, but the city came back with 1.2 billion. The difference between what you are doing is that you are doing it and a white affluent district and the

one we were doing that was a poor black and brown district. So, of course, the last thing the mayor wants to do is invest in poor black and brown communities at this point. If they are willing to throw out a number like 1.2 billion dollars to persuade us to stay away from decking the BQE. So I just wanted ask you in your study whether or not a 1.2 billion dollar price tag makes sense on the two block or three block stretch.

TRENT LETHCO: Decking as early context specific because there is always this dance between we have a deck and we're using open air for ventilation and we have a deck and we've made a tunnel. So, this is the Saint Louis Park arch master plan that Arup worked with Michael Van Valkenbergh and associates. And the reason that park is the dimension that it is over the highway is because that was as wide as the park could be and not trigger a tunnel and then tunneling requirements associated with it. Clyburn Park in downtown Dallas was built for about 240 million dollars and it decks to blocks of highway. So, depending on where you are, of the width of the facility, and what you are putting on

the deck, like parks versus buildings, parks versus plazas. Like--

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Just parks.

TRENT LETHCO: there-- Yeah. There are a lot of variables that influence how much it costs because the deck structure will respond to what is being put on it. But I think, again, that is where it is really hard to inches, off the top of the head to say, it's 1.2 billion or eight is 200 million. I think you have to understand what's required structurally, what's driven-- not just by what's on top, but what you're connecting to on the side, to get to an actual real number and I think you can get there. 200 million dollars is not outside the realm of possibility for a deck, but a billion dollars could be, too. It depends on the length and the width and what's on it.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: When we meet, I would love to show you--

TRENT LETHCO: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: the BQE in my district. And the last question that I'm going to have is you work with traffic engineers and a long time ago I learned that you take away highways and

people get out of vehicles. It seems like the work that you were doing here wants to figure out a way to move 130,000-- 250,000 vehicles instead of just figure-- through engineers that modify and/or tearing down a highway would just per-- dissuade people from having single occupancy vehicle use. And why not take that into account? The fact that there will be a decrease in vehicle usage should we tear down the highway, for example. Instead of looking to accommodate a, you know, climate change supporter or a contributor?

TRENT LETHCO: That was sent to the question we were asked. We were asked to study alternatives that had been proposed. And I don't think you want me to tell you what the city should be doing relative to the traffic mobility, sustainability. I think we can help advise you on your choices, but I am certainly a question for elected leadership. That is a question for policy people. Reducing highway capacity does reduce overall demand just like building more highway capacity induces more demand. So I think that is the question that comes-- would hopefully come out of a planning process where we, again-- not to keep

saying this, but if we know what we want as a city, then month put some goals and objectives around it. And if what we want as a city is less traffic, then let's figure out how to have a city with less traffic and figure out the design response to that. But I think if we were to start this whole presentation, talking to you about that, I'm not sure anyone would want to hear what we had to say about the seven alternatives by the end of the day-- by the end of that spiel at the beginning. So, I think we are trying to walk a careful line between the assignment, what we know is working in the background and kind of what we know different people are going to about what they have put forward.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you.

Thank you.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: One final question before we move on to [inaudible 01:49:54]. Can you talk a little bit more of the concept, about the concept, of induced demand which we know can produce some really successful results. We've seen success on 14th street with induced demand. Would that work in the same way on the BQE? And if you can explain why or why not it would work or not work on the BQE?

TRENT LETHCO: So, study after study shows that, if you add a lane of traffic, demand fill-- a lane of travel on a highway, traffic fills up to consume the demand provided on that lane. Studies have also shown if you constrict capacity and reduce the amount of throughput of vehicles, the traffic actually goes down. So there's a relationship between these two things have provision or wrote attraction of capacity on a street or a road. I think that the question is how much is one going to do that? You know a lane added, a lane subtracted is a very different question from removing all link in the system. And so, I think that the question of four lanes, is that a workable alternative? I have a hunch that probably would work fairly well. We would be living with more congestion throughout the day, but is that the worst thing that the city has to contend with? Maybe. Maybe not. So I think we can think about what is the right to mention and then deploy that. I think removing the link altogether ignores the reality that people need to get somewhere. They need to get from here and they need to get from here. And that trip, congested or not, will need to happen. And if we are creating

undue hardship for people traveling on that journey, who are those people? How are they suffering or how are they going to respond to a different network that no longer meets their needs? So I think the theories are there. They can be applied. But I think, again, it's hard to say in an abstract. No, I can tell you less well bring less and more well bring more. But in the BQE corridor, what that means numerically requires study. And I also think you have to remember what's on the corridor. It's not just Manhattan-bound traffic. It's not just traffic between Brooklyn and Queens. It's traffic between Long Island and New Jersey and, you know, we might want to find different way to accommodate it, but that traffic still needs to move through the corridor somewhere.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you all very, very much.

TRENT LETHCO: Yeah.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. I want to call up Carlo Scissura, who chaired the Mayor's expert panel who looked at this question. And I want to thank him. He has some folks with him. I also know that another member of that panel is with us

today. Hank Utman is in the audience. I want to thank Hank for his service on that panel, as well.

[inaudible 01:52:45]

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Do you want to go up together? That's fine. Yeah. Great.

[background comments]

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Are you okay with that? Yeah. Great. So we're also going to have Commissioner Trottenberg and her team. I want to start off-- do you have testimony, Carlo?

CARLO SCISSURA: I have a PowerPoint.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Make sure your mic is on.

CARLO SCISSURA: I have a PowerPoint based on--

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Oh, great.

CARLO SCISSURA: our report--

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Fabulous.

CARLO SCISSURA: that we had sent out to everyone.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Awesome. So, before Carlo walks us through it, I really want to say thank you because you have done a wonderful job in taking this on and you've spent many, many, many months.

And I know you have a very busy job leading the Building Congress here in New York City, but you are a lifelong Brooklynite who has served in Borough Hall and now is serving the entire city. And I think the recommendations that you came out with were really thoughtful. You put a lot of time into it. I was saying at the press conference that we had earlier this morning, that we are really grateful for your leadership and for the team you put together, as well as the other commission members who spent an enormous amount of time doing something similar to what Arup did, which was going through, evaluating, making recommendations. And my hope was that, with the great work that you've done, with the great work that Arup has done, independently from each other, we can see where there was agreement. We can see where there was agreement. We can see where there are other cases for further study. We can see where there's consensus on what needs to be done. So I want to say thank you for your service that you have provided to the city for many years, but specifically on this, the leadership that you have shown. And I also want to thank Commissioner Trottenberg who we have worked with so often on so many issues and is a

great leader when it comes to transportation here in New York City. I appreciate you both being here. I wanted turn it over to Carlo--

CARLO SCISSURA: Thank you.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: and then, after he brings us through, we're probably going to have-- Polly, do you have testimony, as well? So we will go from Carlo, then we will go over to Polly.

CARLO SCISSURA: Great. Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: What? Oh, we're going to swear them in. Yes. The counsel is going to swear you both in.

CARLO SCISSURA: Okay.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Please raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee and to respond honestly to Council member questions?

CARLOS SCISSURA: Yes. I do. Thank you, Speaker Johnson. Thank you for your leadership throughout the city, but really specifically for getting involved in this issue. It's not an easy one, as I think we have learned throughout the many

different entities that took this on from the commissioner and her team at DOT, to this panel, and now to the Consultant at the city Council has brought on. So, Speaker Johnson, thank you. Chairman Rodriguez, thank you for your leadership. 10 the members of the Counsel here, thank you. Particularly my friends from Brooklyn. It's always a pleasure to see the Brooklyn folks here and as well as our friend from Queens. But Hank Utman, it was mentioned that he was on the panel. He is here, as well. And I do want to acknowledge Ben Protski [sp?] from AIA, who is here, as well. It is interesting, Speaker Johnson. You mentioned to the consensus and the agreement and, I think, listening to the presentation that we just heard from, many of the things that we talked about in our report and called for were part of this consensus. And I think the most critical thing-- and I repeat, the most critical thing. And there are two of them and I will walk through them in a minute. Number one is that the community needs to be not just a part of the discussion or to be at a meeting, but the community has to be part of writing and planning whenever Reed develops along this corridor. And I think that is fundamental. The

second piece is the word corridor. And I want to be clear that, when we reference the word corridor in our report, the corridor is the Verrazano Bridge all through cleans, into the Bronx. That is the corridor. The corridor is not Cobble Hill, Brooklyn Heights, Dumbo. And I think-- I applaud the community groups from those three neighborhoods for coming together and understanding that the corridor is not just those three groups, but it really has to be a stretch. And I think when you hear the tunnels and anything that happens, a tunnel can't start on Atlantic Avenue and ended in Dumbo. You would have to have so much on either side to feed and in the tunnel and the only way to do that, in my humble opinion, is to be fair and equitable to the communities. And, Mr. Chairman, you mentioned that. Most of the communities outside of this small corridor are low income and communities of color and who are suffered enough in terms of economic injustice. So it is important that we look at this corridor fully. So, with that, just a quick overview on the panel, Mayor De Blasio signed an executive order back in April 2019. It was truly an independent panel of experts. We met for about eight

months. We worked very closely with the DOT Commissioner and her team and I think we realized, Commissioner, that your work was much more difficult, complicated, and critical than we even thought it was. So I really want to thank you and your team for really pulling this together. It's a very critical thing. We looked at many things. Engineering feasibilities, urban design, transportation planning. We really focused on talking to the community. To the groups, to individuals. Learning what they thought was important. And then we talked to the MTA and the port authority and DEP and transit and entities that are critical in terms of understanding what can be built and what are the hurdles. I can tell you, honestly, that, when I took this on, I thought that in two or three months, we were going to come up with a beautiful picture of something that was going to look great and be good for this mile and a half triple cantilever. And then, in doing our work, we realized that that wide continues some of the injustices that have been happening across this corridor and I think we understood that, while our role was to look at the triple cantilever, recommendations could not look just at the triple

cantilever. So, what did we do? The first thing I think we did was we looked at the DOT plan that was on the table. And, again, thank you to the Commissioner and her team. We clearly understood that build the main temporary highway at the Brooklyn Heights Promenade would not have been. We did not support that. But equally important was building a temporary highway at Brooklyn Bridge Park, which we did not support and did not want. We also kind of started thinking about-- and I know we heard this earlier, do we really have to carry 150,000 vehicles a day? We actually don't think you do. We believe that you can cut traffic, cut demand, and allow for a better roadway. I think we also said that the original plan did not adequately consider traffic management and, although not part of our original thought process, traffic management was critical. And then the data is important and I think one of the things we did midway through our process was asked DOT and outside experts to come back with new data and give us a really better assessment. We looked at all of the alternative plans. Obviously, not the one you just heard of because our report came out before this one. And they were innovative and they were

exciting. You know, look, I've been one who has been calling for a tunnel to replace the Gowanus Expressway since, Councilman, when you worked with me at Borough Hall. So, they are all innovative. They are all exciting, but we have to be also realistic about the current condition of the road today. And given fiscal realities, given budgets, given the fact that the triple cantilever does not have until 2026 or beyond left in it, it is important that we took this on in a different approach which was what can we do right now? How can we solve that and what can we aspire to? And, again, I repeat that to allocate billions of dollars for a mile and a half only and one neighborhood would truly be, in my humble opinion and the panel's opinion a disservice to the rest of the communities. So, median needs deterioration. The presence of overweight trucks, which was a function of the limited monitoring and enforcement, coupled with the deterioration of the triple cantilever. We believe that it will be unsafe and unable to carry this weight within five years. We collected new data between October and January. The data confirmed what we thought and it is clear that the tools and the assessment we did for this

cantilever are unique because not all roads and bridges in New York look like this. So, I want to stress the tools we used and the methods we used were focused on a triple cantilever. And I think that was important. So, some of our recommendations. And I'm going to brief because I think it is important that the community be heard today. The first thing is we have to address the current cantilever. We have to do something now. And if we don't, something serious is going to happen. We may have to have even more critical closures in the future. So, recommendation was immediately conduct DOT, all necessary maintenance and repair work. And that was critical. It is important that we keep this a roadway safe so that we don't have any unneeded tragedies. The other thing is to immediately enforce existing restrictions on overweight trucks and, I think the NYPD is doing an incredible job on that. Thank you for all your work. Heavy trucks that don't belong there should not be driving there. It's that simple. Installing automated weight sensors linked to police enforcement. You know, I think one of the things that is critical is the trucking community talks to each other, so once people start getting fines and

they hear about it and the grapevine starts to talk, you will see you less illegal trucks on this corridor. The other thing that was a little out-of-the-box and even I in the beginning was not convinced, but became convinced was that we should make this road a two lane highway. Before we even think about tunnels and bank projects, let's reduce three lanes in each direction to two lanes. It is not a good three lane highway as it is. It does not meet standards. It's tight. I mean, I can go on. So, we believe a two lane highway in each direction is much better. The other recommendation is a simple transportation management plan. Let's look at the changes in traffic, and local traffic, and regional travel, and let's make sure that we are ahead of it. Demand management. We believe zero or-- zero to low growth future, activity on this roadway is possible. It is very possible. Pricing strategies, diversion strategies, transit strategies. Very important. I know there is a lot of talk yesterday and today about congestion pricing. It is still going to happen eventually. So, that will lower the amount of cars and trucks. Split tolling on the Verrazano Bridge is probably one of the most critical things that we have

done. It will all the men they tend to 15 percent of trucks from coming over the Verrazano Bridge to toll shop. That is a big deal. That will not just help the triple cantilever, but Carlos and Antonio, it will help both of your districts to have less trucks going through them that shouldn't be there anyway. Who are only going through there because they were paying cheaper tolls. That is important. We've looked at everything from, possibly, closing ramps to and from the Brooklyn Bridge. We have looked at diversion to and management of the Brooklyn battery Tunnel. Someone asked a question earlier about the belt Parkway. It may be time that we look at permitting small trucks, local deliveries on the Belt Parkway. Alternatives for freight. Councilman Menchaca, I know that it's been something you have been working on. It is critical that we look at freight alternatives because that will help this corridor. Diverting some BQE traffic on to the Williamsburg Bridge and also local streets, very important. Do we need a better job connecting the Manhattan Bridge to the BQE so that you don't have Dumbo's streets clogged every day, particularly with Brooklyn Bridge Park now being so popular. So, all

of these things are improvement. Important. And then I think transit strategies. And we're not talking about building new subway lines, but there are things that we can do today to get cars and trucks off the road. We can create new ferry service from Staten Island, not just to Manhattan, but to Brooklyn. We must have services from Staten Island to Sunset Park in downtown Brooklyn. That would eliminate hundreds and hundreds of cars from the road every day. You know, we built a city thinking everybody from four boroughs had to be in Midtown or downtown Manhattan. We don't live that way anymore. So, fairies throughout the boroughs. Why are express buses just meant to get people from the four boroughs into Manhattan? That's an old concept that doesn't exist. This can be done immediately. Express bus service from Staten Island to Brooklyn and Queens. That can be done quickly. That would get people out of their cars. And expand express bus service to Manhattan. So, very important. The final thing, I think, that I want to make note of and it's more complicated. It's more challenging, but this is the moment where we can get it done. We said months ago, months ago, that a governance structure was needed.

