

JOHN SECTION

Good morning and thanks for having us, especially to Committee Chair Brooks-Powers. I'm John McCarthy, Chief of Policy and External Relations for the MTA. Before we get started, I want to introduce the rest of our panel. We've got New York City Transit President Demetrius Crichlow, MTA Chief Customer Officer Shanifah Rieara and MTA Chief Financial Officer Jai Patel.

It's not lost on us that we're here a week after the most transit-focused election in years. Buses especially were top of the agenda for Mayor-elect Mamdani, and that makes sense. They are an underrated part of our transit system, serving 1.4 million paid customers per weekday. That's up 12 percent from last year. And while Customer Satisfaction is currently the highest it's been since spring 2023, we are always looking for ways to improve.

In fact, this has been one of our top strategic priorities for the last several years, and we're making progress. Frequencies have been increasing on routes across the City, but also on the subway and our commuter railroads. Metro-North and LIRR are making a ton more stops within the City and serving a lot more customers, especially with CityTicket.

A big reason we're able to add all this new service – while other transit systems across the country are making tough cuts – is because of our partners in Albany. Big thank you to Governor Hochul and to our partners in the New York State Legislature – including Mayor-elect Mamdani, who, as an Assembly member, pushed for action to assist transit with the post-COVID fiscal cliff.

With our finances stabilized, we're able to focus on the future. There's plenty of new rolling stock on the way as part of MTA's \$68.4 billion 2025-2029 Capital Plan – not to mention other important upgrades that are key to our ability to run strong service. So, there's a lot to look forward to.

Now I'll kick it over to Demetrius to discuss some Transit specific topics.

DEMETRIUS SECTION

Thanks, John. As the President of New York City Transit, providing safe and reliable service for New Yorkers will always be a top priority of mine. Buses are how we keep neighborhoods connected and serve as vital lifelines for some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers. So, over the past year we've made big investments in bettering our bus network which has translated into great strides in improving service for riders.

The Queens Bus Network Redesign went live this summer after six years of back-and-forth with the community. We held over 300 events – which many of you attended. We incorporated more than 18,000 comments, both in-person and online. All in the interest of creating a better, faster bus system for the borough's 800,000 daily riders. Our almost \$35 million investment – which I'll point out will be annual – is already paying off. We'll be releasing a six-month update in the new year, but I can tell you now that the preliminary data is promising.

Like on the new rush routes that we introduced. When redesigning the network, we looked at where riders were located far from transfer points and business centers. We then made strategic changes, creating rush routes to get them to these connections and destinations faster. That effort has paid off. We've seen buses moving 7 percent faster on average with some rush routes experiencing even greater increases like the Q111, which is moving 15 percent faster.

Where we need your help is with traffic management on the streets. New buses are great, but it's no good for anyone if they're constantly stuck in gridlock. Luckily, we know what we need to do, and that is to build more bus lanes and busways.

Look, we all know there have been shortcomings on this front. The City's built out just a fraction of the miles required by law. We're hopeful the incoming mayor will turn that around because we know bus lanes and busways work.

Just look at the busway on Jay St in Brooklyn where we've seen speed increases of 20 percent, or 14th Street in Manhattan with a 30 percent speed increase or even on Archer Av in Queens that's experienced a 48 percent increase in speeds. Busways make a real difference all over the city.

We're also committed to expanding MTA's Automated Camera Enforcement program, as well as the use of Transit Signal Priority, so our buses can communicate with traffic signals to keep them moving. We all know double parking is a huge issue in this city. But with ACE, when private cars block our way, we can snap a photo and quickly send out fines, which we know are a powerful deterrent. When we implement ACE, drivers quickly learn fines add up. Once in effect for some time, only nine percent of drivers receive a second fine.

I know we're here today to talk about Buses but as the head of the city's entire transit system I'd be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to mention our subways and Paratransit services. To build a robust comeback after the pandemic we knew we needed to deliver fast, reliable and safe service. I'm proud to say we've done just that. Crime is at a historic low – down 4.6 percent since this time last year. And it's thanks to our law enforcement partners and the investments made by Governor Hochul like cameras in every subway car and barriers on platforms at over 100 stations. Subway on-time performance is at record highs with September achieving an 85 percent OTP which represents the best September in modern history. We've even added service on 16 subway lines, and most recently increased service earlier this month on the A and L lines which will improve service for 100,000 weekday riders.

Paratransit also continues to deliver for riders. Last month Paratransit hit an all time ridership record by completing one million trips in October. All while maintaining impressive on-time performance.

While I'm proud of these achievements I know there's more work to do. We appreciate our partnership with City Council and look forward to working together in the years to come to deliver even more for New Yorkers.

