

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY,
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

November 18, 2024
Start: 10:23 a.m.
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HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS- CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Selvena N. Brooks-Powers,
Chairperson for the Committee on
Transportation and Infrastructure

Yusef Salaam,
Chairperson for the Committee on
Public Safety

Rita C. Joseph,
Chairperson for the Committee on
Education

Althea V. Stevens,
Chairperson for the Committee on
Children and Youth

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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Chris Banks
Tiffany Cabàn

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Kevin Dantzler
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Chief Joseph Gullotta
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Director Josh Levin
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Jeremy Feigelson
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Chief Michael Kemper
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Norma Nazzario
Mother of Deceased Subway Surfing Team

Bruce Hayne
Rail Transportation Planner

Faran A. Sharif
On behalf of NYS Senator Sanders

Sharon Leslie Brown Jeter
Self

Gabriel Herter
Self

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

Matthew Paolucci
Self

Abram Garfield Morris
Self

Juan Garcia
Self

Shawn Groce
Self

Anna Taktachev
Self

Rick Horan
Self

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1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Sound check for the Committee
3 on Public Safety, joint with Committee on Education,
4 joint with Committee on Transportation and
5 infrastructure, joint with Committee on Children and
6 Youth. Today's date is November 18, 2024 being
7 recorded by Danny Wong in the Chambers.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quiet down please. Good
9 morning and welcome to today's New York City Council
10 Hearing for the Committee on Transportation and
11 Infrastructure joint with the Committees on Public
12 Safety, Education and Children and Youth. At this
13 time, we ask that you silence all electronic devices
14 and at no time is anyone to approach the dais. If
15 you would like to sign up for in person testimony or
16 have any other questions throughout the hearing,
17 please see one of the Sergeant at Arms. Chairs,
18 we're ready to begin.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Good morning and
20 welcome to this mornings joint oversight hearing for
21 the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure,
22 Public Safety, Education and Children and Youth. My
23 name is Selvena Brooks Powers and I am the Chair of
24 the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.
25 Today's hearing will focus on Subway Surfing. In

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1 addition to this oversight topic, we will be hearing
2 two Resolutions, Reso. 59 sponsored by myself calling
3 upon MTA conduct a comprehensive environmental impact
4 study on viability of the proposed QueensLink
5 Project, and Resolution 187 sponsored by Council
6 Member Riley calling upon the Metropolitan
7 Transportation Authority to conduct a comprehensive
8 Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Gun
9 Hill Road Electric Bus Depot Charging Facility.
10

11 As we know, the MTA is responsible for managing,
12 maintaining, and running subway service in our great
13 city. This system is expansive and spans across five
14 boroughs. It includes 472 stations, more than 6,553
15 subway cars and 665 miles of track.

16 It serves more than one billion annual riders and
17 millions during the week day and weekend. Although
18 ridership dipped during the pandemic, the MTA has
19 experienced the substantial recovery over the past
20 few years but would increase ridership since 2020.
21 We have also seen an increase in the incidents of
22 subway surfing particularly among our youth.

23 In 2023, at least five people died in subway
24 surfing incidents. As many as the previous five
25 years combined and this year, there have already been

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1 another six deaths. Each of these tragedies is
2 deeply felt by myself and the Council at large and I
3 send my condolences to all the families who have lost
4 a loved one, including the families here today. We
5 are here to dig into the root causes of increase in
6 subway surfing and discuss solutions that our city
7 and state agencies can implement to ensure that no
8 one loses their life due to subway surfing in the
9 future.
10

11 Last year, New York State Governor Kathy Hochul,
12 the MTA, and the New York City Eric Adams launched a
13 comprehensive multichannel public information
14 campaign in partnership with the New York City
15 Department of Education, the NYPD and the New York
16 City Department of Youth and Community Development.
17 The campaign is named Subway Surfing Kills, Ride
18 Inside, Stay Alive and it's centered on designed for
19 and created by New York City teenagers in an effort
20 to deter this dangerous behavior among their peers.

21 The campaign includes a range of programs
22 including public service announcements in stations
23 recorded by students, digital signage across
24 stations, social media posts across multiple
25 platforms, and anti-surfing messages on the back of

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1 student metro cards. This campaign has worked to
2 bring the voice of the youth to light and sets an
3 example of how powerful young New Yorkers can be.
4

5 In addition to the public service campaign, NYPD
6 has stepped up a multifaceted approach to safety.
7 They deployed officers and drones to stations to
8 deter dangerous behavior, conduct their home visits
9 to youth who were subway surfing and followed up with
10 their families.