Without a governance structure, we can have hearings, we cannot have meetings, we can have presentations. You know, we can all get together and talk about it. But unless there is a true entity that has teeth, that has money, and that has actual power to build, nothing will happen. The governance structure must be the state of New York, the city of New York, and the Federal government. The Governor, the Mayor, our elected representatives from Washington must come together. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get this right and we were very clear. We fully reject spending billions of dollars only through a mile and a half on one part of the city. We reject it. And I have to tell you that was a little hard for us to deal with because we were brought in as a panel to come up with an alternative to-- you know, and look at this. And I think if you focus on when you get off the Verrazano Bridge through Bay Ridge, through Sunset Park, through Red Hood, through Cobble Hill, through downtown Brooklyn, through Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn Heights, Dumbo, Fort Green, Bushwick, Williamsburg, Astoria, and all the way up, and you actually say, well, folks, within 10 years the Gowanus Expressway has to be rebuilt. Within 10

years the trench in Cobble Hill and Carroll Gardens has to be rebuilt. We spent billions of dollars on this great bridge. I will always call it the Kosciuszko Bridge. Speaker, they tell me that's not the right way to pronounce that, but, as you said, I am a lifelong Brooklynite. That's what we always called it. But, you know, it's great to have this bridge and many of my members worked on it. We support it. But unless you feed off the bridge into better ways of driving and commuting, it doesn't help. Councilman Reynoso, you've been talking about tacking part of your communities for years. We have to do this altogether. It is crazy to think to do seven or eight infrastructure projects that have to happen-- We're not saying it's aspirational. We're saying those things must happen within 10 years. We would be insane if we didn't do it as one big project. One project, by the way, that would save billions of dollars because you would have construction done in one entity. Engineering and design in one entity. A group of individuals from the state, the city, the sentence. And one way or you would have as simple as construction documents go out for one project. I mean, it sounds crazy, but we

would save money by a rebuilding the BQE. Now, we are not going to do it all at once. We will do it in phases, that if there is one vision, one model, one corridor wide plan that takes you from the Verrazano Bridge through the Kosciuszko Bridge, up to the Bronx and over the Triborough, boy, we have revolutionized the way we look at the city. And when you do that, you don't have to build the highway to carry hundreds of thousands. You reduce traffic. You green it. You open up Sunset Park and Red Hook to the waterfront. You reconnect to the Columbia waterfront to Carroll Gardens and Cobble Hill. You reconnect Brooklyn Heights to the water. And your communities, Councilman Reynoso, imagine if you are able to walk right through that without having the stitch. The aspirations are grand, but the time is now to do it. So I thank you for your leadership.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. I'm sorry to step out. I have a bunch of questions for you, but--

CARLO SCISSURA: Yes, sir.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: before I ask them, I want to let--

CARLO SCISSURA: Yes, please.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Polly testify and then we'll have questions for both of you. Thank you, Commissioner, for being patient. I appreciate it.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: No. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Chairman Rodriguez and members of the Committee, Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner of New York City Department of Transportation. With me today are BQE senior program manager, Tanvi Pandya, and director of government affairs, Zeeshan Ott. We're happy to be here with our colleagues from NYPD on behalf of the de Blasio administration to testify on the future of the BQE together with the Chair of the Mayor's Expert Panel on the BQE, Carlo Scissura. And, I think, and if you just heard, last year, the mayor convened a panel of remarkable experts led by Carlo, tasked with taking a fresh look at this very challenging project. And I want to think Carlo and all the panelists, couple others who are here today, for their many, many months of work. We are really grateful for how much they look and grappled with a lot of the complexities that the city is raised. And I think, you know, this panel had some of the city's best experts and, as you heard Carlo say, realized there was not just an easy

silver bullet, but that this project presents challenges, but also incredible opportunities. We also want to just take a minute to thank Sam Schwartz and his team for their work and advising the panel. Sam was not technically a member, but he brought remarkable analysis and insight and his own historical perspective. I want to thank all so many of the folks who are here today, and the many civic associations, elected officials, stakeholders, neighborhood residents have been really instrumental in making the panel of reality and have volunteered so much of their time and their thoughts on how we could make this project successful. I want to give special recognition to the DOT team who have worked their hearts out on this challenging project. Tanvi, Bob Collier, the rest of our bridges team, Hannah Roth and our amazing legal division. This project does involve a lot of legal work. Zeeshan Ott and our intergovernmental affairs unit. And all these folks will be involved in the project going forward. As you heard from Carlo, the panel really challenged our thinking about the BQE project and the assumptions we made at the city level, and encouraged us to look through a wider lens. And I want to just

point out, to help further the conversation, we did a lot of work with the panel. We have just posted-- I'm going to have Zeeshan hold it up-- over 800 pages of supplemental information from the panel's work. And you can find it on our website. And you heard from Trent. Some of the-- you know, the analysis he would like to see done, some of it is here. And for folks who are interested in this project, please dig in. A lot of good work was done on top of-- I'll have Zeeshan hold it up-- the 1000 pages that are already online. These documents actually go all in-- take a look, folks. If you need to go to sleep one night, there's lots of good stuff here. The documents here go all the way back to when the state started working on this project over two decades ago and includes all the plans. Some of which you have heard about today, Mark Wouter's proposal on behalf of the Brooklyn Heights Association, BIG, the comptroller, RPA. And I think that this vast body of material here from a lot of different sources, I hope it will really have continued utility as we go forward. And I hope everyone will get to look at it. And I'm very glad that our team got to sit down and really help inform

Arup's work and the Council's very thoughtful report. You know, in the coming weeks, we are going to further absorb both the work that Carlo's panel did and Arup's work and talk to our partners at the state and federal level and talk about what next steps are and what coordination is needed between all of us. But I want today to, at least, briefly, address the recommendations from the Mayor's own expert panel. You know, to begin with, the panel recommended, as Carlo made clear, recommended against building a temporary highway either through the Brooklyn Heights Promenade or the Brooklyn Bridge Park. The administration has embraced to that recommendation. The panel also recommended a reduction of the BQE from three lanes in each direction to two, as has the Council. And the city will be looking more closely at how this might be done. Given the intricacies of the existing on ramps, splits, and lack of merge areas, this idea would almost certainly involve looking at changes on portions of the state structure in addition to the city's. And we would need to do a detailed traffic study. There would likely be some environmental analysis involving our state and federal partners. The panel also called for a new

city and state governance structure, as has the Council. Given the strong interest in a broader approach on the BQE, we share both the panels and the Council's view that the project will require a new governance model with significantly broader authority and jurisdiction than New York City alone possesses. A new governance model, as you have heard various people talk about today, could potentially include the creation of some sort of special purpose entity or be included and one that already exists in New York State. Perhaps one that can toll, possibly has enhanced power to acquire land and build, and that brings together relevant agencies at all levels of government, has representation from all the necessary stakeholders, and include structured community involvement. Authorizing such an entity would require legislative action with Albany and we certainly note, with great interest, that the Council's report recommends enacting legislation to accomplish this in 2020. Council leadership on this front would be helpful and we look forward to further discussions and to also working with our state partners in Albany, including Senator Brian Cavanagh and assembly member JoAnn Simon who have both been

terrific in their leadership and support of, I think, all the efforts we are discussing today.

Lastly, the panel called for a series of interim steps to protect the existing structure. While conversations about the bigger future of the BQE continue, DOT will be doing our part to make sure the structure remained safe and there are some immediate actions we will be taking. This spring, we will be performing road repair work, milling and paving the roadway deck, doing some target and repair of deck sections, and replacing the mesh underneath the structure. We will also be performing structural repairs to the retaining wall at Hick Street that we hope will increase its lifespan by about 10 years. And we are addressing the two sections of the cantilever, which the panel's report highlights as showing faster signs of deterioration. We are already starting designs on these repairs and our goal is to start construction and 2021 with completion in 2022. While in term in nature, the work that we are undertaking well, nonetheless, the significant and cause some disruption. We are still in the process of developing our plans for the use interim repair projects, and will keep the public and

stakeholders informed as we proceed. We also have a rigorous inspections program, including new sensors, ground penetrating radar, vibration monitoring, and other sources of information like monthly site walk-throughs that will help us monitor the BQE and provide ongoing information about its condition. And we are in close consultation with state and federal bridge engineering experts about the structures condition and repair plans. DOT in the panel have worked together to collect some new site-specific data particularly regarding overweight trucks. Under federal legal guidelines and posted signage, trucks along the BQE are limited to a maximum of 80,000 pounds, or 40 times. However, the weigh-in motion or WIM sensors we deployed have detected that some trucks along the roadway are much more heavy, including some even more than double the weight. As much as 170,000 lbs. Such excessive weight can do serious damage to a roadway's structural integrity. In response to these findings, the mayor established the NYPD BQE truck enforcement task force which was launched February 3rd to strengthen enforcement of existing weight restrictions on the BQE. Further, the Mayor's executive order directing DOT, NYPD, and

Deputy Mayor Laura Anglin to develop specific additional proposals to protect the safety and structural integrity of the BQE. One thing we've been taking a close look at is automated truck enforcement. With state authorization, DOT could test and assess an I-278 pilot program in cooperation with New York State DOT. WIM and a couple of BQE focused locations, along with side fire and license plate reader cameras, would allow the city to weigh and record images of every vehicle, including any displayed identifying information such as the trucks US DOT number. Since using WIM technology for automated enforcement is still relatively new and rarely deployed in the US, we would need to assess our ability to generate verifiable accurate data to later be used in enforcement and adjudication. And we would want to explore whether we could develop protocols to feed NYPD near real time information of overweight violations. If the pilot is successful, a wider authorization, including the port authority, MTA, and New York State DOT would probably work best. So they are all able to effectively enforce overweight trucks that their respective facilities, as well. But it is important to recognize, as our

own panel and the Council's report have noted, that maintenance and enforcement efforts cannot extend the life of the structure indefinitely. The underlying deterioration of the structure will continue and steps needed to preserve the existing structure will become progressively more involved and less effective over time. The city and state can work together to do more to remove overweight trucks, but, in time, that BQE will no longer be able to carry even legally loaded trucks. The history of planning and studies to grapple with the BQE's multi-decade going back to well before the state's design and construction workshops in 2006. And shows what a challenging project this is. But it has also brought forth a whole range of proposals from more modest, though still costly rehabilitation efforts, more transformative concepts that could cost many billions of dollars and require a new city state governance model. It is clear and has been said today that a visionary planning for the BQ he will require cooperation across multiple levels of government and numerous agency is and we look to our leaders and government to help us achieve that goal. The city will also continue our work of caring for and

protecting the existing structure and keeping the public safe as this debate unfolds. Thank you and happy to answer questions.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thanks, Commissioner. Thanks, Carlo. I want to thank your staff, as well, from DOT. For the work they do. I want to thank the staff of the panel for their hard work. They make us all look good by doing a lot of the hard work. And I want to thank the staff of the City Council, Elliott who is here, and Raju and the folks from the Transportation Committee and the Land Use Division. The staff is-- all of our staffs have worked so hard on this and they deserve a lot of credit. So, Carlo, I apologize if you asked any of this when I had to take an emergency phone call, but as I said, you did an incredibly great job and a lot of thorough work in looking at the structural problems with the cantilever, but also, as you mentioned, the entire corridor from the Verrazano all the way into Queens. If you had to just highlight and you highlighted at the end, the governance issue that you think is really at the forefront right now that we need to solve, what do you see as the immediate, immediate, immediate next steps tomorrow on what we should be

doing from an engineering perspective and from a governance perspective?

CARLO SCISSURA: Sure. And you mentioned staff and I neglected to say I am joined by Justin Pascone and Michael Poppianokus [sp?] who helped lead the process for the panel. It's very simple on governance. I think we have to have our state elected officials, and Senator Cavanaugh and assembly member Simon have been instrumental and incredible in this, come together and create legislation in Albany that would create a new governance model. That would have the support of you, Speaker, and your colleagues, that would have the support of the federal government. I know Dan Wiley is here representing Congress member Nydia Velazquez who, I have to say, has been a leader on this issue for probably about 20 something years. And I think the opportunity is now to get it done. So, if we introduce legislation in Albany, you know-- can we get it done before budget, I don't know. But we can get the discussion and the dialogue done before budget for sure. And then working with the Cuomo administration and the de Blasio administration to ensure how it looks, who is sitting on this. But

that can happen immediately. And I think we should all come together. And I have heard, you know, from our panel's report, from DOT, from the Council, from your report. I think we all agree the governance model is needed. So we should all really get this done now. In terms of engineering-- and I'll leave that to the experts, but I will say this. There are two or three parts of the triple cantilever that need immediate work and DOT has either started that or will began it immediately. I think, as we start thinking about what is the future of the BQE, you know, I happened to lead an organization that has some of the top engineers and contractors and design professionals across the country that are here in New York. And it's an opportunity, I think, Speaker Johnson, for you and I and many of us to may be set really with professionals at a roundtable and say, start thinking about how do we engineer? How do we build? What is the process of getting this done so that we're not waiting five years to start thinking about it? One of the recommendations and the clear items that we came to a conclusion with was that all the things we call for are not one after the other in sequence. They are all now. So, fix the BQE now.