With that, I'll turn it over to MTA Chief Customer Officer Shanifah Rieara

SHANIFAH SECTION

Thanks, Demetrius. Before we get to your questions, I just want to take a moment to talk about the work my team is doing on Customer Communications.

I'm happy to report that we're seeing a continual rise in customer satisfaction across all agencies. For Buses, we've seen an 11-point jump between fall 2024 and spring 2025, and we're working hard to drive those numbers up even higher – particularly as we transition away from MetroCard.

Fair Fares is another priority. We've been on record supporting an expansion to the eligibility requirements – up to 200% of the federal poverty level – so more New Yorkers can benefit. It doesn't make sense that a person working minimum wage makes too much to qualify.

Our team is ready to help you meet the demand. We're on track to open another 14 Customer Service Centers by the end of the year – bringing our systemwide total to 30 -- where eligible New Yorkers can sign up for Fair Fares 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Station agents can also help folks apply to the Reduced Fare program and answer any questions they might have about switching over to tap-and-ride.

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL TESTIMONY
JOHN MCCARTHY / DEMETRIUS CRICLOW / SHANIFAH RIEARA
DRAFT AND CONFIDENTIAL – NOVEMBER 12, 2025

It's important to us that riders have a resource in their communities for assistance. No need to come all the way down to our 3 Stone Street location – we're meeting riders where they're at.

I know we all share the same goal of making the transit system run better for New Yorkers. So, thanks again for having us. We're now happy to take your questions.

**NYC Department of Transportation Testimony Before the
City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
November 13, 2025**

Good morning, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am Diniece Mendes, Assistant Commissioner for Transit Development. With me today is Rick Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Adams and Commissioner Rodriguez on the Administration's work on New York City's bus system.

DOT continues to work collaboratively and creatively with the MTA to improve the bus rider experience citywide, ensuring that New Yorkers have bus service that they can depend on at any time of the day. We have achieved historic street safety and accessibility improvements under this Administration, including record-breaking measures to protect cyclists, safeguard pedestrians, enhance intersections, make it easier for people with low-vision to use our streets, improve bus service, and augment bus stop amenities. Our recently completed or in-construction transformative bus priority and accessibility projects will improve commutes for nearly 400,000 daily bus riders along 5.2 miles of new and 4.6 miles of improved bus lanes. This builds on our success in 2024, having delivered 17.9 miles of new, upgraded, or newly-protected bus lanes – the highest annual mileage for protected bus lanes ever.

We continue to improve buses citywide through our Better Buses Action Plan and the NYC Streets Plan, focusing on bus priority corridors. In September, we announced our plan to begin installing new bus lanes on Flatbush Avenue this fall, which includes advancing a plan for center-running bus lanes between Livingston Street and Grand Army Plaza. Thanks to our previous investments, like the \$1.5 million investment from the FY26 Adopted Budget, we can make transformational upgrades to the pedestrian and transit rider experience and the broader public realm for nearly 30,000 daily bus riders.

Our most recently completed project on Hillside Avenue in Queens includes nearly eight miles of new and improved bus lanes, one of our longest bus priority projects in history, and delivers faster and more reliable bus service for 215,000 daily riders on 22 bus routes along the corridor. Other recent projects include the expansion of bus-mounted camera enforcement on 96th Street, Second Avenue, and along Allen, Pike, and Madison Streets in Manhattan, and construction of 1.4 miles of new bus lanes on Third Avenue between 96th Street to 128th Street in Manhattan. We're in the home stretch of our building season and will be delighted to update the final numbers in February in our Streets Plan Update.

Making buses faster and more accessible is a top priority. We continue this work by adding Transit Signal Priority to speed up buses, expand bus lane camera enforcement, and support MTA Bus Network Redesign efforts with borough bus priority plans. Thus far in 2025, we have studied Transit Signal Priority across 10+ bus routes. Last year, NYC DOT upgraded dozens of

bus stops to be physically accessible and expanded our accessible pedestrian signals, all as part of our Five-Year Accessibility Plan. We can enthusiastically say, there's many more good things to come for New York City bus riders.

Legislation

Turning to the legislation before the Council today:

Introduction 339

First, Intro. 339 sponsored by Council Member Narcisse. This bill would ensure that drivers are not receiving multiple summonses for the same violation of driving in a designated bus lane. DOT already ensures that drivers don't receive multiple tickets for the same violation through our back-office process. We look forward to working with the council and support the bill.