11 Today's hearings provide the forum for our
12 agencies to share what they have learned during this
13 year long campaign with successes they have
14 accomplished and what future solutions they would
15 like to pursue to further safeguard the children in
16 our city.

17 In addition to this oversight topic, we will be
18 discussing two Resolutions, one of which of my own,
19 calling on the MTA to conduct a comprehensive EIS on
20 the viability of the QueensLink project. Communities
21 across South East Queens have been consistently left
22 out of plans to expand transit access, leaving them
23 to become transit deserts. The QueensLink project
24 proposal is connecting northern and southern Queens
25 using what was formerly the Rockaway Beach Branch of

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1 the Long Island Railroad. By extending service on
2 the M-Train from Regal Park to the Rockaway, this
3 project could provide an estimated 80,000 daily
4 riders with a new and efficient option for transit.
5 While bringing an estimated 150,000 new jobs, a \$13
6 billion increase in personal income, and potentially
7 increase in property values along the corridor by up
8 to \$75 billion. Furthermore, we will be hearing
9 Reso. Number 187 sponsored by Council Member Riley
10 calling upon the MTA to conduct a comprehensive EIS
11 for the proposed Gun Hill Road Electric Bus Depot
12 Charging Facility.
13

14 Before we begin, I would like to thank my
15 Committee staff and my staff for their hard work
16 Kevin Kotowski, Senior Policy Analyst, John Basile,
17 Senior Policy Analyst, Mark Chen, Senior Counsel to
18 the Committee, Connor Mealey, Counsel to the
19 Committee, Adrian Drepaul, Senior Financial Analyst,
20 Julian Martin, my Policy and Budget Director, and
21 Renee Taylor my Chief of Staff. I would also like to
22 thank my Co-Chairs, their staff, and Committee staff
23 for all their work on this hearing today.

24 I now will pass it over to Chair Salaam to give
25 his opening remarks.

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CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you. Good morning.

I'm Council Member Yusef Salaam, Chair of the
Committee of Public Safety. I want to thank Council
Member and Chair of Transportation and Infrastructure
Brooks-Powers, Council Member and Chair of Children
and Youth Stevens, and Council Member and Chair of
Education Joseph for collaborating on this important
hearing.

Today's hearing addressing the dangers of subway
surfing reflects the Council's commitment to
protecting our youngest constituents in aiming to
develop holistic solutions to improving public
safety. Although subway surfacing is not a new
phenomenon, the true scope of the problem is likely
unknown. It appears that youth have been more
regularly engaging in this dangerous risk taking
behavior in our subway system. Whether due to
seeking attention from peers and social media or
otherwise, we've seen too many lives lost or changed
forever due to this reckless activity.

Although most single intervention can fully stop
this behavior, the city still must act. Today, we
bring together the voices and resources of multiple
government agencies to examine how to prevent the

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1 occurrence of these tragedies. We would not only
2 look to improvements in our transit infrastructure
3 and examine policing inside the transit system but
4 also seek to gain insight from those who work
5 directly with young people on how to better engage
6 with the children to discourage risk taking behavior.
7 We are here to listen, to learn, to develop and
8 collaborate strategies to prevent more lives from
9 being lost. As Chair of the Public Safety Committee,
10 I hope to specifically examine the NYPD's current
11 strategy to ensure public safety in our transit
12 system.
13

14 What impact have we seen from current targeted
15 enforcement efforts deployed by the Department? How
16 effective is public outreach at shifting behaviors
17 and how does the Police Department directly engage
18 with youth to encourage better decision making? And
19 finally, what challenges does the NYPD face in
20 preventing risk taking behaviors? Such as subway
21 surfing and what innovative solutions exist to
22 improve department responses to these incidents?

23 At its heart, today's discussion aims to examine
24 a holistic approach combating subway surfacing, one
25 that focuses on preventative measures, education and

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1 community engagement necessary to tackle this issue
2 and better protect our youth.

3
4 I now pass it to Council Member Joseph. Thank
5 you.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Chair Salaam and
7 thank you to Chair Brooks-Powers for inviting the
8 Committee on Education to join the Committee on
9 Transportation and Infrastructure, Public Safety and
10 Children and Youth for this very important hearing
11 topic. I'm Rita Joseph, Chair of the Education
12 Committee. Thank you to everyone who is planning to
13 testify today. I'm very much looking forward to
14 hearing your testimony.