Get a legal trucks off the road now. Start thinking about traffic management now. Create a legislative intent to do to really be the governance model now. Start thinking about how do we engineer to design and build the future of the BQE now? This all has to happen now.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. I have more questions for you, but I want to go to Polly.

CARLO SCISSURA: Yep.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: You, of course, Polly, mentioned in your testimony about the Mayor's executive order earlier this month or the end of January to increase enforcement on those overweight vehicles on the BQE. You mentioned, and it's a little frightening, and the maximum is 80,000, but the sensors have detected trucks in excess of 170,000 pounds, which is frightening in many ways and what that is doing to the structure on a daily basis. And you talked about the Deputy Mayor Anglin and the DOT and NYPD coordinating on having the tools needed to ensure that that is not happening. And I see you folks from the NYPD who are here today who were involved in that. Could you just speak a little bit more specifically? You talked about that WIM

sensors. But what are we doing sort of specifically on and showing that, from the day the executive order was signed, moving forward as this process continues, regardless of all the sort of trials and tribulations of us figuring out consensus and moving forward, how are we keeping these overweight vehicles off of the BQE? How are we doing that? Do we have enough personnel? What is happening in that way to sort of assuage people's fears when they are seeing these large trucks and vehicles on the BQE?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: I'm going to say a little bit about that and then we are joined by a inspector Delisse from NYPD highway district and he will talk about their enforcement efforts, which have been very robust and, I think, showing some good affect, but I think we also know why I started to talk about potential automated enforcement legislation with the state. You know, PD is not going to be every place all the time and, you know, increasingly, I think we are going to want to get tracks with automated enforcement that can be operating in key parts of the city 24 seven. You know, we have discovered in our research it is not widely deployed around the world quite yet, but I

think it is a place where New York is likely to want to be a leader. I think the challenge for us is that we will want to ultimately work in partnership with others state agencies and, potentially, have that kind of enforcement occur, for example, at Port Authority and MTA structures that are more on the city's borders. But all at the inspectors speak more specifically to enforcement efforts.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Inspector, we're just going this way are you and very quickly.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Just put your right hand up.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Please raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony above for this committee and to respond honestly the Council member questions?

STEVE DELISSE: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is inspector Steve Delisse. As the commissioner said, I am the commanding officer of highway district which is in control of all New York City Highway Patrol. Since the initiative started, which was February 3rd, we have been doing inspections of trucks on the BQE. What we've doing

is, at the split of the Gowanis and the BQE, we have been identifying trucks that we believe are overweight. We've been pulling them over and taking them off the BQE onto Hamilton and we've doing inspections there. Since the initiative, we've been very aggressive with our summonses. Obviously, we are targeting overweight vehicles. How we do this is on the Gowanis we have two, what we call, spotters. Police officers on the Gowanis. The zebra stripes. We look at the trucks as they go by. There is a lot of good indicators that my officers know what in over truck vehicle may look like. Once they identify one, we pulled them over. We take them off the BQE. Unfortunately, the BQE, especially in this whole area that you are talking about, there is no safe area to do inspections. That's why we take it off highway. And we want them off highway anyway. We bring them off highway onto Hamilton. We're out of the way of most traffic because Highway Patrol, we have major functions in reducing fatalities, reducing collisions, and keeping traffic moving. So we tried to take it off so it's not an impact on the community there. Where right by the Hugh Carey Tunnel. We do our inspection. We're concentrating on overweight

vehicles. Obviously, we do all type of inspections, so if we see anything else, we do summonses for that. The ironic part is we did many summonses for overweight the first six days of our initiative and, as time went by the weight violations have decreased slightly. So, we believe between our enforcement, between the public campaign, the public service announcements, the VMS signs, truckers are starting to realize they cannot go on to the BQE overweight.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: How many summonses have you--

STEVE DELISSE: [interposing] We have, so far since February 3rd, 276 summonses. Of those, 96 were weight-related. And as I said, as time has gone by, less trucks are being overweight. We are getting other violations, but not overweight, fortunately.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: 96 were weight violations?

STEVE DELISSE: 97 were weight violations then, out of those, 23 trucks we put out of service.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Why? What does that mean?

STEVE DELISSE: Out of service, if anything is over the weight, the VTL weight, we can put it out of service. We go according to the Commercial Vehicles Safety Alliance. They are standards of what designates a truck to be put out of service. We don't indiscriminately put trucks out of service. There is a manual of how we do it and, if anything is overweight, if it is tire overweight-- A truck may not be 80,000 pounds. It could be 40,000 pounds, but it may be overweight for that truck. So we go according the tire pressure, tire weight and we can put things out of service like that.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: And what's the amount of a summons for a weight violations? How much of a ticket cost is that to the operator owner of the vehicle?

STEVE DELISSE: I have to get back to you. I'm not 100 percent sure about that.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Is it-- Do we have any idea? Is it thousands of dollars? Is it hundreds of dollars?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: It's actually sort of a matrix. It can be up to thousands of

dollars, depending on how overweight the vehicle is and if there are other offenses.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: And do we set that or is it set by state law or federal law?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: It's set by state law.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: State law. Because, potentially-- I mean, we are seeing the number go down, but if there is this much of a risk involved and you want there to be a deterrent, it may be worthwhile to significantly increase that amount of penalty on folks that are breaking the law. Do we have--

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well--

SPEAKER JOHNSON: the information?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Mr. Speaker, the governor actually did propose that and his budget--

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Great.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: to increase on those penalties. The city is certainly supportive of that.

STEVE DELISSE: 100 percent. We definitely support that. The other thing about the

trucking industry, which is good. They talk to each other. Someone was mentioning that before. They do talk to each other. We do go out to the trade commissions. We do talk with the trucking industry to let them know what is happening. So the educational part is definitely helping in this matter. That, obviously, the concern is trucks anywhere in New York City. We cover five boroughs. So, where are they going? The big support that we have, the NYPD, the automated enforcement of the Commissioner was talking about. That is key. That is key to get every single truck that is overweight automatically. Almost like a red light summons or speed camera summons. We are touching the tip of it. Having an automated system, well, we need our state partners to help with this. So, that--

SPEAKER JOHNSON: [inaudible 02:33:52]

STEVE DELISSE: will go a long way.

Trucking industries are very, very concerned about their safety record. Unlike, unfortunately, some drivers out there, pedestrian cars, trucking industry use, they are very, very concerned about their safety record. The more summonses that they generate against them, the more they have to pay and they

could lose their licensing. So it is very critical, the enforcement on with this.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, just to be clear-- I mean, I support, of course, increasing it and also making sure that the technology is in place to actually detect to the stuff. But, Inspector, what you are saying is-- when you're saying it's the tip of the iceberg. You're saying that even with the officers that are deployed to do the spotting, to then get people off of the BQE and onto Hamilton, the with that you only think you're getting sort of the tip of the iceberg. You think there are a lot of vehicles that are sort of getting past that may be overweight, but without the technology, we can't do it besides you trying to figure out by looking at the types of vehicles, by looking at the tires, by looking at what they are carrying-- those flags kind of give you indications, but until you have that technology, you're going to be missing stuff.

STEVE DELISSE: Absolutely.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you very much, Inspector. I want to go back to Carlo. I want to finish quickly because there is a lot of people here. Could you, Carlo, just very quickly bring me

through the recommendation for reducing the highway from six lanes to four lanes and can you explain how you came to that recommendation and what benefits you believe that would provide?

CARLO SCISSURA: Sure. Again, I think it was not something we thought of when we started this process. But, you know, right now, if you have driven on that stretch of the BQE, you come from Atlantic Avenue, if you are driving northbound and you go around the stretch and then you've got three lanes of traffic along the triple cantilever that are inadequate. They are tight. They don't meet standards. There is no shoulder breakdown lane. It's very difficult when you are coming in from a ramp getting on to these lanes. It's just really planned out very poorly. So, by doing two lanes, you can widen the lanes and you make it safer. You have room for a breakdown lane. You then connect, when you get towards the Brooklyn Bridge, if you are going northbound, it is already two lanes through Fort Greene. Really through Dumbo and Fort Greene. So, really, what you are doing is just adding two lanes to a piece of it that is already two lanes. We believe that that was not just reduce traffic, but

would make it safer. He would have less accidents. It would give you a little more breathing room. And I think it is something that-- it is our firm belief that, short-term, it should happen as you are doing in the immediate renovations and repairs and fixing it. But, when you've really rebuild this road, whether it is a tunnel or a new highway or whatever it is, we believe that two lanes particularly, in that stretch of the BQE, is a critical thing.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Polly, how come the mayor doesn't support that?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Well, I'll just say this. I would certainly authorize today to say we are going to take a hard look at that. And, I can, I think it does involve doing some traffic analysis, potentially use some environmental assessment, not sure yet. We are going to be talking to the state and our federal partners. And I think just one challenge for us, and just, I think most people in the room know this. The city is sort of owns or, rather, the state gave back to the city a 1.5 mile stretch of the highway, but all of these corridor wide solutions we're talking--

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you for that present.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: We're talking about, really, a 20 miles, you know-- in its full picture, it's a 20 mile stretch. And, I think, as we are looking at different lane configurations, part of-- you know, part of the stretch beyond the city's borders would likely have to also be reconfigured.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, does the Mayor support reducing or you don't know yet?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, again, I think we're going to do that analysis. We are certainly open to seeing if we can make it work.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. Carlo, just last question for you. Can you, again, quickly highlight the areas of common ground between the incredible work that you were panel, which you lead, had done, what the DOT had already looked at, what you saw from the Arup proposal. Can you just--

CARLO SCISSURA: Sure.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: kind of synthesize what you think some of those great areas of common ground are?

CARLO SCISSURA: So, I actually think that is a great question, Speaker. The most important piece of common ground-- and I said this at our meeting when we announced our report-- was the excitement and seeing the community groups rally together. So, common ground number one community must be part of this process. Common ground number two governance structure must happen immediately. Common ground number three, a two-lane, at least-- most of us-- and you are studying it, but reduction in traffic. Not building a road for 150,000 vehicles or more. Traffic management. Getting illegal trucks off the road. And fixing and riparian immediately the roadways so that it doesn't deteriorate further. I think all of this has common ground. I think that the corridor wide, I'm excited to say, the community groups-- and I'm sure you'll hear from them shortly-- believes that that should happen. And I think that all of us are really coming together on that. So, I think something great has come out of all of this as we have more common ground and we don't. And that is something exciting.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: That's great. And, Polly, just to be clear on this part, New York State

DOT was leaving this project from 2006 until 2011 when they abruptly with true, was my understanding, and leaving New York City DOT to pick up the project three years later when you all came into office and you became DOT Commissioner in 2014. What support has the city received from New York State DOT to maintain safe operations of the roadway?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: I mean, we have certainly talked to our estate partners in the years that we have been looking at this project. But I would say, you know, this stretch of the highway has largely been a city only project.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: So there hasn't-- I mean, there's been conversations, but there hasn't been much tangible support to maintain safe operations of the roadway?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: Again, I think the city has largely been in charge of this project. We have certainly kept our estate partners apprised and no work of the panel. But, as of yet, I can't say we have done a lot together. We will certainly-- I have talked to my counterparts at state DOT, at the port authority, and the MTA, both somewhat about the larger project. And then about the more immediate

challenge is of automated enforcement. So, there is some cooperation there. We certainly haven't come together yet on a bigger governance structure, but--

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Does--

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: That is clear.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Does state DOT have an affirmative responsibility for maintenance of the interstate highway system within New York State?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, I think you would say from the federal point of view that is true. I think, like many things and New York State, we have-- the city and the state have a very complicated legacy. We have invoked Robert Moses here today. As many folks know, there was a time, pre-interstate, when he held both many city hats and state hats. And a lot of that infrastructure became pretty entwined. It's a little complicated to unpack, but I certainly think the state should have a real role and responsibility in the whole corridor.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Has the state committed any funds to the current replacement project?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: No.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: How is their level of involvement on this project different than other highway projects in the five boroughs?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, the state owns most of the other highways throughout the five boroughs. And, you know, if you want to look at the example of the K bridge, that was invoked-- that was a state run project. The city cooperated and lot and, you know, obviously we work together, but that was one that was led and financed at the state level.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: And how is that constrained the project?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I'm sorry?