Introduction 647

Next, Intro. 647 sponsored by Council Member Riley. This bill would require DOT to post signs on each block of any street subject to bus lane restrictions. The bill also proposes publishing the days and hours during which bus lane restrictions are in effect for all streets that are subject to any such restrictions on the website. In accordance with MUTCD guidance, we already install at least one bus lane sign per block, subject to bus lane restrictions. Additionally, we already publish the Bus Lane Restrictions dataset on DOT's Data Feed webpage and NYC Open Data. We support the goals of the bill and look forward to working with the Council.

Introduction 1345

Finally, Intro. 1345 sponsored by Chair Brooks-Powers. This bill would require DOT to provide notice, as practicable, to owners of homes and businesses when new bus stops are designated to be placed within 50 feet of such homes and businesses or when existing bus stops within 50 feet of such homes and businesses are designated to be removed. DOT conducts substantial outreach to communities whenever the agency implements changes to the local transportation network. Importantly, this outreach is an iterative process working with elected officials, community boards, and various stakeholders to inform communities of our planning and design of projects from inception to implementation.

On average, DOT installs, removes, and maintains nearly 4,000 bus stop no standing signs and 11,000-12,000 bus stop route/destination panels each year. By way of illustration, nearly 12,000 bus stop panels were installed, removed, and maintained as part of the Queens Network Redesign. Although DOT supports the intent of this bill to increase awareness of any changes to bus stops, the legislation presents challenges that are beyond our limited staff capacity and would delay implementation of critical safety, accessibility, and service reliability improvements. We enthusiastically commit to working with you to identify strategic and tailored outreach plans in relation to bus stops.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Council for the opportunity to testify before you today. We would now be happy to answer any questions.



**Testimony of Katelyn Villatoro, New York City Policy Fellow
New York League of Conservation Voters
City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Oversight Hearing on NYC's Bus System (Network, Operations, Equity, and Redesign)
November 13, 2025**

My name is Katelyn Villatoro and I am the New York City Policy Fellow at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for the opportunity to testify.

Public transportation is the cornerstone of an accessible city. As such, New Yorkers deserve to have their buses be affordable, sustainable, efficient, and most importantly, reliable. Investing in our bus system is vital for both quality of life and environmental interests. We are here today to highlight a few areas for growth in our bus systems, and to underscore the need for support from City Hall in order to deliver services quicker. This is an area that requires collaboration from several agencies and stakeholders, so it is important to meet the needs of New Yorker's with united action.

This year, the NYC Comptroller's Office released a [report](#) that found one-third of buses fail to show up on time, bus speeds have remained stagnant over the past 10 years, and buses fail to reach stops at their scheduled time 30% of the time. A majority of buses are performing at a below average standard. This is unacceptable from a major method of public transport. This is also a working class issue: those who feel these effects the most are marginalized communities who typically live in outer borough neighborhoods without subway access. Another [report](#) from the Rider's Alliance found that bus riders are 75% New Yorkers of color, and over 50% earn less than \$51,000. While the MTA and NYC DOT have sought to improve bus performance and boost ridership, such as utilizing dedicated bus lanes, automated enforcement, and transit signal priority, in reality the implementation has been slow moving.

According to the [2025 Mayors Management Report](#) (MMR), DOT installed 5.5 miles of bus lanes in Fiscal 2025, a shocking 65% decrease from Fiscal 2024. The MMR cites resource constraints as its reasoning. As such, NYLCV urges more funding for DOT staffing and resources to increase bus lane completion. This Administration is nowhere near the mandates of the NYC Streets Plan, which in part requires DOT to install 150 miles of dedicated bus lanes and 500 bus stop upgrades. As Congestion Pricing continues to show [positive results](#), we strongly encourage getting back on track with the milestones and goals laid out in the NYC Streets Plan, restarting long-stalled busway projects such as the Fordham Road busway in the Bronx and Flatbush

Avenue Center-Running bus lane in Brooklyn, and implementing additional bus measures such as bus camera enforcement.

When it comes to affordable transit, the Fair Fares program is crucial in making public transportation more accessible for New Yorkers. The program helps eligible New Yorkers with low incomes manage their transportation costs by providing them with discounted subway and bus fares. Currently, we stand with advocates urging the Administration to expand Fair Fares to 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL), including expanding free fares to qualified applicants below 150% FPL and half fares for applicants between 150% and 300% FPL, as well as increase funding for program outreach and education. Not only do we need greater investment in the Fair Fares program to expand eligibility, we also need more investment for outreach and education to make sure residents who qualify are using the program, as well as expansion of the program so that other forms of public transportation discounts such as for Citi-Bike, Metro North, and Long Island Railroad, are included. With the cost of living only increasing, it is critical that we ensure affordable transportation for everyone.