15 Subway surfing is a dangerous and often fatal
16 activity that has tragically claimed the lives of
17 young New Yorkers and put countless others at risk.
18 With the report, 366 percent increase in subway
19 surfing incidents between 2020 and 2023. It is clear
20 that we are facing a growing crisis. Alarmingly
21 those engaged in this behavior are often teenagers,
22 our students, our children. As the Chair of the
23 Education Committee, I believe we must approach this
24 issue, not just through enforcement but also with
25 education prevention and community engagement. New

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1 York City public schools play a vital role in this
2 effort with nearly one million students under its
3 guidance. New York City public schools has a unique
4 opportunity to shape how we educate our youth about
5 danger of risky behaviors, particularly those
6 amplified by social media. The Subway Surfing Kills,
7 Ride Inside, Stay Alive campaign launched last year
8 by MTA in partnership with New York City Public
9 Schools, NYPD and DYCD is a step in the right
10 direction. The campaign emphasis on youth
11 participation through student design graphic, social
12 media posts and school based outreach demonstrate how
13 engaging students directly can foster a peer driven
14 culture of safety. However, we need to evaluate
15 whether these efforts are enough. Are the resources
16 provided schools such as palm cards, posters, anti-
17 surfing messaging on metro cards? Reaching students
18 most at risk, are educators adequately equipped to
19 discuss the life threatening consequences of subway
20 surfing with their students? Do New York City Public
21 School social media guidelines appropriately address
22 risky behaviors like subway surfing and importantly,
23 how can New York City Public Schools work with
24 parents and communities combat these harmful turns.
25

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1 Today, we will hear from New York City Public
2 Schools, MTA, NYPD and DYCD to assess the
3 effectiveness of current interventions and identify
4 what more can be done to combat this dangerous trend.
5 The hearing will provide an opportunity to explore
6 how interagency collaboration can create a
7 comprehensive solution focused on education
8 deterrence and enforcement. I look forward to
9 learning how New York City Public School is engaging
10 students and their families in conversation about
11 subway safety particularly through the lens of social
12 media influence.
13

14 I'm also particularly interested in learning how
15 MTA and NYPD are leveraging innovative strategies
16 such as a use of drone to monitor and deter these
17 behaviors. Additionally, I hope to get insight into
18 DYCD's role in providing youth focused programming
19 and resources to steer young people away from risky
20 activities like subway surfing.

21 By examining how these agencies are working both
22 individually and collaboratively we can identify gaps
23 in the current approach and craft a meaningful public
24 policy to better protect our city youth. Thank you
25 to the Committee staff as well as my own staff for

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1 all their work they have put into today's hearing. I
2 will now turn it over to Chair Stevens.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Good morning and thank you
5 all for joining us today for this critical hearing on
6 combating the dangers of subway surfing. I'm Althea
7 Stevens, Chair of Children and Youth Services. We're
8 here because every instance of subway surfing is one
9 too many. Each is a preventable risk in light of
10 safety. In recent months, this risky activity has
11 claimed lives, injured others and left our community
12 grieving. Subway surfing doesn't just pose a danger
13 to the individual involved; it impacts our entire
14 city. From the transit workers who are encountered
15 with these incidents first hand to the family and
16 friends and school and program of those who are put
17 in harm's way.

18 I'm particularly focused on the understanding and
19 motivations that lead young people to engage in this
20 dangerous behavior and on developing effective and
21 supportive responses. This is not merely a matter of
22 enforcement but also education, engagement and
23 prevention. Why are young people doing this and not
24 attending our programs? Are our programs not
25 engaging enough? We have a responsibility to address

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1 the root causes and influences including social media
2 glorification, lack of engagement in activities, or a
3 need for more effective education on the risk of
4 involvement.
5

6 Today, we will hear from several key agencies but
7 we also need to listen to youth leaders, educators
8 and mental health professionals who help us
9 understand the broader context in ways we can support
10 young people in making safe, positive choices. This
11 hearing is an opportunity for us to both come up with
12 immediate and long term solutions. We'll discuss the
13 city's education campaign Subway Surfing Kills, Ride
14 Inside and Stay Alive. My questions will be
15 centered, is a social media campaign the most
16 effective way to reach this population of young
17 people? Especially because this is often considered
18 an alternative way of life. Are we looking for more
19 creative ways like mentorship and other programs and
20 constructive alternative. Additionally, has DYCD
21 started working with their providers to address this
22 issue? And will DYCD be asking for additional
23 funding to expand outreach and services to work with
24 providers? And will we explore how we will
25 strengthen partnership across city agencies to ensure