SPEAKER JOHNSON: How is that constrained the project that they are taking a different approach to this day and they had with the K bridge? With plans around the Sheridan express way? With all of those other projects that are highway related?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, look. Obviously, it's been sort of the original challenge of this project all along and I-- Look. I think Carlo put it really nicely. One thing that is come out of all this debate and analysis and, you know, activity on the community level is, I think, some

political momentum that we do need a corridor wide solution. New York City DOT, we control this portion of it. And some of the things Carlo invoked, you know, mass transit solutions and freight and all these other pieces are just sort of not within the grasp of my agency or even of the whole city. They need state partnership, as well.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: And what does the future of this project look like if the state does not become a more active partner?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, I'm not sure I can speculate on how that would work. I think, obviously, a city only solution has proved, you know, basically impossible to achieve and a political sense, so I think we're going to have to come together and have a city state solution. I don't necessarily have a good answer to a city only solution.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: And in an ideal world, what would that collaboration look like between New York City DOT and New York State DOT?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, I think you heard today from [inaudible 02:43:24] from Arup there are other models both here within New York

State and in some other jurisdictions. Some kind of an entity in which, I think, city and state are fairly represented, in which elected officials and community stakeholders have a real role. I mean, I think, depending on how big of a project we're talking about, potentially an entity that has some pretty, you know, expansive abilities in terms of land use and perhaps tolling and bonding. I mean, one could, depending on how big you are going to go, you could see different versions of such an entity. And such entities already exist in New York State, as you heard, for the Tappan Zee Mario Cuomo Bridge. They sort of created an entity within New York State Thruway. There are a bunch of different ways we can do it. I think what Carlo has said is a good point. Let's get that dialogue going. We are excited to have it. Get up to Albany and put all those ideas on the table and see what would work best for everybody.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: What obstacles are preventing that from happening?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: I don't know yet what the obstacles are. I think we have, at least, a good consensus here at the city level, it sounds like, with the community, with all the

experts, and with the Council. And certainly with the administration. So, at least I think there is some immunity here and, you know, certainly I know the state elected officials who represent at least the Brooklyn Heights portion of this project, who I mentioned Senator Cavanaugh and assembly member Simon, they have both been terrific. I know they want to be helpful. You have Congressman for Alaska is that the federal level. So I think we have a lot of players. Obviously you we need to get the Governor and to those state agencies into the dialogue, as well.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: The Congresswoman, the senator, and the assembly women have been fantastic--

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: They have, indeed.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: on this--

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: As has the Council member.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. Yes. Steve's been great the whole way through. And all the other Council members that are affected have been great, as well, on this. Lastly, community members, elected officials, and even the Mayor's expert panel

have all rejected the DOT innovative plan to build a temporary six lane highway where the Promenade is now. Has DOT given up on this plan?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: I mean, yes. I said so in my testimony.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. Without greater state involvement, does DOT believe that the only remaining alternative is sort of the traditional plan?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: I mean, again, I think, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry. I don't-- Without state cooperation, I'm not sure. I can say today what the path forward would be. I mean, one of the challenges, again, that I think we've landed with is city only solutions are just not comprehensive enough to garner political support.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: And have you all been developing other proposals that weren't talked about today? Other ideas? I mean, not ideas. Like real different proposals from all the ones we saw. Are there other ones out there that we don't know about?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: I mean, I think the only other category that I would put on the table-- And Carlo's panel did not-- rejected them,

but if you look-- if you go now to your website, you can see, I guess, one other category that the panel asked us to look at is sort of in-- I'm saying sort of middle range rehabilitation proposals, which is a non-, you know, the larger proposals we initially came out way not quite the incremental repairs we are going to be doing now. Sort of more robust rehabilitation schemes that one, perhaps, last 30 or 40 years. I think they don't achieve a lot of the goals that folks have talked about today. They are not going to provide transformative new benefits. They will be-- Certainly have a lot of impacts on the community. But I think there are some versions that are sort of less impactful than DOT's original proposals. I'm not sure that they would be particularly popular, but just, and folks want to love, we looked at a bunch of different permutations there, as well. You know, again, things that are more mostly city's control.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Polly, you know, there have been people that were upset about the-- of course, about the DOT proposals, but I want to say that you are always, I think, very transparent. You are always extraordinarily up to date about what is

going on. You are deeply involved in projects. You are responsive to communities. You go out in neighborhoods and you listen, as does your team. And in wake of significant state involvement and those falling on my shoulders DOT from weighing you first came into office in 2014 and you talking today about the challenges, the real complicating factors that exist here, I want to thank you. I want to thank you for being transparent. I want to thank you for being the thoughtful about this. In coming today and sitting through the Arup presentation. It's always-- We don't always agree on everything, but it's always a pleasure to work with you because you are sort of a consonant professional takes your job incredibly seriously and I think have a great track record to show for it. So, even with people not being happy with what your agency - only put out there. I think you, even after that reaction, has continued to show up, respond, come forward, listen, be here today. And it's hard for you when you don't have a real federal partner and when you don't have a real state partner and a project this size, scope, and scale and cost has really fallen on the city agency which, I think, has probably eliminated your options and being

able to potentially think creatively about this because you didn't have that support at the other layers of government where you needed it. So I want to thank you for being here today. I appreciate your leadership at DOT.

[applause]

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Thank you.
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[applause]

SPEAKER JOHNSON: And I'm not sure you expected to get a round of applause.

[background comments]

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I most certainly didn't. And, look. I will just say thank you for your leadership and for all the Council members and all the community members. We certainly-- Point took a swing at it and, obviously, didn't have a head. But I do think-- I think, as Carlo put it, the silver lining is certainly present is the kind of community engagement, elected official engagement, creative thinking that, honestly, this project needed. And I think we will always admit was sort of beyond just the ability of New York City DOT. So, you now, we look forward to continuing this

dialogue and, you know, putting some really creative ideas, hopefully, to fruition.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you to the DOT staff. Thank you, Carlo for your service and the great job you did. Into your staff. And we are going to call up the next panel.

[background comments]

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Oh, sorry. I apologize. There are more questions. I'm so sorry.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Uh--

SPEAKER JOHNSON: I apologize, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No. That's okay. Look, first of all, Speaker, I would like to invite everyone to dedicate prayer to the family who lost at 10 years old a girl today. It is so sad that, you know, one more time in 48 hours, three individuals lost their life in the last three months. One in December, 10 years old, another one around 12 years old in Queens and today, seven in the morning, another 10 years old lost their life. And I would like for us to dedicate a moment of silence to the girl and to the family who lost their love one today. They can be a daughter, they can be our grandchildren, they can be a family member. And,

with, no. We don't have to have a policy thinking about trucks, thinking about cars, cocho, in the city of New York. We need to build tunnels. We need to support Congressmen Andres. We need to create distribution centers in the city of New York in order to leave our city better for the future generation. And everyone has to be part of that solution. The trucking associations, the federal government, the state, the city, and the private sector. Most of the trucks that they go through the BQE, they come from other places from where they pick up in other areas and then they go and distribute. We New Yorkers have to be part of the solution because if we're continuing just consuming online only, then trucks will have to go out and deliver it. So, I just hope to see how, as we continue conversation, as we look at why we have so many trucks or increase of trucks, everyone contributes. And I just hope, again, that, you know, we need to have the motivation from the future, but we need to learn from Robert Moses. The city has to be greener. I mean, learn from him and the things that he did good, but also in other areas where he failed. And I feel that when you ask any New Yorkers who lived around 14th Street, they would

like to see a park from Union Square to 23rd Street to 34th Street. And I feel that I want to be careful that, as we discussed these plans, we have pedestrians and cyclists of the priority. If you live in the Upper West Side, if you live on the Upper East Side, you don't need to have a car. You live in places that you walk from-- you can take a train for blocks from where you live. Most of the middle-class and upper-class, I only have to go and travel 20 minutes. They can take a bike and go to work or they can walk. But if you live in places in Washington Heights and [inaudible 02:53:40], he did a study. He said that people who live in Inwood and [inaudible 02:53:47], they need to travel an hour and a half to work. If you live in the South Bronx and you are around the more congested area and a solution is to arise now. So, when I look at the BQE and thinking about all those ideas, you know, first, when it comes to safety, I would like to know how are we preparing ourselves to redesign BQE thinking about vision zero. Thinking about safety. For trucks that come in and get out from that area. And how we are looking at, you know, the corridor that serves a significant first and the mild connector. The they [inaudible

02:54:38] and there would not be a significant reduction in trucks. Traffic if we don't build tunnels. If we don't create alternative. So as you look on this plan from the city perspective, how is the ideas for these BQE aligned with the vision zero safety?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: So, I'll--

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Commissioner, just before you respond--

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Yep.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: I have to run to the Rules Committee hearing across the street, so I am going to go run over there check in, then come back so folks-- And I'll be back for the community. I just need to go run to a Rules Committee hearing. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I'll sort of take a step back and, I think, talk about the dilemma that the BQE prisons. And I think, actually, we heard from Trent from Arup, you know, something that I've talked a lot about, to, that all big cities are grappling with right now awaits is just the enormous explosion in freight and truck movements in our cities. And a lot of you saw the New York Times

article from last year. New Yorkers are now getting a million and a half packages a day. And, often times, when people complained to me about trucks, I say that, well, how many Amazon packages did you get this week? And they will acknowledge that, you know, home deliveries, they are really changing the way our city streets work and, you know, as Trent also said, people do want to get their food and their goods. So, you know, how we reduce that truck traffic is an enormous challenge. And the city is going to have more to say on that in the coming weeks. But I think the balancing act with the BQE is, you know, and I think the Inspector talked about it a bit with enforcement. We want to reduce truck traffic and reduce those heavy trucks on the highway, but if all we're doing is sending them on to local streets, then that's an even worse outcome in terms of vision zero. Obviously, because their trucks are mixing with pedestrians and cyclists and you know well, Mr. Chairman, last year, that was the particular tragedy we saw, you know, all over the city in Councilman Menchaca's district. A lot of fatalities involving trucks. And so we need to have strategies that are going to reduce that traffic

overall. Not just send it from the highway into local neighborhoods. I think, if you look through some of these materials, you see the panel, Carlo's panel, dug in really deep talking to the Port Authority, EDC, looking at a lot of those freight reduction strategies. You know, some of them are longer-term. Again, we at the city are doing some experiments. We've started a car go bike pilot to try and encourage, which you came in and attended our announcement to try and replace trucks with sustainable ebikes that you can pedal and will hopefully be safer on the streets. But that is really going to be the ongoing challenge here and just, you know, as folks say, we'll just let all the traffic melt away from the BQE. I just want to make sure it isn't going to melt onto local streets and present more of a hazard to pedestrians and cyclists.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [inaudible 02:57:24] say what the trucking Association claimed that the corridor of the BQE served as the first and last mile connector.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, we've done a lot of deep analysis of that. And you have heard it here today that the challenge of the BQE--

It is certainly a through corridor for trucks that are coming from New Jersey, Staten Island, the freight areas, going to the airports. But it is also a place for local truck traffic. I mean, Brooklyn and Queens, between the two boroughs, are home to over 5 million people. That is a lot of supermarkets and restaurants and clothing stores and all those things. So, one of the challenges is a lot of that truck traffic is through traffic, but a good amount of it is local, as well. And serving local businesses. And, you know, as we know, the Council member mentioned we have Industry City and Brooklyn Army Terminal and the Brooklyn Navy Yard. We have a lot of sites on that route where new industries are developing, new employers, supermarkets. So, finding that sweet spot and reducing that truck traffic is going to be an ongoing challenge. Some of it is headed for New England, but a good amount of it is headed locally for New York City.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And in many of them, based on what they also claim is coming [inaudible 02:58:40] from home point, Brooklyn Navy Yard, and other-- those destinations.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Right. I mean, again, each of-- Brooklyn and Queens in and of themselves would be to of the biggest cities in the country. You know, there's a lot of residents, a lot of business is, and a lot of them for an activity there. A lot of people employed. So, again, the city, we are going to be coming out with some more proposals on truck safety, but I do think some of those bigger holistic solutions, as you are hearing today, and I think of Arup testified, Port Authority, EDC, we need to have a lot of players at the table if we're really going to start to do major shifts in those freight flows.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. So, again, like we know that trucks will be needed. You know, as they are needed today, we need trucks. We have to think about the needed trucks in the city of New York. It's not like-- I understand that we do need it, but the question is, with the freight and, you know, and creating new distribution centers, [inaudible 02:59:42] as we know and led by you and City Hall, we-- and you announced to the, you know, the pilot project. Doing more to deliver using the electrical tries cycle. So, how all so as we put in

the vision for the area we also how is the city thinking about creating distribution centers so that we can then use electrical tries cycle to distribute from any destination to local areas?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Right. We are looking at that very closely. Talking to the sisters cities and working with the industry. As you said, we are trying to pilot now where we are actually giving up city loading zone space for electric cargo bikes to park and deliver their goods. We are looking also-- there are a bunch of news sort of private players in the market that are looking at repurpose same garages. Parking garages or finding other places that can be those distribution hubs where, you know, potentially one track, and then leaves a lot of goods and then those goods can be either hand carted or cargo biked to different parts of the city. You know, there was some innovation happening on the private sector's side, as well. As you know, Amazon and UPS and other places are starting now to work with pharmacy use and other places where they will deliver the packages there and people can go and get them. I think there are creative solutions on the table, but it is also true

that the number of packages that New Yorkers want to get delivered continues to rise.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Thank you. Council member Levin.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very much, Chair. Thank you, Commissioner. I still have a few questions. Hold on one second. Let me bring them up. Let's see-- is there a community outreach plan for the repairs? The kind of more immediate repairs and is there-- what about the potential of having a community advisory task force of some kind to look at that issue?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Yeah. Just typically, I think the repairs we are going to be doing this year. And we certainly, obviously, well want to work with the community and, with what ever advisory and notification, you know, is required. And, again, Zeeshan Ott has, I think, running that throughout the whole panel process and--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: doing a fantastic job. The repairs we are going to be doing this year, I think I'm happy to say will be, hopefully, not a terribly intrusive sort. The kind

of things that we do pretty routinely on the BQE. Fixing the mesh and, again, we are going to do work on the Hicks Street retaining wall. We are, as I said in my testimony, looking at a design and a procurement to do some sort of larger repairs, particularly, on the two panels that our data are showing us really need some repair. Those will be more involved repairs. As soon as we have a sense of that design, we will be back to the community and a more formal way to show them what that looks like and talk about, you know, potential impacts, mitigations, what type of closures we might need, etc.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And is there a time-- What's the timeframe for that?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: For that, we are working on the design right now. Hope to get the procurement done by next year and have the work for that first set of two deteriorated panels done by 2022. I will just add--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And how much-- I'm sorry. How much time does that buy?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, we are hoping each of those repairs will BIOS around 10 years, but, just to be clear, so is the way the--

the BQE is broken up into a 50 foot panels. We are starting with the first two that are the worst. We are then probably going to move on to the next couple of panels that are the worst. So this will be ongoing--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: you know, while we look for a different solution. I will just emphasize that we don't want to just be ongoing year after year after year.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Are you able to say today that the innovative plan is off the table?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I have set it already a couple times.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yeah. Okay. But just explicitly, it's--