We need transformational change going forward and we urge the next Administration to prioritize Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Bus rapid transit, or BRT, provides frequent, high-capacity bus service comparable in quality to rail and subway systems, at a fraction of the cost. Faster and more efficient than traditional bus systems, BRT uses a combination of design features and technical elements to deliver high-quality service to bus riders. The benefits of BRT include faster travel, lower emissions, and safer streets. As it currently stands, the priority measures put out by NYC have never even reached the baseline speed rating of a BRT corridor. If we were to implement these successful corridors, it is [estimated](#) the average bus speed in NYC on BRTs could be increased from 8.5 mph to 13.2 mph. As part of BRT improvements, we urge DOT and the MTA to work together to implement more high-quality busways and center-running bus lanes citywide, all door boarding, and improve the effectiveness of automated enforcement. As the Riders Alliance has [identified](#), major corridors with slow speeds and high ridership that have been identified by experts are prime for new bus rapid transit routes, including, but not limited to: Flatbush Avenue, Utica Avenue, Brooklyn Linden Boulevard, Brooklyn Main Street, Queens Merrick Boulevard, and Queens 125th Street.

Resolution 0061

In today's hearing, we express our support for Resolution 0061, which calls upon the MTA to remediate any transportation structure, primarily elevated train lines, with extremely high levels of lead. As a member of the New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP), NYLCV stands with advocates calling for the elimination of lead poisoning in New York City because no level of lead exposure is safe, as even small amounts can cause neurological damage and other health problems. There have been multiple concerning reports that highlight subway lines in [Queens](#) and [Brooklyn](#) with fallen chips containing up to more than forty times the legal limit. New Yorkers should not have to be concerned for their health when they step on a subway, so eliminating lead in our subway system is of the utmost importance.

As we approach a new mayoral administration and new City Council session, we emphasize the importance of working together to invest in our city's bus system – whether it's making it more affordable, building more bus lanes, or investing in DOT staffing and resources. The next Mayoral Administration needs to take our bus system's issues seriously and restart long-standing bus projects that have been put on hold. Projects like these are ready to move forward, but simply need the green-light from the Mayor to move forward with implementation.

Our bus system is a lifeline for many New Yorkers and we cannot afford to neglect it. If we want our city to meet its climate goals and reduce air pollution, we must invest in public transit.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



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Progress on Buses, More to Come on Fares

Testimony to the NYC Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

November 13, 2025

Good afternoon, I'm Brian Fritsch, Associate Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. Thank you to Chair Brooks-Powers for the opportunity to testify today.

On Monday, we stood with the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign to announce the winners of the 18th annual Pokey and Schleppeie awards, given to the city's slowest—the M42—and least reliable—the Q8—high ridership bus routes. We do this to highlight the need for more investment from not only the MTA, but also NYC DOT.

This is in part because both the M42 and Q8 are good examples of what the MTA is doing right to make buses run more reliably. The M42, while still objectively slow, was also considerably faster than in 2024, a direct result of congestion pricing. Likewise, the Q8 recently had 25% of its over 100 stops cut during the Queens Bus Network Redesign in a smart effort to make it more reliable. Will see how it does in next year's awards—we're hopeful!

We also, for the first time this year, offered a new "Mazel award" for the most improved service to the M79, which improved from 6.63 to 7.25 MPH, and the SIM32 express bus, which jumped by more than 2 MPH. Neither of these improvements would have been possible without congestion pricing.

In short, riders are seeing progress, but we can only continue to do so with a city—and especially a mayor—willing to properly enforce busways and priority bus lanes, invest in signal priority technology, and, we sincerely hope, finally follow the NYC streets plan.



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We also would be deeply appreciative of a Mayoral Administration that promises to keep affordability a priority and partner with this council to expand the Fair Fares program. Currently, Fair Fares only enrolls about a third of eligible New Yorkers, which is dismal. We would love to see automatic enrollment in the future, so that low-income residents who are already getting other benefits that clearly qualify them for Fair Fares don't have to jump through additional hoops. If they are struggling to enroll, we should make things easier.

Additionally, expanding Fair Fares to over 200% of the Federal Poverty Level would finally expand eligibility to minimum wage New Yorkers, who are incredibly likely to be transit dependent. Coupled with other improvements like fully free fares for the lowest income New Yorkers and expansion to the commuter railroads and express buses in New York City, we could take this program from a good idea to one that transforms how people move around the city.

As a Council, you have been steadfast in your commitment to riders. Let's get on board with making bus service and Fair Fares even better. Thank you.



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Jean Ryan's Disabled In Action Testimony to the City Council 11-13-2025 on Bus Issues

Hello, I am Jean Ryan, president of Disabled In Action of Metropolitan NY, DIA for short. Three big bus issues concern us in DIA: the inaccessibility of express buses, the failure of all NYCT buses to pull up to the curb for passengers, and the drive to eliminate bus stops.