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1 unity, compassion and an effective approach to this
2 dangerous trend?
3

4 I look forward to a constructive dialogue today.
5 I would like to thank my Committee staff Christina
6 and Elizabeth for their hard work in preparing for
7 this hearing and I would also like to thank my team
8 back in the Suite 16 and I will turn it over to New
9 York City's Public Advocate Jumaane Williams. Thank
10 you.

11 JUMAANE WILLIAMS: Thank you Madam Chair. As
12 mentioned, my name is Jumaane Williams, Public
13 Advocate for City of New York. Thank you Chairs
14 Joseph, Stevens, Salaam, and Brooks-Powers and the
15 Committee Members for holding this hearing this
16 morning. As mentioned, this year alone we lost six
17 lives to subway surfing and even more have suffered
18 injuries. This decades old dangerous trend has
19 surged in popularity in part due to social media.
20 Though the city and the state have launched multiple
21 strategies to prevent subway surfing, the behavior
22 persists. I often ask myself; would I listen to me
23 as a young person? I'm not sure I have the full
24 answer to that. Although I never subway surfed, I
25 did hang on to the train on the track which was

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1 dangerous enough and that was before platforms like
2 Tik Tok, You Tube, and Instagram promoting videos of
3 subway surfing. It's just one of the many dangerous
4 viral challenges that are proliferated on social
5 media. Some attorney generals and families of
6 victims have resulted to suing the social media,
7 rightfully so for spreading dangerous trends. The
8 city, state, and MTA have worked with these platforms
9 to take down videos of subway surfing and spread the
10 city's Ride Inside Stay Alive public service
11 announcement campaign as seen on screens and posters
12 and heard via announcements through our subway
13 stations. I am happy that we're trying to do
14 something. I do know that some experts say that the
15 impact of PSA's alone on minimal and young people who
16 are more susceptible to peer pressure unless able to
17 assess risk. Young people should also be directed to
18 an alternative, exciting activity in addition to one
19 of them against subway surfing.
20

21 As Kevin Dahill-Fuchel, Executive Director of
22 Council in the school said to chalk beat, "just say
23 no doesn't work so much because you're not saying
24 what to say yes to." So far there's been 181 arrests
25 related to subway surfing this year, with arrests for

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1 young people spiking 46 percent. Police found that
2 25 percent of those arrested were arrested more than
3 once indicating that arresting people is not
4 necessarily efficient and effective as a deterrent.
5

6 The NYPD has announced that over the past year
7 they deployed drones to combat subway surfing. They
8 reported that 900 drones have saved an impressive 114
9 lives. What we don't know and should get more
10 information about is exactly where and how the drones
11 are being used and what happens after drones spots a
12 subway surfer. It is important to peer transparency
13 with the increased use of surveillance technology,
14 especially considering the NYPD's concerning history
15 of surveilling New Yorkers.

16 The NYPD needs to inform this body about what
17 happens after a subway surfer is spotted and how many
18 subway surfing arrest involve the use of drones. I
19 appreciate that the NYPD has a multifaceted approach
20 here but I am concerned about the increase in arrests
21 of young people, especially when we consider many
22 subway surfers are young enough to be in elementary
23 or middle school. We know that children don't have
24 this inner ability as adults to fully understand the
25 potential consequences of their actions. We also

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1 know that simply arrests and punishment don't always
2 have the deterrent affect on individuals,
3 particularly other population members who see the
4 individual they arrested don't always change their
5 behavior, which is what we actually want and that's
6 just for adults. And so, that's probably even a
7 little less when it comes to young people.
8

9 So, it is clear we must try additional ways to
10 combat subway surfing. We can make infrastructure
11 investments that will make it physically harder to
12 get on top of trains, like the open gang way trains
13 currently running on the sealine. We must engage
14 people at the community level and young people, get
15 their feedback as well who know the needs of their
16 neighborhoods best and can recommend intervention
17 specific to their communities.

18 I do want to say whenever we have a problem like
19 this and we can't figure it out, it often unfairly
20 goes to the NYPD, so I'm glad to see that there are
21 many agencies here today trying to work with everyone
22 to figure this out. Hopefully the agencies that deal
23 directly with young people are speaking directly with
24 young people to try to get their information.
25 Sometimes kids also need to hear from their peers.