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Yeah. It's in my testimony.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Got it. Okay. And is there anything that the expert panel identified that DOT did not know on their initial assessment of the condition?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean, I-- You know, one thing, and we have said this before

that we were especially grateful to the expert panel. You know, we worked together. We had been doing a lot of monitor on the structure, but one thing the expert panel worked with us on and pushed us on and I think it was really useful was to get those way in motion machines installed. We have them in a couple other places in the city. We did not have them there. And, as I testified and, I think, as has been made public and the mayors certainly talked about and did his executive order, we knew we had a lot of overweight trucks on the BQE, but we had even more than we thought. And some of those trucks were-- You know, as the Speaker mentioned, shockingly overweight.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: And I think that was a good wake-up call for us. You know, we have stepped up our enforcement with NYPD, looking at potential solutions up in Albany in terms of automated enforcement. And I think just underscoring, as you have heard today, there is an urgency here.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: You know, we will do a lot to reduce truck weight on the structure, but, you know, we need to make sure that, even if we reduce those truck waves, eventually, those structures are not going to be viable.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Two more questions. On governance, have we, as a city, reached out to our state counterparts on the issue of governance to start that conversation so hopefully we get that addressed--

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I mean--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: in this legislative session?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: that is, I mean, it's certainly a conversation that we have had with various state counterparts at all levels. I think we haven't yet engaged on a formal legislative proposal. And I think, obviously, what we are hearing from the Council here today is there interested in working--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: and we are, too.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I mean, I had asked us somewhat provocative question, but has the Mayor's office reached out to the governor's office on that specific issue?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: You know, I don't know that I know the answer to that. I'm sorry.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I encourage them to do that yesterday.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: well, I would just say, Council member. I think that the city has done a lot to reach out to the state. We--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: actually invited them to participate in this panel effort. So, you know, I think just-- I'll speak for myself and hopefully for the Mayor. We are very keen to have the state engage with us. There is--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: no lack of enthusiasm on the part of the city for that.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Absolutely. Absolutely. And I think, going back to our very

first conversation, this was, may make, two or three years ago about this.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I think it was longer than that.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Was it longer than that? When it was-- When the cost was 1.7 billion dollars that was that we were talking about this issue of the state responsibility here. Senator Squadron was in office, so to put it in some kind-- And, Carlo, to you, so one of the things that I just want to think through here, as we're looking at a corridor wide comprehensive plan, you know, going from the Verrazano Bridge to the Tri Borough Bridge, I mean, obviously, that's an enormous stretch and every part of that stretch requires a-- you know, could have a different solution. As way of thinking about the capital costs here, you know, have we had a sense of why the universe of capital costs would be if we were to examine the whole corridor?

CARLO SCISSURA: Well, I don't think we have a number. I think, though, we have a couple of things. So, we know that, for example, the Gowanus Expressway, in its last reconstruction--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

CARLO SCISSURA: we were told and advised that this would be the last repair. That the next version would have to be something long term.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

CARLO SCISSURA: So we know that has to happen. We know that the same thing has to happen and very different pieces of this corridor. So, there is capital or there will be capital allocated for these projects. So--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

CARLO SCISSURA: it's our assessment that, as capital is allocated, we should allocate it into one entity. Into this governance entity that will then take on the rebuilding project of it. I think this is where we have to look at public-private partnerships. We have to look at innovative design opportunities, and elevated funding stream opportunities. There's a lot of things that will have to be put together, but I think, until this governance entity--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

CARLO SCISSURA: authority, whatever we call it, is created, a lot of this is kind of just not real.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Does the expert panel think that, in the broader context of that-- because, really, if you're going to be doing the entire BQE, you know, it's very possible that we're looking at a 30 to 50 year project. And, I mean, I've been here for like 15 years, 16 years and I remember there were projects that like were going on when I first got here that are still not complete. So, you know, realistically, were talking about it, you know, very long-term project. And so, is it the expert panel's opinion that it would be unwise to, as it's being phased, for this part or furthers stretch of the BQE to be done at the front end of that?

CARLO SCISSURA: Well, I think, look. To answer the first part of your question or comment, yes. It takes a long time to do projects. Not just in New York, but across the country. But we did see the Mario Cuomo Bridge get rebuilt into a new bridge.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

CARLO SCISSURA: We saw the Goethals Bridge Bay, new bridge. We've seen the K Bridge. I mean, that airports are being rebuilt. Moynihan Station. There's a lot of infrastructure, big capital projects, that are actually happening and

they are happening in record time in either a budget or under budget. So--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

CARLO SCISSURA: things can happen if we kind of come together. I think we believe that you are not just going to break ground and start, you know, on 65th Street in Bay Ridge Sunset Park and keep working all of it. Clearly, this will have to be phased. There will have to be some infrastructure work that will have to be done first. We have to see what happens with DEP and the MTA. So, yes. There will be lots of phases to this.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-hm.

CARLO SCISSURA: But you can't just say, well, let's build a replacement for the triple cantilever without knowing what you are going to build something that is north of that because everything has to feed together.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right. And so that's-- I'll just leave it. I mean, so as were kind of thinking through that, you know, we're going through kind of a lot of different legislative districts and Council districts and community boards and the like and-- So that will be a significant

challenge. It will make the BQX look like, you know, child's play. So--

CARLO SCISSURA: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: we should-- I mean, that's something that I think is going to take a fair amount of comprehensive planning just in terms of organization to even start that conversation about what, you know, what we want the entire corridor to look like. And, you know, with so many cooks in the kitchen, you know, the consensus will be, you know-- it will be a challenging goal to achieve, but, you know, achievable--

CARLO SCISSURA: Achievable and needed.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Needed. Yeah.

CARLO SCISSURA: Necessary because we to have to rebuild all of these pieces of this road.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Great. Okay.

Thanks.

CARLO SCISSURA: Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So, now we have a few questions from Council member Menchaca and then we go to the public. We have like 30 members of the public that are ready to testify. Council member Menchaca.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Did you say
BQX?

[laughter]

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: I'll get to
that. Thank you for being here today. And I only
have 30 minutes, so I'm going to go quick. The first
panel was a hired-- I'm just kind of learning this.
The hired contracted group that came in to analyze
it. Mr. Scissura, did you meet with them at all?

CARLO SCISSURA: No. We did not.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay.
Commissioner Trottenberg, did he meet with them at
all?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I didn't
personally, but members of my staff did.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay. So they
did meet with you. Okay. And, Mr. Scissura, you
talked a little bit about the work that the panel
did. A volunteer group of experts and panels that
came together. Much of that was in the report that
was heard earlier today. The most feel good--

CARLO SCISSURA: It feels great.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: to kind of see
that affirmed by a consultant. I think what was more

compelling-- There's so many compelling pieces, but I'm only going to focus on one, which is the truck enforcement piece. I'm going to move over to Commissioner Trottenberg. Commissioner, you or the Mayor, actually, an executive order really is now focusing on enforcement. What kept the Mayor and you to really focus on this issue? What prevented it kind of quick and rapid response to this?

COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: I mean, look. Again, I think they are is where I really want to give the panel credit. You know, they--

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEMBERG: really, I think, pushed us. And one of the member, Hank Utman, is here. He was a real leader in pushing the city and saying, you know, we have to step this up and we have to step it up right away. And I think when we got that WIM data and-- Again, we knew there were overweight trucks on the structure, but I think all of us, our eyes certainly were open wide when ways saw to the extent of the overweight trucks and how overweight they were. An NYPD, I think, stepped in, you know, very, very quickly and, you know, as you heard from Inspector Delisse, we are starting to seem

now at least-- when we look at the violations they are catching--

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: fewer overweight trucks. Now, it's a fair question that you would ask, in your district, where are they going?

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: And we are trying to monitor that. We are not hearing a lot of reports that they are, you know, hitting Third Avenue or Fourth Avenue, but we are mindful that that is another piece of this puzzle.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: So, the panel really kind of made that a priority and you're stepping in.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Yes.
Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: So, there is testimony here that I am getting from the record from Zach Miller from the Trucking Association. I read it. He said a lot of things about the vast majority of the truck traffic along this corridor is local. He also talks a lot about permits, overweight

permits, that are offered by the city of New York. So, some trucks can actually be overweight if they are given permits. He talks about this being a practice that is stopped. So, no new permits, but those permits are allowed to be kept on that truck over time, which is kind of creating a some-have-and-some-don't. This is really interesting in terms of what the issue is that really points to this kind of glacial piece that we don't even have a sense of. And so, I guess, what I'm kind of thinking about is how do we further that enforcement piece that really connects the role and responsibility and the accountability of the city of New York? And I wish I had more time, but we will just pause there.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: I'll give you an answer to that, Council member. And I'm sorry. I don't have that testimony in front of me. Like many things in New York, the system that you are referring to, it's a complicated story. Back in 1986, the federal government had standardized weight restrictions, but they allowed states to grandfather in certain, you know, trucks that had permits for overweight loads. Here in New York there used to be several thousand of them. Over the decades, that

number has sort of a treated down to around 600 and something, but it is true. There are a group of-- it's a pretty small group now-- of trucks that have-- they are actually state permits that allow them to carry overweight loads. And I think there is a lot of feeling that the system is kind of unfair and irrational. If the legacy system. We the city also do permits for what we call overweight indivisible loads. You might think about the tree for Rockefeller Center or big cranes or big beams and things that are needed for big construction. So there is a bit of a patchwork there. And no question, you know, is another part of this process, you know, talking about going up to Albany to talk about automated enforcement, to support the governor's proposal to raise the tolls on overweight trucks and maybe taking a fresh look at this sort of legacy permit system, which I think we agree certainly doesn't serve the times.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Well, again, just thank you both for your time. I look forward to working with you. The impact about Red Hook and Sunset Park is pretty big. And I know I'm going to get taken off the mic here, but the work that we're

doing needs to come back to communities. I heard that from the panel discussion. Let's make that happen.

CARLO SCISSURA: We agree.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: The BQX is one of those things that have been spoken to, so I'm really happy that Council member Levin even just put it in the air. These are all massive projects that need to be coordinated and, I mean, the BQX just needs to disappear, period. But the work that we need to do to really think about this in coordination and frustration that our communities have when the state is just nowhere and that even the elected officials Push this in the way that we need to do is just-- the crisis is big and it's going to have a big impact. And I'm just going to leave it there. Let's continue the conversation.

CARLO SCISSURA: Thank you, Council member.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Thanks, Council member. And thanks for your leadership on this.

CARLO SCISSURA: And thank you, really--

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you.

CARLO SCISSURA: Mr. Chairman, for hosting this today.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Carlo, and thank you for your leadership in the Building Congress. And I know that, you know, this is only, you know, one more phase of these conversations and a lot of work has to be done. And Commissioner, thank you. A lot of work has been done together and more-- much more to be done. And thank you for your leadership and your team putting together our 50 year celebration of Earth Day which will happen on April 19th. And the four year celebration of the car-free day. So, we encourage everyone that will have-- that have [inaudible 03:18:38] we're closing Broadway from 44th to Union Square and we are opening the streets to local artists, to the public, the private, the academic institutions, to use the space and discuss about the future and the better use of our streets. How we share the streets. And also there is going to mail a lot of opportunity to celebrate. Is going to be a climate change March and a lot of things are going to be good. It's going to happen in the city. But thank you again for what you are doing in the [inaudible 03:19:09], too.

COMMISSIONER TROTTEBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So, with that, we are going now to move to the members of the public. We are going to be having two minutes each. So, if testimony takes longer, please summarize, because there is like 35 members, so we are going to be very strict in the two minutes. So, now, we are going to start calling the panel.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Jeremy Siegel, Mark Baker, Kate Slevin, Rachel Weinberger.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Please listen to the names and come to the table and, again, the presentation takes longer, use the two minutes and then gives us the testimony. So, the first member, he will be taking 10 minutes because he is speaking also on behalf of another members of the organization. So, then 10 and then we will continue for everyone on two minutes each.

JEREMY SIEGEL: So thank you. Good afternoon, Council members. My name is Jeremy Siegel. I'm an associate urban designer and planner with the Bjarke Ingels Group, or BIG, and on behalf of our team, I would like to say, Speaker Johnson,

Committee Chair Rodriguez, Council member Levin, City Council and city Council staff for providing this important forum, as well as Commissioner Trottenberg, the Department of Transportation, the Mayor's expert panel, community members, Arup, Mark Wouters, Mark Baker, and all those stakeholders that have been working tirelessly on this challenging problem. So I'd like to take some time today to explain briefly who we are, why we've gotten involved with this, and what we have done over the last year. The so-called BIG plan which Arup and others have touched on in their remarks and recommendations. We are a multidisciplinary firm based in Dumbo and working across planning, urban design, architecture, landscape, and built environment at large. We are based in Dumbo right by the Manhattan Bridge here. I particularly live in the area and have been leading our work on waterfront and coastal infrastructure planning across the country and internationally. For the last six years in particular, I have directed our work on the BIG U conceived in 2015 and the resulting Eastside Coastal Resiliency Project, pictured here, which is now a 1.45 billion dollar capital project beginning construction this year that will help

protect hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers from future storms and has been on the leading edge of complex community orientated and cross jurisdictional planning in New York City. So this project, you age, which is kind of multipurpose open space that doubles as flood protection embodies an approach that we like to call social infrastructure. How can we challenge the 20th century model of infrastructure and create multi-functional projects that work overtime for their communities, doubling, tripling, and quadrupling benefits and making important social and other investments at the same time as we build the infrastructure that is necessary for our cities. So, in short, we are locals. We are concerned about the future of this waterfront. We put together a pro bono team that has been working on this for the last year. Members are listed here. Going to move quickly here because of the new time constraint. But, essentially, we were looking at what we could to in this place that would be similar to the kind of work that Arup has referenced elsewhere in the country that has happened in New York City, as has been mentioned today, on the east side-- Sorry. The west side of Manhattan. And that, even if you look

just about 100 years ago and Brooklyn Heights, that we had a completely different waterfront. With a very different relationship between land and the coastline. So, really thinking about this coastline, not as a static thing, but about as something that is changing and that really needs to be thought about for the next 100 years. So, the idea of the BQP or BQ park-- you can see here-- was essentially to look at this corridor, which has been created in the back of the park by the designers of Brooklyn Bridge Park with a sound attenuating berm running along the length. A parking strip which, both together are there as above for from the existing highway for sound and views, as well as a potential buffer, if a project like this were to occur. So, what we've been looking at essentially is phasing where the highway would be built at grade while operations of the BQE were still continuing. And then, eventually, the roadway would be transitioned back to grade with a park on top, a corridor for light mobility, if desired, and other amenities that would make Intel link Brooklyn back to its waterfront. We have looked at multiple variations of this. And phasing, seen here an overview, and kind of an overall look at what

that would be. So, since about a year ago when we unveiled this concept at the town hall that was held in Brooklyn Heights and subsequent meetings with the expert panel and others, we have been working with the community. We have been meeting with city agencies, including DEP, DOT, DMTA, and others to explore issues that are triggered by scheme like this. And we've really been looking at not just how to do the easy part, which is the cantilever, or let's say the most straightforward part, but all those other aspects that need to be thought about to validate a concept like this and its feasibility.