Express Bus Inaccessibility

Express buses go from the outer boroughs to and from Manhattan. All have lifts for people with mobility disabilities but the drivers are poorly trained, especially on buses on weekends, holidays, and in the evenings and on weekends when untrained fill-in drivers often work. As I have testified before, it leads to boarding times up to an hour or being left at the curb or the FDNY getting us off the buses. Of course, that is not good! All drivers should be regularly trained or they should not be driving express buses.

Failure of Buses to Pull up to the Curb

There is an epidemic of bus drivers who do not pull their buses up to the curb and that makes it difficult to impossible for many riders to get on or off the bus. There is little supervision or enforcement of the rule to pull up to the curb and it is not safe for the bus to be out in the street. Sometimes e-bikers drive in that space when someone is trying to exit or get on the bus!

Removal of Bus Stops

On 14th Street, many bus stops were removed and people continue to suggest that as a solution to slow buses, but studies showed that it hardly has any effect on bus speed. It does, however, have a huge impact on the inability of ambulatory people with disabilities to take the bus at all.

We want better bus driver training and enforcement of rules as well as keeping the bus stops we already have and not reducing them.

Thank you.

Jean Ryan, President

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Additional DIA testimony to Nov. 13, 2025 Bus Oversight Hearing Testimony by Jean Ryan

Please add this testimony to my previous testimony that I presented in person and handed you the written version of.

Tickets for AAR broker vehicles dropping off or picking up people in bus lanes

Broker drivers who are driving for Access-A-Ride are getting tickets for dropping off or picking up passengers in bus lanes, but there is no other place to drop them off. These tickets are automatically given from cameras at bus stops or on buses. Drivers do not know what to do or they don't have time to deal with the bureaucracy to try to get them annulled, and when they have appealed, they still have to pay the fine. I understand that there are people who look at the videos and decide, but this system is not working. Many streets have a bike lane on one side and a bus lane on the other side. It does not work to drop off or pick up Access-A-Ride passengers around the corner or further away. Many people who take AAR cannot walk far or well or they cannot see. Some people need to be helped to the door.

What is the solution to AAR broker drivers being ticketed for picking up or dropping off people in bus lanes? How can the remedy be streamlined?

Lack of benches at bus stops and the meaningless, unhelpful bus leaning posts

Someone's bright idea of installing hostile architecture in the form of leaning posts at bus stops instead of benches has spread to the DOT. A bus stop at Bay Ridge Parkway and 4th Avenue has a long (two?) leaning post and no benches. Despite people with disabilities saying that the leaning bars do not help, they are continuing to put them wherever they want. No one besides a gymnast can sit on the leaning bars. Seniors, people with disabilities, and children need benches and plenty of other people need them, too, when they are waiting 20 minutes to an hour for a bus. DOT claims that the leaning bars don't take up as much space as benches. People need benches, period. They do not need leaning bars ever. For years, if people needed to lean, they leaned against a tree, a column, or a building. Our efforts to convince DOT to stop putting leaning bars and only put benches in bus stops has not stopped or curbed their enthusiasm for leaning bars like they are doing us a big favor.

The council could ban leaning posts and should ban them.

Thank you,

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November 13, 2025

NYC Hospitality Alliance comments before the NYC Council's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on Int. No. 1345, *A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to providing notice to home and business owners regarding the creation or removal of bus stops*

The NYC Hospitality Alliance is a not-for-profit association representing thousands of restaurants, bars, and nightlife venues across the five boroughs. We submit this comment in support of Int. 1345, a Local Law to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York in relation to providing notice to home and business owners regarding the creation or removal of bus stops.

The addition or removal of a bus stop can significantly impact small businesses. Providing advance notice of such actions is critical, as it allows businesses to better plan for how these changes may affect their operations—such as the addition or removal of parking spaces, loading zones, or bike lanes. Notably, the addition of a bus lane may restrict a restaurant's ability to operate a roadway café under the Dining Out NYC program.

Therefore, we recommend that provisions be added to Int. 1345 to account for such situations, as they can have financial implications for small businesses, local jobs, and city tax revenue. Suggested provisions include:

- **Consideration of existing roadway cafés:** When establishing new bus stops, the Department of Transportation (DOT) should take into account the location of existing roadway cafés and, when practical, locate new bus stops elsewhere to avoid their removal.
- **Seasonal timing:** If the installation of a new bus stop will require the removal of a roadway café, such installation should occur after **November 30** of each year to minimize economic impacts during the warmer months, when outdoor dining is most active.
- **Coordination with license periods:** When feasible, roadway cafés should only be removed for the installation of a new bus stop at the expiration of their active license period.
- **Financial relief and responsibility:** If a roadway café must be removed due to the installation of a bus stop, the restaurant should receive a prorated refund of the license and consent fees, and the removal should be carried out at the expense of the Department of Transportation.