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1 Schools are already engaging students in peer to peer
2 messaging about the danger of subway surfing, which
3 should be happening in every school with students old
4 enough to ride the subway by themselves. We must
5 continue to expand resources for youth, including
6 mental health treatment and safe engaging after
7 school programs. I want to congratulate the Council
8 for holding a hearing on this important topic today
9 and please add my name to all the Reso.'s. Thank
10 you.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Next,
13 we'll hear from Council Member Riley on his
14 Resolution.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Chair. Before I
16 begin, I would be remiss if I don't speak about the
17 importance of today's hearing. I contacted Chair
18 Selvena Brooks-Powers I believe a month and a half
19 ago when I was riding down here to attend a hearing
20 where I witnessed myself, two young boys subway
21 surfing in the same cart that me and my wife were
22 traveling in.

23 My heart dropped to my stomach. I immediately
24 started praying and contacted the Council and the
25 Chair and I just want to thank you Chair for

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1 effectively and speeding up the process of this
2 hearing because it's really, really effective,
3 really, really important excuse me, that we talk
4 about this issue and I'm glad to see that all
5 agencies are here to talk about this because it's
6 going to take all of our agencies and all of our
7 minds to actually address this issue. I just want to
8 speak briefly about Reso. 187 to collect an
9 environmental impact study on the Gun Hill Electric
10 Depot Bus Station. Since being elected to the
11 Council, I have had several conversations with MTA
12 about this location within my district. It's a huge
13 vacant lot. I believe conversations prior to me
14 coming into office, it was supposed to be reimaged
15 to be some form of affordable housing for seniors. I
16 believe that plan kind of fell through and it ended
17 up here with this electric depot.

18
19 Currently right now, the state of this area is
20 poor. The maintenance and just the dumping around
21 this area and the community has been frustrated with
22 trying to contact and communicate this frustration
23 with MTA. And that's why we're here calling on this
24 impact study, to figure out how can we better address
25 this environmental issue within you know this area

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1 within Gun Hill Road in my district. So, I'm really
2 eager to hear from MTA. Looking forward to having
3 you know future conversations about this area and
4 seeing if we could come to some form of resolution.
5 Thank you Chair.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you Council
8 Member. I'd like to acknowledge the members we are
9 joined here today by, Council Member Holden, Marte,
10 Hanks, Dinowitz, Louis, Williams, Narcisse, Riley,
11 Menin, Majority Leader Farias, and on Zoom we are
12 joined by, Council Members Gennaro, Hanif, Sanchez,
13 Cabàn, Lee and we've also been joined by Council
14 Member Banks.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Our first panel will be
16 from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority
17 Michael Kemper, Jeremy Feigelson, Franck Joseph, the
18 New York City Police Department Joseph Gullotta. I'm
19 butchering everybody's name. New York City Public
20 Schools, Mark Rampersant, Kevin Dantzler, and from
21 Department of Youth and Community Development Jessica
22 Hernandez.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If you could all just raise
24 your right hand, I'll administer the oath. Do you
25 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing

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1 but the truth before this Committee and to respond
2 honestly to Council Member questions? Okay, you may
3 begin your testimony.
4

5 MICHAEL KEMPER Good morning and thank you for
6 having us, especially Committee Chairs Chair Brooks-
7 Powers, Chair Joseph, Chair Salaam and Chair Stevens,
8 the Public Advocate Williams and to all Committee
9 Members, thank you. I'm Michael Kemper, Chief
10 Security Officer of the MTA and I'm joined by Special
11 Counsel Jeremy Feigelson to my right, as well as
12 Frank Joseph, Acting Chief of Staff in the New York
13 City Transit to my left.

14 Today's hearing is an important one. I think we
15 all agree on the need to stop the dangerous trend of
16 people of all ages, especially young people riding
17 outside of subway cars. This year alone, six New
18 Yorkers have tragically died doing it, up from five
19 of last year, which includes Staten Island and seven
20 people have been seriously injured.

21 Even though 350,000 kids use our system daily and
22 the overwhelming majority do the right thing, any
23 loss of life is unacceptable. So, our team at the
24 MTA is taking a broad approach to get that number
25 down to zero.