So, I am just going to go over a couple of those. One of them is integration with Brooklyn Bridge Park. We've been working with Michael Van Valkenbergh, the designers of Brooklyn Bridge Park and kind of stewards of for the last 10 or more years. Looking at that area of interface as a potential BQ park with Brooklyn Bridge Park, looking at the technical implications of either four or six lane roadway, integrated with that sound attenuating berm, looking at potential construction methods. This is the St. Louis Arch Memorial Park that was referenced by Arup and others in their presentations.

We are in a little bit over a year a section of highway here is capped with a deck which is then able to support Park programming and creates a much different relationship between its waterfront and the city behind. So, working with Michael Van Valkenbergh, we've looked at construction impacts to Brooklyn Bridge Park. We determined about two percent of the overall Park area would be physically impacted by a scheme like this. And we've done a series of visualizations showing what the transformation would be. So, from an exposed roadway spewing sound in fumes into the neighborhood, to the covered green hill or escarpment with access from above to below. Similar integrating different kinds of programs, play for use and better connections up and down. A much different kind of Brooklyn Heights Promenade, which would be preserved, but given much better access down. Dealing with the two pinch points or the endpoints at Furman Street and pretty dramatically, I think, at Geralamon [sp?] Street where here you can see what the existing approaches like and here with the viaduct removed. Really, significant transformation. And also, kind of distributing more access along this route will take

pressure off of some of the neighborhoods that are today experiencing a lot of pedestrian traffic. So, you know, what has become clear to us is that this is a park that's not just for Brooklyn Heights or Dumbo, but it's a park that really serves all of Brooklyn. If you look at a user shed with a 30 minute walk, a 30 minute bike, and a 30 minute subway, there is a huge population across a diverse socioeconomic kind of profile which has access to and which uses this park every year. Estimated that about 5 million people use this park every year in and out of Brooklyn. A couple of the other points to bring up. DEP infrastructure is often talked about in relation to this scheme. Any scheme through this area is going to have to deal with the 10 foot [inaudible 03:28:29] that runs for love. You can see here and cross-section and we have been looking at a dedicated utility corridor that when I have are made to the riverward or landward side of either four or six lane roadway. We met with DEP senior staff and received a note fatal flaw kind of assessment for this idea, so it has been incorporated in our rough or magnitude cost estimates. We met with MTA senior staff, as well. In the big news kind of interaction with MTA

infrastructure is seen here. It's an electrical substation which sits in the floodplain and would cost about 100 million dollars to move. So it would be moved in a phased fashion where it would be lifted up on distillates. The roadway would be constructed, and then the rest of the park built around that. It would bring it out of the floodplain, modernize the facility, and integrate it with a new scheme. People ask about how this works with other kind of developments and ideas up and down the corridor. So, we think there is a big opportunity at Atlantic Avenue to rethink are really kind of undesirable condition to sink the roadway below, to create space for parkland, for better, safer on and off-ramps, and for other amenities that might be desired in this area. So, we really don't think it's an either or. We think that the BQP be a keystone, which is the first kind of dealing with the most vulnerable stretch of this corridor, we choose going to need attention over the next decades. So we think that both need to happen. The corridor needs to be looked at, but we also need to act urgently in the most critical areas. And the way that we work in those areas is going to set up a model for the way that we

do the rest of the corridor. So it's important to get this part right. Another question that comes up is how the BQP scheme would work with kind of short-term rehabilitation fix foods that have been recommended by the expert panel and others. And for us, it's a really clear kind of nested strategy where, as the roadway is reduced to four lanes and some sort of physical reinforcement is introduced, that does very well to buy the time that is needed to organize and build the kind of governmental coalition for a scheme like this. It supports the cantilever for eventual use as a park and a second phase with a capped highway as remarked by Arup, would be the natural thing to follow. So I'm just going to end here with a video. And this is the end that just kind of summarizes the potential of an approach like this for this particular part of the corridor.

[video playing]

[background comments]

JEREMY SIGEL: It's true. So this is going to be ongoing conversation. There's a lot of work that needs to be done, but if you'd like to know more about this particular proposal, you can go to BQPark.NYC. There's a full 150 page report, a

website, the video, etc. And we hope to continue the conversation with the community members we've been working with and others over the next years on this. Thank you.

KATE SLEVIN: Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity today. I am Kate Slevin, senior vice president for the Regional Plan Association. And I am joined by my colleague here, Rachel Weinberger, who is RPA's senior transportation fellow. RPA is a nonprofit civic organization that conducts research, planning, and advocacy to improve economic opportunity, mobility, environmental sustainability, and the quality of life for those who live and work in the New York City metropolitan region. With the team at RPA, Rachel and I co-authored RPA's report last year, reimagining the BQE, the first of a number of publications that have called for a narrow BQE and a more community focused planning process. Our president and CEO, Tom Wright, was on the Mayor's BQE panel established shortly after that report's release and we are pleased to work with the community and that. We applaud the city Council for holding this hearing today and pursuing this report with Arup and for Speaker

Johnson's and the Council's steadfast report of reducing car dependency in our city. We proudly support the Council's recommendations on the BQE including narrowing the highway, creating joint city and state entity to manage the project, and embarking on a community driven process and creating a long term vision for the broader BQE and Prospect Expressway. We have called for many of these same approaches and we know that a narrow highway opens up cheaper and new alternatives for reconstruction. Beyond the benefits from a traffic and sustainability perspective, which Rachel will talk about in a minute, reimagining the BQE as a smaller thoroughfare is a more fiscally irresponsible proposal than keeping a six lane highway. The projected costs of fixing the triple cantilever portion alone is three or 4 billion and it will be one of the most expensive project in the city or state capital program, as the Arup report notes. We will only reduce costs by doing this in a more efficient way.

RACHEL WEINBERGER: The lane reduction in particular is a key recommendation of the Council's report and of the Mayor's panel and that is one which we strongly endorse. From a global

perspective, cities across the US and countries around the world are taking lane reduction to the end conclusion and eliminating outdated highways altogether. They are replacing hotbeds of pollution with walkable green spaces, all with no discernible negative impact on traffic, but, instead, a great benefit to the surrounding communities. RPA's analysis found that a four-lane highway could easily accommodate the traffic, especially after the implementation of congestion pricing. A combination of congestion pricing and new transit options could easily reduce traffic on the BQE by 15 to 20 percent, according to our analysis and the Mayor's BQE expert panel, the split-- so the split tolls on the Verrazano are also predicted to reduce car traffic on the BQE. Other travel demand strategies, such as emphasizing more passengers per car and managing trucks could also be used to reduce traffic and make travel more efficient. The new and wider lanes, simplified on and off ramps, means more cars can move per lane than can be moved today. That underscores the importance of reducing the lanes, not replicating. Lane reductions have a history in New York City of working. Historical examples from

closures on the Williamsburg Bridge in the 1980s to the total collapse of the West side Highway in the 1970s has shown that traffic is actually absorbed into the system, much of it falling into public transit. Smaller highways don't result in more traffic jams, they result in fewer cars on the road. It's not unlike the experience of the new and very successful 14th Street bus way or the pedestrian is a shadow of Times Square. In both cases, encouraging the more seamless flow of traffic by deemphasizing car centric options in favor of public transit results in a more pleasant street life without adverse traffic effects. Of course, this isn't just a traffic issue. A smaller BQE means less pollution with fewer cars on the road and it provides an opportunity to re-program the open space with additional parks, housing, and other facilities that provide amenities to residents. As such, RPA stands by you to help as you work with local communities and elected officials reimagine the BQE in ways that help the city break the cycle of dependence and overreliance on automobiles. Thank you for your time today.

MARK BAKER: Hi. I'm Mark Baker and it is great to see my idea make it out into the bright world here. The idea of a capped highway occurred to me as I was jogging down Furman Street and it is so great to see that confirmed now by multiple experts, including the great work done by the BIG group. I want to commend the Council for being open to community inspired solutions and not to take them in anything other than this serious way we've seen you do today. The one thing that I would emphasize listening to everything today is the importance of the environmental side of this project. The BQE, if you take a heat map of articulate manner and pollution in Brooklyn, it is a map of the BQE. So this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to remove, perhaps, the most significant source of pollution in Brooklyn and Queens. And I am hopeful that city government will be able to accomplish that. Thank you so much.

[applause]

[background comments]

MARK BAKER: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And as we will continue listening to [inaudible 03:37:32] for

everyone, I know about challenges in people. I also wanted also for us to also look at the [inaudible 03:37:40], to look at the South Bronx because, right, we are engaged as a city right now. Even though sometimes people, they don't express and they don't open saying what they feel, but what people feel is [inaudible 03:37:56] in New York City that one is more related to the middle class and upper class and the other one is the underserved that no one is visiting, that no one is talking about it. The one with the high rates of asthma and obesity. So I feel as we're saying that as we're looking to the BQE, I know that there's a lot of residents very progressive and fighting for social justice who live along the corridor of the BQE. People living there for decades and [inaudible 03:38:26] that we are all in the same vote, committed to bring social justice. I just want for us to, as we are advocating to make changing the same block when we leave, just think about that we use the same air and the city [inaudible 03:38:42] live with those two realities. So I look at the BQE as a role model things that we should do. I'm thinking right now I've been asking the city [inaudible 03:38:53] those of you that drive through

the FDR and [inaudible 03:38:58] from 178th to Digman [sp?]. It's a big green above so that we can connect to the Highbridge Park with the waterfronts. So I think that-- I know that we all care. We want to be able to bring big changes, thinking about the 100 year plan. So, I want us to encourage all of us who look at the BQE as a role model. The 100 year plan is good, but when you-- I look at the faces of the audience, and there's no diversity there, then there's the challenges that we have. I'm all about now doing my part. I want to say that, you know, anyone who comes from any group that is in power, you will fight for your voice and for your seat, but if you a part of the 35 percent who live in poverty, it's difficult and there's all these excuses why those groups, they don't get involved. And it's more easy because you send an email a group text-- and who will come? Those are the more educated. Those are [inaudible 03:40:04] the voices counting. So, as this conversation will continue on putting the 100 year plan and thinking about the BQE, let's not only think about those who have gentrified the area. But think about those that they've been struggling, fighting everyday to maintain their apartment in

[inaudible 03:40:24]. I feel that we can create something that can benefit everyone. So I want to leave that not only for the first group here, but for the future members of the public that will come to testify. As you talk, think about the city of New York today. 29 percent Latino, 29 percent African-American, 15 percent Asian. It's not the same New York City in the 1900 that used to be 96 percent white, two percent black, and Latino were not counted. So as you think about, from the architecture, if you think about from the academic, if you think about from the business, just plan with the vision for the future of New York City that is very diverse. Thank you.

KATE SLEVIN: If I could just say one thing. RPA's fourth regional plan did look at the city over all and we would be happy to work with you in any borough, any place, and even outside of the five boroughs. So we appreciate that very much. Thank you.

[background comments]

JEREMY SIEGEL: No. I also just want to echo that in terms of kind of open space means, this area is, of course, not the first one that comes to

mind when you look up and down this corridor, but when you look at the criticality of the condition of this highway, it is one of those. And so I think it's important to make sure that it is done right in this place so that, when it happens, and future areas, we have a roadmap for how to make the same thing happen across all of the different portions of the corridor and eventually across the city as a whole.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And, again, like a few years ago, the budget director came here sharing information about how the city invests. The city, through EDC, pulled 185 million dollars of incentive for the business sector that creates jobs. But those jobs are mainly created down 96th street, Long Island City, and Brooklyn. And I feel that-- and what I've been asking the city, let's double that incentive. Let's bring additional 185 million dollars for the private sector that creates jobs in the outer borough area because I present that same idea and [inaudible 03:42:42] a few years ago, challenging the city of New York to have a plan to reduce the number of car owners that we have in the city from 1.4 million New Yorkers that own cars today to 1 million by 2030.

But in order to accomplish those goals, we also have to think about, not only about the infrastructure, but it's also about creating good paying jobs in those community. Because that's how people will be also. You know, if you live in some places in Queens, in the Bronx, a teacher that is looking for a job and he or she needs to walk 15 blocks from the train station to the school, there's a lot of challenges. So, again, this is for me [inaudible 03:43:26] BQE, it's about the whole vision for the future to bring the urban planning around cyclists and pedestrians. So I think is a great idea. Let's see how we can continue engaging not only the professional sector, but also, again, the working class New Yorkers. Thank you. We're going to be taking a five minute break, so if anyone needs to use the restroom, get some water, okay.

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: You may begin.
Anyone. Council member.