We appreciate the Council's efforts to ensure transparency and to protect the interests of small businesses that contribute so much to New York City's economy and vitality. We respectfully urge the Council to incorporate these recommendations into Int. 1345 to help achieve a balanced approach that supports both improved public transit and a thriving local business community.

Thank you for your consideration.

If you have comments or questions, please contact our executive director Andrew Rigie at 212-582-2506 or arigie@thenycalliance.org.



Testimony before the NYC Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Rachel Swaner
November 13, 2025

Thank you to Chairperson Brooks-Powers and to all the Committee members for this opportunity. My name is Rachel Swaner, and I am the Vice President of Policy, Research, and Advocacy at the Community Service Society of New York (CSS), an organization dedicated to helping everyday New Yorkers achieve economic security and well-being, leading to a stronger and more equitable New York.

Right now, too many New Yorkers are struggling to stay afloat. Our recent *Annual Survey of Housing and Economic Security*, fielded just this past September and October and capturing the experiences of 2,000 city residents, found that 40 percent couldn't make ends meet or were barely managing to get by. Over a quarter (27 percent) said they rely on short-term debt like credit cards and online cash advances to cover expenses, and 28 percent said they could not or probably could not come up with \$400 to cover an emergency expense.

Among those making 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level or less, the picture is more dire: 63 percent of low-income New Yorkers reported they couldn't make ends meet or were barely managing to get by, and over half (52 percent) said they couldn't or probably couldn't come up with \$400 for an emergency.

The Federal Poverty Level is an important benchmark, but it does not reflect the true cost of living in New York City. The same threshold applies whether you live in rural Mississippi or midtown Manhattan, even though housing, childcare, and food costs here are among the highest in the nation. As a result, the federal measure masks the real extent of economic need in high-cost cities like ours. In New York City, a family can earn triple the federal poverty level and still struggle to afford basic necessities.

And one of the most essential of those necessities is transportation. An accessible and affordable mass transit system is the backbone of the city's economy, enabling millions of New Yorkers to move efficiently from place to place, supporting local businesses, reducing congestion, and ensuring equitable access to opportunities. For many low-income New Yorkers, the cost of an OMNY card can be a barrier to getting to their job, school, or medical appointments. Expanding Fair Fares eligibility from 150 percent to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level would reach an additional 377,615 residents who are working hard but still facing financial precarity. At a time when costs for housing, utilities, and food continue to rise, this expansion would be a concrete, targeted measure to help our neighbors.

CSS strongly supports Resolution 0964 as an essential step toward transit equity. Expanding Fair Fares eligibility to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level will make a meaningful difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who are currently just above the cutoff but still facing economic insecurity.

At the same time, we know the need extends even further. CSS ultimately envisions a Fair Fares program that offers free transit for New Yorkers at or below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, and discounted fares for those up to 300 percent. We view this resolution as progress toward that broader goal—a foundation on which to continue building a truly inclusive and affordable transit system for all.

We urge you to support Resolution 0964 to expand Fair Fares eligibility to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

Thank you again for allowing me to present this testimony. Please reach out to me at rswaner@cssny.org if you have any questions.

Downstate New York



Downstate New York
ADAPT
Website: dnyadapt.com

November 15, 2025

Council Member Selvena N. Brooks-Powers
Chair
New York City Council Committee On Transportation
And Infrastructure
Sent Online at <https://council.nyc.gov/testify/>
Emailed to: testimony@council.nyc.gov

Copy emailed to: Julian Martin, Policy Director at
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Re: T2025-4228, New York City Council Oversight - New
York City's Bus System (Network, Operations, Equity, and
Redesign) Hearing Held On Thursday, November 13,
2025

Dear Chair Brooks-Powers;

Downstate New York ADAPT (DNY ADAPT") is a
grassroots, non- hierarchical community of people with
all types of disabilities advocating for the civil rights of
people with disabilities, including, but not limited to, the
right to live and fully participate in the larger community.
Downstate New York adapt covers the five counties in
New York City, the two counties on Long Island, Nassau

and Suffolk counties, as well as Westchester, Dutchess, Orange, Rockland, Putnam, Ulster and Sullivan counties in New York State. We submit this testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

We totally agree with the testimony provided by Jean Ryan, President of Disabled In Action of Metropolitan New York, Inc. ("DIA").