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1 We're working closely with City Hall, the New
2 York City Department of Education, and the NYPD,
3 because none of us can solve this problem alone.
4 Together, we launched the student led Ride Inside,
5 Stay Alive campaign more than one year ago. All the
6 announcements, graphics and social media outreach
7 were developed by young people, for young people to
8 help us get through to that 0.1 percent who want to
9 ride outside of train cars and temp fate.
10

11 To serve as a deterrent, my former colleagues at
12 the NYPD also started deploying additional offices to
13 stations on outdoor elevated lines. Where riding
14 outside trains is most common and using drones to
15 spot so called subway surfers in action. I hesitate
16 to use that term since it glorifies the behavior.
17 But police are also doing home visits with young
18 people known to ride outside of trains because it's
19 truly that many of them are recidivists.

20 Perhaps most important, the MTA is pressing
21 social media companies to take down viral videos of
22 this dangerous behavior. We are searching for this
23 kind of content every day and so far we flag more
24 than 10,000 posts to be deleted on platforms like
25 Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and Snap Chat. That

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1 work will continue. We believe news organizations
2 also have a role to play here and we've asked them to
3 avoid sharing images of riders on top of trains that
4 can encourage people to try it themselves.
5

6 Bottomline, we want riders to stay where they belong,
7 safely inside trains and on platforms, which is
8 another issue. For the last few years, all over the
9 system, there's been a growing problem of people
10 going into locations where they should not be,
11 including on tracks. Signs are there for a reason.

12 When you trespass or break the rules, bad things can
13 and will happen. So, we need your help. The
14 Council's help to get the word out that these risky
15 behaviors are dangerous, not only for the people
16 engaging in them but also for MTA workers and first
17 responders. We are willing to explore all avenues to
18 get through to young people and their parents and we
19 look forward to working with the Council. We are now
20 happy to take any questions.

21 JOSEPH GULLOTTA: Good afternoon Chair Salaam,
22 Chair Brooks-Powers, Chair Joseph and Chair Stevens,
23 and members of the Council and our Public Advocate
24 Jumaane Williams. I am Chief Transit Joseph Gullotta
25 of the New York City Police Department. I am joined

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1 today by Josh Levin, the Director of the Department
2 Legislative Affairs Unit, as well as colleagues from
3 the New York City Public Schools and Department of
4 Youth and Community Development.
5

6 On behalf of Interim Police Commissioner Tom
7 Donlon, I would like to thank you for this
8 opportunity to discuss an important subject that
9 particularly effects our city's youth. Our top
10 priority in the NYPD is always to ensure safety and
11 protect life and efforts in addressing subway surfing
12 is just that. Our focus is preventing future
13 tragedies, already too many people, too many children
14 have lost their lives or sustained life altering
15 injuries while subway surfing and too many families
16 and friends have to endure the heartache.

17 The dangerous and unlawful act of riding on the
18 exterior of train cars, known as subway surfing, is
19 not a new phenomenon. Yet we have seen resurges in
20 police contacts with surfers in recent years. That
21 could be contributed to two factors. The NYPD taking
22 a more proactive approach towards curbing activity,
23 and greater awareness by the public leading to
24 increased reporting.
25

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1 Not only is the number of police contacts with
2 individual subway surfing gone steadily up, the
3 number of 911 calls from concerned New Yorkers have
4 grown exponentially. To be clear, when we speak
5 about individuals while subway surfing, we are
6 proudly speaking about juveniles. The average age of
7 the subway surfers we encounter is 14 years old, with
8 some surfers as young as nine. What we see is the
9 social media is the major driver of this behavior.
10 The constant one upmanship we see from surfers try to
11 capture and share, edge content and social media
12 platforms is a phenomenon that we did not see in
13 decades past.

14 So, in order to address this reckless activity,
15 the NYPD has implemented a multifaceted approach that
16 incorporates community outreach and education, as
17 well as proactive enforcement of the law. Turning to
18 our community outreach, NYPD exercises affirmative
19 and formal contact with juveniles who have subway
20 surfed. Officers will visit their residents to speak
21 to them and their family to enhance the line of
22 communication, offer support and reinforce the
23 seriousness of their actions. I, myself, have sent
24 detectives. Detectives grew up in the same
25