[background comments]

KEN FISHER: You know, Mr. Chairman, I had a little bit of déjà vu this morning. I went back and I went I looked-- I actually funded the first

study of doing a tunnel with the Council's support and a Brooklyn Heights bypass. I said putting tens of millions of dollars into rebuilding a 1940s solution instead of integrating it into the community and creating more recreational space seems stupid to me. And, unfortunately, we've had sort of a generation of neglect since then, but there was a little bit of déjà vu all over again. So, I want to thank you and the Speaker and Council member Levin and the other members of the committee for your leadership, for the Arup report and for providing a platform for the advisory panel on these important issues. And I want to say I'm speaking only as an individual, but I live directly across from exit 28A on the highway and I really appreciate the work that so many of my neighbors have done through the organizations you'll hear from in a minute. But the reason I wanted to testify today is, with all due respect to the Speaker, I don't have the same confidence in DOT that he does. And I say that because my neighbors and myself have been complaining for months about the fact that the truck traffic, those overweight trucks that they should've known about and didn't, have been causing our houses to

rattle and DOB's response-- DOT's response was, basically, to tell of, don't worry. It's not causing structural damage. It's only disturbing your sleep and, by the way, repairs don't last that long, so we are going to have to do a big project before we do anything about it. So I had asked-- and the reason I'm here today is to ask the Council to pay particular attention to what happens in the next two years while love you are and meet your current positions because, in response to Council member Levin's question, there was nothing that the panel found that DOT couldn't have found and shouldn't have found. But for kind of a conscious disregard of the realities of the situation. So we wound up with a solution that the commissioners said was impossible and that was, clearly, second rate. And now we are expected to have the very same team that was responsible for that that has wasted two years and tens of millions of dollars to figure out what happens next. I don't think the city can afford to do that. My neighbors certainly can't and I don't think the Council should let them get away with that. You need to hold them accountable. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: If you know mine, please, say your name so for the record.

KEN FISHER: My name is Ken Fisher and I am a Brooklyn Heights resident.

AMY BREEDLOVE: Hello. I am Amy Breedlove from the Cobble Hill Association which is also a member of the Coalition for the BQE Transformation. I, of course, want to thank the Council and the Speaker for what they have done in writing the future of the BQE working with Arup to give us such a detailed and comprehensive report. I would like to address some of the things that you brought up today, Chair Rodriguez. One is that, originally Cobble Hill was not even in the scope of work for this project. I was at one of the regional meetings and said spans to Atlantic. What about Cobble Hill? And was told by Polly Trottenberg, very respectfully, that that a state issue and that she was not going to do that. So, while it seems socioeconomically makes sense that Cobble Hill is paired with some of my neighbors to the north, we have been advocating have only to be included in this. So, I just wanted to bring that up. What we are dealing with in Cobble Hill is we have the most

dangerous on and off ramps that bisect a park at Van Voorhees Park. We have a trench that spews fumes into our neighborhood. It's easy to cap that trench and their Council members here today that talked about that. We have never been able to get that done. And as the report states, the time is now. We must not defer to-- We must not defer real change and continue to find a never ending cycle of patchwork repair, which is what we are doing. Buying another decade and hope that someone else will take on the systematic issues that have prevented a permanent solution in the past. Why can't this change happened in our lifetime and now? And not just for us, Council member, but for everyone who lives near a highway? But we have to start somewhere and we are failing, a gene infrastructure with the cantilever. So, this is really propelled these community groups to come forward and advocate. In my testimony, which I'm not able to read within the two minutes, but you will see that we address asthma. That we address the socioeconomic and sociojustice issues and environmental justice issues that you've brought up. But we cannot speak for those communities, but we invest repeatedly that those

communities also they brought in and part of the discussion. And where we can speak for them, we do. And I just wanted to bring that up as part of the testimony today. I would like the Council to bring together all of our groups and have an open forum where we can all dialog together because, as our coalition has found out, we're all dealing with the same issues, so get us in the room together and say that we agree and they can join our coalition and then we will continue to advance forward and make this happen because we need this multi-of all governmental body into what's right for all New Yorkers. Thank you.

HILLARY JAGER: Good afternoon. I--
Good afternoon.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Sorry. Turn the mic on.

HILLARY JAGER: There we go. Good afternoon. I'm Hillary Jager and I'm a cofounder of A Better Way. As you know, A Better Way was a community group that was formed in 2018 after the DOT hearing precisely to respond to the DOT's proposals and to fight this idea that those were the only two options. We believe that there must be a better

option. Must be a better way. There must be an answer for this problem that is comprehensive, transformative, and environmentally sustainable. And I think you have seen over the course of the last years, the energy from the community, the coordination, and that has brought these different plans to fruit-- or to the table, but it has also brought attention to it. And I want to thank the Speaker and thank the Chair Rodriguez and City Council for your attention to this, your dedication of resources to Arup. I think it's very helpful to have all of that work kind of in one place now. But I think, if anything, today is made me realize, you know, we have come a long way, but we have a really long way to do and we have a lot more coalition building and work to do together. I wanted to talk and, in my written testimony, you know, both about the call for a governance structure and this refrain I kept hearing in my early meetings which was like, it's just too hard. It's just too complicated to get everybody to play in the same sandbox. And I just think there is a tremendous failure of government and leadership and the community will not stop saying that there needs to be coordination. 30 it's to be

some sort of a structure. In this problem is not a problem that is specific to our neighborhood, has he been hearing all day long. It is shared by neighborhoods throughout New York City thing, in particular, up and down the corridor. And we have to start somewhere, so we demand that the government-- some sort of governmental structure be put in place and we're going to work on legislation for that. Also, there are areas of momentum. There are areas of consensus. And, in particular, that is an expanding the view of this project from just being about the cantilever to gain about more of that. And we really believe that should be embraced. As my colleague, Amy, here said, you know, we have been working to build this coalition of community groups and to acknowledge that this is not about just a gene infrastructure. It's about asthma. It's about public health. It's about green space. It's about how communities work and live. It's also about mobility and transportation. We are really cognizant of that. So how can we bring change to the Farragut, Ingersoll, and Whitman Houses? How can we build, really build, this concept-- you know the BQ Green was a concept that was put forward over a decade ago.

Like that fits seamlessly into the BQP. We're not too far away from actually coming up with a solution here and we chose, as Amy said, we need to all get in around, we need to roll up our sleeves, chop the words in front of us and get the work done. And the last thing is to say like their teachers can't be a Band-Aid solution. We can't keep shoring up-- the cost of just shoring up the cantilever while we get our ducks in a row is too much. So, if we can use this as a Keystone and work forward and really fight for an actual solution, I think there is tremendous momentum and willingness to work collectively and with neighborhoods all over the city to see the city turnover and change and become a place that is really for all of its citizens. Thank you.

MARTHA BAKOS DIETZ: Good afternoon. My name is Martha Bakos Dietz. I am the president of the Brooklyn Heights Association, which is one of the founding members of the Coalition for the BQE Transformation. It's a coalition that is expanding and we, at the coalition, and to have plans in place to reach out to communities other than those represented by the current 12 coalition members. The BHA would like to thank the Speaker, the Chair of

this committee, Council member Steven Levin, the entire Council and, in particular, the Council's Land Use staff and Arup for their commitment to solving the challenge posed by the BQE repair and reconstruction project. This hearing is evidence of the critical importance of the future of the BQE to all the neighborhoods which are enjoying this outdated and unsafe highway. The BHA others in our neighborhood first became engaged on this issue when we learned of the Department of Transportation's plan to put six lanes of traffic on top of the promenade. We quickly recognized however, that the problem is bigger than just a Atlantic Avenue to San Street stretch of the BQE. We recognize that this problem has given us the opportunity to reimagine what can be built along the entire BQE corridor to serve and transportation needs of a new age. The BHA, along with our fellow coalition members, calls for a comprehensive and transformative plan for the entire BQE corridor. That's why we are here today. We are certainly not alone in that call. The Mayor's expert panel and the City Council have both recognized the need to address the corridor in its entirety so that New Yorkers can benefit from a plan that doesn't just

move people and goods from one spot to another, but makes divided communities whole, results in cleaner air and quieter streets and serves as a model for how to replace the infrastructure of the past with one for the future. That's the long term. In the short term, and essential and immediate next up is the creation of a governing body made up of local, state, and federal partners who will work together to implement this plan. The governing intensity must be transparent and responsive to the community priorities and work on integrating any immediate repair work with a long-term vision. As for the intermediate repair work, the task force must be set up so that community representatives can meet routinely with the DOT. The BQE has been a problem for decades. At this point, we simply can't spend billions of dollars to replace, in kind, one short section of a crumbling roadway, only to do the same with other sections in the coming years. The time for leadership on this issue is now. New Yorkers deserve a plan to reduce the scale and environmental impact of an antiquated thoroughfare that has served to the transportation needs of the previous century.

They deserve a plan that serves the needs of the next century. Thank you.

MARK WOUTERS: Thank you. My name is Mark Wouters of Mark Wouters Studios. One of our proposals was the first public option that was studied in the Arup report. I am also state chairman for Congress for the New Urbanism. For over two decades, we have been advocates for transforming elevated highways into much more neighborhood friendly urban boulevards. We have successfully done this in Milwaukee. In New York State, we are concentrating efforts on the Buffalo Skyway and I-81 in Syracuse. With great irony, we actually proposed a temporary elevated highway. Basically, to counter DOT's proposal to demolish the promenade and put new spans of highway over the Brooklyn Bridge. But the purpose of that alternative was twofold. Not only does stop demolition, but to bring many agencies to see that there were other technical options that needed to be studied and bring people to the table. We are proud to see the tables that have been assembled this year, including this table, the Mayor's panel, and so many across our community. When at the table, then our goal was to then

encourage, as so many people have said, the solutions for this region are going to be at the regional scale. So, reducing the number of single occupancy vehicles, traffic management, enhancing transit options across the outer boroughs. We believe that that will help the most number of people across the BQE and we support the Mayor's recommendation of doing for lanes in this particular portion of the BQE. Our studio continues to work, since new information has come out, on alternatives which we believe may be lower cost, will have sustainable transportation, examine issues of social equity, and we're looking at opportunities to provide ongoing funding for new parks along the stretch. Thank you.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Patrick Killoke.

Farzana Pritt. Doreen Gallo. Eric McClure and Thomas McMann.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I want to say [inaudible 04:12:02] before anybody else leaves, to please check on the-- since I hear and I see a lot of good grassroots groups, as I mentioned before, car free day is led by the New York City Department of Transportation. So I know that last year there was also working with the Brooklyn borough president.

Some areas in the downtown Brooklyn was also close, so you can file suit through DOT and check on car free day and you will see the website there and tried to get engaged. Get involved.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Mr. Chair, I apologize for missing some of the testimony that was given, but I have it and I will review it. And sorry. I had to step out to another hearing. Your mic.

PATRICK KOLACKE: Got you. Good afternoon. My name is Patrick Kolacke, representing North Heights Neighbors. NHN is a member of the Community Coalition led by BHA, ABW, and Cobble Hill Association. The North Heights sits atop and adjacent to some of the most compromised parts of the structure and is the site of significant BQE caused vibrations that you have probably heard of and that causes a significant effect on our quality of life. We want to thank the panel led by Carlo Scissura and the Council led by the Speaker and the Chair, for the leadership to save us from the promenade highway. Save us and all of Brooklyn and to promote a more sustainable plan. I want to touch on really one main point and we want to urge the Council to support the panel's recommendation to immediately reduce the

roadway to for lanes. The panel found a flaw in DOT's reliability analysis, which we have discussed at length today. They assume the maximum truck weight was 80,000 pounds. As the Speaker noted-- Well, first of all, 11 percent of the trucks are over that weight. That is 1500 trucks a day, a lot more than 23 or 93. Whatever the number was that they have ticketed since they have started the enforcement. And the Speaker noted there were some trucks 170,000 pounds. What does that look like on a roadway? So, with the benefit of accurate data, the panel calculated that the remaining roadway life is far less than assumed. Astonishingly, the mayor characterize to the four lane proposal as unrealistic. On the Brian Lair show on January 31, he acknowledged that the roadway is a serious and present danger, but he went on to dismiss the idea as saying we have to be careful and it is a guarantee for traffic jams. I would suggest due to the public safety concerns and unplanned roadway closures as a greater concern. And then, just so on additional point. I just want to affirm the importance of the Chair's comments about the underserved. To state the obvious, our community brings above-average resources

to bear on this issue and these resources have been a factor in our success in stopping the promenade highway. And I promise you we will continue to apply them. But the underserved also need the same voice and advocacy. And, especially, those living in the shadow of highways and other burdensome infrastructure. The Coalition's principles call for reengineering urban design, an outcome that just helps us and not citywide, not the Bruckner, not the Deegan, not the Cross Bronx is a failure. We really need structural change in our society. Thank you.

FRAZANA PRISI: Hi. I'm Frazana Prisi. I live in Fort Greene and I am a sophomore at the Boerum Hill high school and I am a climate justice advocate. Your actions to the BQE will affect more than you know. From the families who live alongside Eric, to the playgrounds and the ballparks that are considered the hang out spot, the place we chill after school, where toddlers, smiling and giggling on a dog passing by. Where a family makes a joke that's not so funny, but the group laughed hysterically anyways. I am here to tell you, if you have the opportunity to build something greener and safer, you take it. Are you thinking about the toddler giggling

or the friend failing at comedy and the kids laughing? Are you thinking about how you will expose them and future generations to long-term health problems, a collapsing ecosystem, and dying Earth? I stand for youth who are watching and critiquing your actions. Stand for the youth who could not be here because they are school learning, much like I should be right now, and they're hoping for a future that you play a part in destroying. So, dear New York City and DOT, if there is a better option, a greener option, then do the youth a favor and choose it. Thank you.

[background comments]

DOREEN GALLO: Really good job.

Speaker Johnson, Chair Rodriguez and Council member Levin and Council members of the committee, my name is Doreen Gallo. I am here today on behalf of the Dumbo Neighborhood Alliance. I'll refer to as DNA after this. Founded in 1997, DNA is a coalition member of the BQET. We applaud the committee is recommendations that a big solution for traffic and our borough is required. We have had such a solution on the table for years now. Former longtime Cobble Hill Association president, Roy Sloan's BQE two lane

Parkway and cross Brooklyn tunnel plan. I find it ironic that he wasn't at the table in these recent rounds of discussions, but the state recognized them as early as 2006 when they soon to be part of their technical advisory committee. The only citizen nonprofessional member of that team, perhaps you will now rectify this. But we also need to take a fresh look and strong oversight of what DOT has been doing to destroy our local community roads in the area, ripping apart the historic fabric of our neighborhoods by paving over or removing Belgian block that actually helps slow traffic down at the same time, keep the historic nature alive, and keep our communities, mine, Dumbo, especially vital. In 2004, we asked DOT, who occupies an extensive amount of Dumbo's previously open space, nearly the whole of the streetscape underneath the span of the Manhattan branch to carefully consider their storage needs and release these spaces for public use. These sections are closed off with chain-link fencing, barbed wire, aluminum siding, and our formally grand open spaces underneath the Manhattan Bridge remain eyesores. The city DOT has failed to calm traffic in Dumbo, fail to protect its historic resources, including the

Manhattan Bridge Anchorage. And I, for one, while calm the state and the federal government's engagement as part of the transformational plan we require because I saw how great the state was in the last round of engagement from 2006 to 11. And engage citizens like myself, like Royce Sloan, and others who are part of the effort of transformational solutions dating back to the above for Brooklyn Bridge Park was built and also 10 years ago when all these solutions were on the table, ignored by the de Blasio administration until now as we face crisis. We are critical to a long-term success citizens who have lived in these affected communities have built strong citizens engagement and coalitions who know what is need. Have known it for now, for decades, and are still willing to help.