New Yorkers with disabilities face frequent transportation barriers and transportation deserts, including inaccessible subways, out-of-service elevators, taxi and rideshare refusals, and REVEL vehicles they cannot use. Thus, the need for reliable, affordable, accessible and reachable bus service is critically important to New Yorkers and visitors to New York that have disabilities.

Express buses that have drivers who are properly trained to operate the lift and interact with passengers with disabilities is essential since an express bus may, in many instances, be the only way a person with a disability can travel between the boroughs of New York City and not have to rely on Access-A-Ride which is not even considered to be late if you are picked up within thirty (30) minutes of your pickup time.

With respect to the buses within a borough. Of course we would like to arrive at a destination on time, however, the elimination of bus stops, as Jean Ryan and Charlton De'Souza pointed out, does not result in faster bus service. It only results in out of reach bus service. We need more accessible bus stops and more accessible

buses operating so people do not have to travel further to get a bus and wait longer for a bus. As Charlton De'Souza, President of Passengers United, so aptly noted "the Queens Bus Redesign is not a redesign, it's glorified budget cuts on steroids" (Hearing video at 1:54:23 to 1:54:27) which force people to travel further to reach a bus stop and wait longer for a bus. The City Council needs to tell the Metropolitan Transit Authority and the new Mayor we do not want fewer bus stops and decreased bus service. We need more accessible bus stops and increased bus service because buses are crowded even during weekends and off-peak hours. Often, members of Downstate New York ADAPT must wait for another bus since the one they intended to board does not have available space for passengers with disabilities.

So too, we need bus shelters at bus stops. Additionally, we need traditional on the sidewalk accessible bus stops with shelters with seats and not bus stop islands. Bus stop islands many times force all New Yorkers to cross through active bicycle and traffic lanes to reach the bus stop island. This is dangerous for everyone, but especially for New Yorkers with disabilities who cannot move quickly, see, or hear a bicycle, e-bike, or other traffic. Further, New Yorkers with visual disabilities may become confused and think they have reached the other sidewalk when in fact they are on a bus stop island. Also, these bus stop islands are narrow and cannot include bus shelters which is not helpful to anyone. Rarely, do the bus stop islands installed have any accessible pedestrian signals ("APS") on them. Bus stop islands that do not have APS are unsafe.

We need bus drivers to bring the buses to the curb and not out in the street. Forcing passengers to embark and disembark from the roadway is dangerous for everyone and many times makes it impossible for a person with a mobility or visual disability to board or get off the bus.

We also agree with the comments that Fair Fare should be expanded to cover those who are living at 200% of the federal poverty level and that people who are eligible for the Fair Fare Program should be automatically enrolled with an affirmative opt-out option. So too, free fares should be available to the lowest income riders. Of course, all these benefits should be available to Access-A-Ride passengers who would otherwise be eligible for Fair Fares.

Finally, drivers of the blue and white/yellow Access-A-Ride buses and the broker service Access-A-Ride cars when ticketed because they are picking up or dropping off a passenger with a disability in a bus lane need to have these tickets voided by the proper agency.

We all want more accessible, affordable, reliable, efficient, and sustainable buses. However, the elimination of bus stops, and the use of bus stop islands is not the answer.

The answer is more accessible bus stops with accessible bus shelters that have seating, more accessible buses serving the public, including better training of all bus drivers; more efficient methods for boarding passengers and letting passengers off buses, as well as the implementation of more efficient and safe procedures for moving the traffic.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on bus service in New York City. If you would like additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Downstate New York ADAPT at dnyadapt@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Co-Coordinator,
Downstate New York ADAPT
Email address: dnyadapt@gmail.com
Telephone number: 631-855-9707



Transport Workers Union-Local 106

Transit Supervisors Organization



Philip Valenti
President

Joseph Betancourt
Vice President

Hubert Reardon
Secretary Treasurer

Jose DeJesus
Recording Secretary

Unit Chairs

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MTA Transportation
Executive Council

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Vice-Chairperson
Queens Division

Thomas Tunison
Vice-Chairperson
OA Maintenance

November 14, 2025

Subject, November 13, 2025, 10am Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Hearing

Chairperson, Members of the Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on an issue that will have a direct impact on bus riders across New York City: the planned reassignment of 26 Bus Dispatchers from street operations to the Bus Command Center.

I am submitting this testimony to highlight the serious operational, safety, and service-quality concerns that these reassignments will create for the riding public.

1. Loss of On-Street Dispatchers Will Mean Longer Wait Times

The presence of Bus Dispatchers on the street is one of the most effective tools the Transit Authority has to keep buses on schedule. Dispatchers resolve delays as they happen — adjusting spacing, managing headways, and assisting operators. When they are removed from the field, delays snowball.