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1 neighborhoods as these kids to visit a number of
2 these families. When we speak to them and we show
3 them the dangers of this action, they truly realize
4 the seriousness and impact of this issue. This issue
5 also heavily impacts our schools. As the trauma of
6 the death or injury of a student effects all students
7 and staff. In an effort to inform juveniles of
8 dangers of subway surfing, we've coordinated with our
9 partners at the New York City Public Schools to hold
10 awareness presentations. This school year, we
11 visited over a dozen schools across the city and
12 given presentations to about 3,000 students with many
13 more scheduled. We have also held presentations for
14 school staff, including principals, teachers,
15 guidance counselors and safety directors because
16 these individuals equally invest in the safety and
17 future of our children.
18

19 In regards to our proactive enforcement of the
20 law, 2023, the NYPD began utilizing drones to
21 strategically address subway surfing. The use of
22 drones provides an actual point to assist officers in
23 spotting subway surfing activity. Identifying
24 surfers and radioing ahead to officers on the ground.
25 Apprehension of surfers was until recently often

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1 hindered by the fact that surfing activity typically
2 takes place in between subway stations where
3 observation by the officers or 911 call was limited.
4 Deployment of over the past year has shown great
5 promise in our mission to save lives of our students
6 who ride the subway. Drones allow us to record and
7 livestream footage of the act while it's happening.
8 Allowing the fellow officers to see what is occurring
9 on top of the nearby train has positively impacted
10 our ability as an agency to save young lives.
11

12 In the case of juveniles, our goal is not to
13 punish young New Yorkers for a foolish and incredibly
14 dangerous act. It is creating meaningful
15 intervention that provides offramps away from the
16 behavior. We encounter those who think subway
17 surfing is a game and who view the subway system as a
18 thrill seeking playground. NYPD officers who are
19 responsive to these scenes were a victim of a subway
20 surfing, know all too well the consequences and how
21 life altering this activity can be. Sadly, there are
22 no second chances for some of these victims. The
23 only thing that waits a repeat subway surfer is
24 potential disfigurement, tragedy and death.
25

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1 While the drone footage offers tremendous value
2 when given to family court, the real value lied in
3 the ability to show parents what their kids were
4 doing because parental buy in the key. We can have
5 this discussion every day inside the station house
6 but this conversation needs to happen at the dinner
7 table. Afterall, there's no better part in the
8 campaign against subway surfing than an involved,
9 informed, concerned parent or guardian. Our officers
10 have encountered parents who insist their child would
11 never subway surf, and they are shocked and horrified
12 when they see the footage of their loved one on top
13 of a moving train car.

14 We understand this is an emotional moment and it
15 may be difficult to process this information
16 including how to spot signs of surfing in the future
17 and find healthier activities for their child. We've
18 created a flyer available in multiple languages that
19 includes this information and is handed to our
20 parents and guardians of every juvenile subway surfer
21 that we encounter. We are also constantly looking
22 for new ways to collaborate with our partners. We
23 have recurring meetings on this subject with a number
24 of stakeholders, including New York City Public
25

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1 Schools, Department of Youth and Community
2 Development, and the MTA. Last year we worked with
3 them to create a public service campaign,
4 specifically to address the dangers of subway
5 surfing. You have seen apprised to this campaign
6 within the subway system both in audible
7 announcements as well as visual messaging on digital
8 displays. We've even posted visual public service
9 announcements in anti-surfing content on our own
10 social media platforms.

12 We at the NYPD take this issue of subway surfing
13 very seriously. There are no higher stakes than the
14 lives of our young people. Once again, our priority
15 and our efforts to save lives and prevent tragedies.
16 We're dedicated to committing resources, embracing
17 technology, collaborating with anyone willing to
18 tackle this issue and work tirelessly until there are
19 more lives sensibly lost or altered by subway
20 surfing. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with
21 you today and I'm pleased to answer any questions.

22 MARK RAMPERSANT: Good morning Chair Brooks-
23 Powers, Chair Salaam, Chair Joseph, Chair Stevens,
24 and all of the New York City Council Members here
25 today, and special good morning to Public Advocate

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1 Jumaane Williams. Thank you for being here today.

3 My name is Mark Rampersant and I am the Chief of
4 Safety and Prevention Partnerships for New York City
5 Public Schools and I am here on behalf of public
6 schools to speak about our ongoing efforts to address
7 the subway surfing among our youth. From the onset,
8 let me be clear that we believe that no parent,
9 guardian, caregiver, family member or friend should
10 endure the unnecessary pain of losing a loved one to
11 this reckless and dangerous activity. Subway surfing
12 inflicts needless and tremendous pain to families,
13 peer groups and to entire communities.