ERIC MCCLURE: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Chair Rodriguez. Council member Levin. My name is Eric McClure. I am the executive director of Streets PAC. We are a political action committee that advocates for safer streets and better public transportation. A lot of good thinking is gone into the various reports that were discussed today by different parties and we want to thank all those

involved further work. While urban highway teardowns are very much in vogue, certainly among advocates, as well as more than a few planners, and while it's true enough that even substantial amounts of vehicular traffic will disappear or get absorbed elsewhere when a major roadway is removed, the BQE reality is that 150,000 daily vehicle trips and a whopping 25,000 daily heavy truck trips as a subset of that aren't going to vanish completely. The potential effects of transfer. Even a portion of that traffic to the local surface streets without a comprehensive plan are very likely untenable. At the same time, it's quite possible that we're missing the forest for the trees by focusing on the engineering challenges posed by the BQE and the triple cantilever, rather than the larger question of how to fix our car problem. Whatever happens with the BQE, we need to be moving relentlessly toward a future in which anyone in New York City can get around easily and efficiently without a car. That question demands as much time, energy, and resources as how we deal with the future of the BQE. But for that immediate problem, there are some themes that urge the Council and the Department of Transportation and other stakeholders

to follow. First, we want to add our voice to those calling for a reduced width BQE as it now exists at the triple cantilever. Four lanes, rather than six, is a critical first step and should be implemented as soon as possible. At the same time, we must implement an effective protocol for barring overweight trucks from the BQE. Secondly, while creating a bypass tunnel might seem like an attractive design option, it's really impossible to justify an 11 billion dollar price tag for what, essentially, is the 20th century design. A highway encased in a tunnel is still a highway. 11 billion dollars could go a long way towards developing a regional freight plan that doesn't change on trucks and highways or to a building new subway lines and rail lines or to creating a true bus rapid transit system. The BIG and Mark Baker proposal to bury and at grade replacement roadway but I need an expanded Brooklyn Bridge Park is a better and somewhat cheaper tunnel alternative, but it also involves dramatic serious engineering obstacles the needs Furman Street. And, even then, it would still mount the hiding in urban highway and needs the green cloak. Ultimately, we need to have the vision to imagine a

future that doesn't involve a four or six lane highway, however pretty its veneer. If we need to bury a highway in a box, we need to simultaneously be thinking outside of that box and planning for a near future in which we are converting those lanes of vehicular traffic to the bus ways, new subway lines, or free rail. We must all be working towards a 21st-century solution that, sooner rather than later, renders the BQE unnecessary. Thank you.

TOM MCMANN: Mr. Speaker and Mr. Chairman, my name is Tom McMann. I'm here on behalf of One Brooklyn Bridge Condo Association at 365 Furman Street. Our building, with 430 units and over 1200 residents is probably the building that is most impacted by this project since we are exactly adjacent to the cantilever. Our formal testimony reiterates many of the recommendations made here today, so I will just briefly summarize. It was around 35 years ago when the state first proposed a plan to rebuild the cantilever and actually had the highway coming through our building. Fast-forward and we now have a beautiful park and we of the building that is fully occupied. And so, what we need more than anything is coordination between all

the parties. We were amazed when DOT first proposed the flyover plan and said that it was the only thing they could consider because they were able to coordinate with other agencies. We would urge you to use the power of the Council to force the city to focus on a coordinated effort, federal, state, city authorities. Everybody should be at the table on this project. The second thing is to move forward with the traffic mitigation plan now. There are so many good recommendation in Carlo Scissura's expert panel report. The, unless you hold city DOT's feet to the fire, I expect we will be delayed for quite some time. The final issue with DOT is the need for transparency. A lot of conversation about transparency, but, for the first time today, we learned that the city DOT had released a procurement for a repair program at a certain section of the highway. They set of shared that with the larger community. Maybe they did and we missed it, that I would urge them to be more proactive in that vein. And then, finally, just a comment on the good work that the Arup study dated. Took up Chairman Rodriguez's point, I would urge the city Council to do that for the entire city. I mean, it's time to

take a very local focused look at transportation needs. Thank you.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Calvin Nicholsteen.
Alexandria Sica. Tova Petoskey. Celeste Gudas.
April Sonneborn. Pia Scalazenkla. Cindy
McLaughlin. Rosie Sloan.

[background comments]

LEGAL COUNSEL: And Laurie Garret.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Go ahead.

TOVA PETOSKEY: Good afternoon. My name is Tova Petoskey. Before I get into my prepared comments, just want to say to Council members and the speaker that I am inspired by your comment to us today. And, especially, Councilman Rodriguez, I want to say to you specifically, that when some people might see negativity and I see opportunity. And then say, I know that what I would like to do is maybe meet with you or members of your staff to talk about if people have not been-- members of different communities have not been part of this conversation, I see that there is plenty of opportunity for that to happen and for them to be, vital part. So, and if anybody is not been included, I know-- of course, a lot of people are just at work, but there is plenty

of opportunity to bring people who have not been part of this conversation into this part of the conversation. And I, for one, and members of the coalition's that I work with would like to encourage and bring people into that. So, if there is an opportunity for us to meet with you or your staff to talk about that, and thank you for bringing that point up. It's very vital. Okay. So not going to be really fast. I represent the Downtown Brooklyn Co-op Alliance and the Cabinet Park Conservancy. The alliance consists of elected board members from different co-op buildings along San Street and Atlantic Avenue and this includes-- some of these properties you may be familiar with. Concorde Village, 140 Cabinet Plaza North, Henry-- 75 Henry Street. Cadman Towers, where I live, the St. George Tower and 160 Columbia Heights. So, combined, Council members, we represent over 4000 people who live in the downtown Brooklyn area. I specifically want to thank upfront Speaker Johnson and the members of the Council for commissioning the Arup report. I also want to think the Brooklyn Heights Association and A Better Way and the Cobble Hill Association and the other community groups for their unfailing

activism in the defense of our homes. You may remember the movie or have heard of the movie The Day the Earth Stood Still. For those of us living in downtown Brooklyn, that day was September 28th, 2018. That's the day that Commissioner Trottenberg revealed the plan to build the flyover highway. I'm just going to just cut to the end. Our organization supports the request by Congresswoman Velasquez and Comptroller Stringer and other elected officials who have signed a letter and sent to the Commissioner asking that community groups, civil groups be part of the conversation and be part of a review panel moving forward. Okay. Thank you for your time.

PIA SCALA ZENKEL: Hi. My name is Pia Scala Zenkel and I'm a member of North Heights Neighbors which represents Brooklyn Heights residents North of Clark Street and is part of the BQE Transformation Community Coalition. I would like to express my gratitude to the panel and the city Council for their leadership in thinking about how a new and more sustainable plan would benefit all communities. I live at 20 Willow Street and the corner of Middaugh Street in the North Heights and, over the past 18 months, I didn't need to be an

engineer to know that the BQE was deteriorating. My evidence comes from the fact that my husband and I are awakened on a daily basis at 5:30 a.m. when the trucks began their parade at high speeds. My evidence comes from the giant boom, rattle, and rumble we hear as they continuously had a particular spot in the underpass off of exit 28A. Evidence comes from a vibration and reverberation and reverberations of which coincides with the boom and, literally, shakes the floor beneath my bed and rattles my doors and windows. Sleepless, anxious nights in a quaking 150-year-old home where my family has lived for over 40 years. That is my evidence and proof positive that mitigation cannot wait. I fully endorse all recommendations put forth by the expert panel, one with which I know which would have immediate positive impact is to reduce the BQE to four lanes now. We are perplexed and angered that the Mayor publicly contradicted this and put traffic jam concerns above public safety and community. I would like to add that we also need to enforce a speed limit with cameras. The bottom line is we don't trust the DOT. For the past 18 months, the vibrations grew in severity and the DOT did nothing.

Finally, they agreed to put monitors in our homes to measure the vibrations in relation to the BQE. After much delay, the results read there appears to be some correlation between the roadway and perceptible residential vibrations. What is being done to mitigate this? Nothing. They kick the can until the weather window closed and we were then promised a resurfacing in the spring. We have no confidence that they will follow through and pinpoint the section causing these untenable vibrations, nor that they will properly resurface the roadway in the spring. We would need the Counsel to hold them accountable. Thank you.

CINDY MCLAUGHLIN: Good afternoon. I'm Cindy McLaughlin. I'm the CEO of Envelope. We are a technology company focused on zoning and urban planning. I am also a member of the Coalition for the Transformation of the BQE and a resident of 360 Furman at the pinch point of Geralomon. I'm here today in my personal capacity, but I'm active in all these groups. Thank you to all of you, the City Council, the Chair, the Speaker, for asking this here today to listen, learn, and offer our thoughts on this important topic. Thank you for Arup and all the

groups that presented here for their forward thinking view on how we can transform the BQE. The Mayor's expert panel did great work on its report that recommended traffic mitigation, lane reduction, and a multi-stakeholder authority to manage a visionary BQE project in its entirety, not just the currently crumbling Atlantic-Sans stretch. This is an important step. But because of the extent of this vision, it could take a decade or more to establish that same panel also suggests spending the next two to five years and billions of taxpayer dollars on major repairs to maintain the Atlantic-Sans stretch in place as an aboveground highway, meant to last for the next decade or two while we figure out the bigger picture. This is an extensive, disruptive, and unproductive Band-Aid to be sure. The Council's report on the BQE presents a thoughtful analysis of the options that can be deployed immediately to achieve a future forward solution to the decaying Atlantic-Sans corridor. With the fantastic BIG Mark Baker plan coming out as the top option, based on its great outcomes and the most balanced time and costs. I recognize that there is a long-term versus short-term balancing act in play here, but the Atlantic-

Sans corridor that is in crisis today, with terrific future forward plans on the table today, should be handled today as a demonstration of how we can do this right. Any time and dollars spent there should be an investment in service of a future vision, rather than hardening the highway and place against it. This boldly revamped section of the BQE can then be held out as a shining example of what's possible for the rest of the BQE and all our urban highways. Thank you.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. I'm sorry that you didn't go sooner, Larry.

[background comments]

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Turn the--

ROY SLOAN: I have this thing on-- Yeah. I've got it on, now. My name is Roy Sloan. I am the longest serving citizen member of CB6 Transportation Committee. I think I was the only citizen that was on both the Stickles Advisor Committee and Technical Advisor Committee during the stay process. A long time civic leader and resident of Cobble Hill today. I'd like to make it clear that I'm speaking on my own behalf. I am very, very happy to be here. I know you called me up as Rosie and I am feeling rosy

today, but my name is really Roy. As the person who first proposed the tunnel 10 years ago along this alignment in downtown Brooklyn and I think I'm the first person who made the observation about two lanes in two directions. It's taken many years for people to accept that. And I think I'm the first person who called for a city state combine. The federal government has always been involved in this and has to be involved in it. So, they are involved in it. So, it is deeply gratifying and thrilling for me to have my ideas validated by one of the world's great transportation engineering firms and by this body. I deeply thank you. I extend my deep appreciation to Corey Johnson and the Transportation Committee members for asking the team and Arup for their comprehensive review and recommendations for restoring the triple cantilever roadway. But most especially for going beyond simply looking at the immediate problem. You have seen the tremendous transformative potential that a cross downtown Brooklyn tunnel offers to resolving the transportation issues on the BQE in downtown Brooklyn and the surrounding residential communities. Not to mention, improving mobility for Brooklyn's businesses

and even for Brooklyn's drivers living areas far from mass transit. But most importantly, have seen how a tunnel will improve air quality, improve the health of our citizens, and make our downtown Brooklyn and all the surrounding communities more livable, more walkable, and more bikeable. And you have also recognized and clearly stated that simply fixing the TCR provides no transportation benefit or improvement at all. It merely prevents a truck from collapsing a section whereas a tunnel provides a way to preserve and leverage the TCR repair into a 21st century transportation improvement for our entire region. And I just would like to add one thing.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Finish your testimony. You were very patient.

ROY SLOAN: Thank you.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Finish your entire testimony.

ROY SLOAN: Thank you. I appreciate it. What Arup did not mention is that the tunnel is the only option on the table that will actually pay for itself over time through tolls on roadway users. And who knows? The carbon recapture plant that I hope will be included in the Brooklyn Navy Yard may start

to pay dividends sooner than you might think. Finally, after having attended and hundreds of meetings on traffic and transportation matters on CB6 and CB2, over many years, I can think of no greater benefit or blessing that you could boast of on our community and our region. Bottom line, Brookline and New York deserves the 21st century transportation solution that defines us at the forefront of technology. Thank you so much. This is going to be a happy day for me.

SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Roy, for your patience. For spending all this time. Thank you to all of you who have taken time out of your busy days to be here. We really appreciate it. Is that everyone that has testified? Mr. Chair, do you want to say anything? I want to thank you all very much. I apologize for some of the testimony in that I missed, but I will definitely review it. I have a book here and I look forward to continuing this conversation, coming up with consensus, figuring the path forward, working with our federal presented evidence. I'm so glad Dan is here from Nydia's office. And working with Joanne and Brian in the state legislature to actually move something forward

that's going to work for the entire corridor. So, thank you all so very, very much. Thank you. This hearing is now adjourned.

[gavel]

[background comments]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date March 25, 2020