This reassignment will leave fewer trained supervisors on the street to prevent bunching, gaps, and irregular service. Riders will be waiting longer for their buses, especially in high-traffic corridors where hands-on dispatching is essential.

2. Reduced Safety and Visibility for Riders

Bus Dispatchers do more than manage schedules. They are the uniformed, trained safety presence that riders see at bus stops — especially in areas where incidents or emergencies can and do occur.

Removing them from the field eliminates an important layer of public safety. Vulnerable riders — seniors, students, disabled New Yorkers, and women traveling alone — lose a supervisor who can step in, call for help, or de-escalate situations.

3. Reassigning Dispatchers to the Command Center Weakens the System

This plan shifts dispatchers off the streets to a centralized command center that is already struggling. The new \$294-million radio system has been plagued by dropped calls, system

outages, and overlapping messages that cut each other off. These failures prevent effective communication between field personnel and command staff.

Relying more heavily on a system that does not function reliably places both workers and the riding public at risk.

4. The Public Deserves Transparency

This reassignment has been presented as an efficiency measure. But riders and their elected officials were never meaningfully informed about what the loss of street dispatchers would mean. The public has a right to know the real-world effects of these decisions — especially when they will impact wait times, safety, and emergency response.

5. A Better Path Forward

Instead of removing dispatchers from the field, the Transit Authority should be:

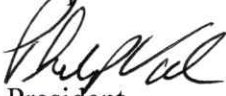
- Strengthening street-level supervision
- Promoting more supervisors to work at the Command Center
- Fixing the Command Center's communication systems before expanding reliance on them
- Collaborating with frontline workers who understand service challenges firsthand
- Maintaining — not reducing — the uniformed presence that riders depend on

Conclusion

The Transit Authority's plan to reassign 26 Bus Dispatchers away from the street will degrade service, reduce safety, and weaken the operational integrity of the bus system. I respectfully urge the Council to oppose these reassignments and to require the Transit Authority to provide a transparent operational justification before removing essential personnel from the field. **Furthermore, I recommend you request a tour of the Bus Command Center and I will join you. You can ask the Bus Dispatchers yourself how the radio and GPS Bus Trek system is working. Don't take the MTA's word for it because they're not telling you the truth.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Philip Valenti



President,

Office (718) 601-5700

Cell (917) 273-5945

Email pvalenti@twu106.org

Good Morning

I'm a mother of six and a daily bus rider who relies on public transportation to get my family where we need to go. Recently, I discovered that the bus stop around the corner from my home had been moved — with no notice or clear information about where the new stop was located. This caused real confusion and inconvenience for me and my kids, especially during our morning routines.

I understand that bus routes and stops sometimes need to change, but residents and businesses deserve proper notice before that happens. A simple sign posted at the old stop, an announcement on the city's website or social media, or even a mailed notice to nearby households would make a huge difference. For families, seniors, and people with disabilities, unexpected changes like this can make public transit difficult or even impossible to use.

Please consider creating a clear public notice policy for any future bus stop changes. Keeping riders informed shows respect for the people who depend on these services every day.

Thank you for your time and for listening to community concerns.

Sincerely,
Kristal Middleton

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 2 Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 11/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JENNIFER PRITCHARD

Address: _____, Hempstead NY

I represent: NYC TRANSIT

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. MTA Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 11/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Philip Valent

Address: _____ Bx 10471

I represent: TWU Local 100

Address: Same

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Brian Fritsch

Address: _____ Bk, NY

I represent: PCAC 112346

Address: 2 Broadway 16th Fl.

New York, NY 10004
Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Demptrius C. Crenlow

Address: 2 Broadway

I represent: MTA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shaylah Breary

Address: 2 Broadway

I represent: MTA

Address: 2 Broadway

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rick Rodriguez

Address: _____

I represent: DOT

Address: _____

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John McCarthy

Address: 2 Broadway

I represent: MTA

Address: 2 Broadway

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DINIECE MENDES

Address: _____

I represent: New York City DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 252-2024 Res. No. 252-2024

Bus transfers in favor in opposition

Date: November 13, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Charlton D'SOUZA

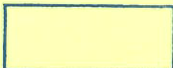
Address: [REDACTED] 105th Avenue

I represent: Passengers United

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition
Express Bus accessibility + Bus stop accessibility Date: 11-13-25
(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jean RYAN

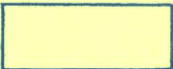
Address: fansies007@aol.com

I represent: Disabled IN Action

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 4228 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jose DeJesus

Address: [Redacted] Bx 10471

I represent: TWU Local 106

Address: Sam

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katelyn Villatoro

Address: _____

I represent: New York League of Conservation Voters

Address: 30 Broad St, NY, 10004