14 I am joined here today by several partners who
15 have shared testimony about our collaborative efforts
16 to end this reckless behavior. Subway surfing
17 defined as riding anywhere on the exterior of a train
18 car is illegal imperials activity that unfortunately
19 some youth engage in for reasons as minor as social
20 media popularity or mere thrill of the act. Some
21 attempt to emulate characters and video games and
22 others are seeking peer acceptance. Whatever the
23 reason, our youth are reckless in their lives and in
24 participating in this activity.

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1 In response last year, New York City Public
2 Schools along with the NYPD started the working group
3 with the New York City Metropolitan Transportation
4 Authority, the MTA to address this behavior in an
5 effort to ensure that a multitude of strategies were
6 considered. The working group expanded to include
7 agencies and partners from across the city and across
8 sectors, including the Department of Youth and
9 Community Development, the Department of Health and
10 Mental Hygiene, and the New York City Department of
11 Probations and the New York City Law Department.

12 In September of 2023, New York City Public
13 Schools collaborated with our partners to launch an
14 anti-subway surfing public service campaign, Ride
15 Inside, Stay Alive. The educational components
16 including the following: In recognition of the
17 student voice, we partnered with Principal Max and
18 students from the Art and Design High School who are
19 here today to create and design an anti-subway
20 surfing, digital and print posters. A campaign of
21 digital and printed posters that we displayed on MTA
22 subway lines.

23 Electronic versions of the posters were made
24 available to 1,800 schools across New York City
25

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1 Public Schools, printed posters and palm cards were
2 hand delivered to schools in close proximity to the
3 train line such as the JMZN7 lines. Additionally,
4 students from various schools across New York City
5 Public Schools recorded anti-subway surfing public
6 service announcements that have been broadcasted in
7 stations throughout the system. New York City Public
8 School students in continued partnership with the MTA
9 are currently designing new digital imprint campaign
10 assets to be displayed systemwide.
11

12 In further recognition of our student voice and
13 perspective, a subway surfing presentation was given
14 to the Borough Student Advisory Council in Staten
15 Island and they have established an anti-subway
16 surfing committee to help inform the design and
17 implementation of strategies tailored to the unique
18 conditions of Staten Island railways.

19 We welcome the opportunity to work with Council
20 Member Hanks to address Staten Islands subway surfing
21 concerns as well as other Council Members in our
22 efforts regarding surfing in other boroughs. With
23 respect to presentations in collaboration with the
24 NYPD Transit Borough. Over 1,300 students have
25 participated in anti-subway surfing presentations to

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1 date. Moreover subway surfing presentations have
2 been given to superintendents citywide in the summer
3 of 2023. To superintendent teams, school staff and
4 school safety personnel in the summer of 2024, and
5 most recently to the Brooklyn High School principals
6 this past September and New York City Public Schools
7 is currently working with the MTA to develop an anti-
8 subway surfing lesson plan and resource guides that
9 teachers may use in their classrooms.
10

11 Through our continued partnership with the NYPD
12 Transit Bureau, under the leadership of newly
13 appointed Chief Joseph Gullotta, we are increasing
14 our communication channels so that New York City
15 Public Schools will receive notification of every
16 instance of the student involved subway surfing
17 incident. This will allow us to ensure that students
18 involved receive direct services such as counseling
19 supports and their school communities receive the
20 appropriate resources, and we continue to collaborate
21 with the Department of Youth and Community
22 Development to hold youth focused groups to hear
23 directly from students about how best to spread this
24 important message on the dangers of subway surfing
25 and to better understand some of the drivers for this

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1 behavior. We acknowledge that there is still a lot
2 of work to be done and we are committed to continuing
3 our efforts to educate our students and our school
4 communities about the dangers of subway surfing.
5

6 We also invite thought partnership and influence
7 in brainstorming additional ways of doing this work.
8 As you would agree, our children are worth every
9 effort. Thank you again for the opportunity to
10 address the Council today on this extremely,
11 extremely important topic. We welcome any questions
12 at this time.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you all for
14 your testimony. I'd like to also acknowledge that
15 we've been joined by Council Member Rivera. So, I'll
16 start my question with the MTA. Last year, annual
17 total subway ridership was approximately 1.1 billion
18 with an average week day ridership of around 3.6
19 million and an average weekend ridership of around
20 4.2 million. What is your estimate for the total
21 annual subway ridership for 2024?

22 FRANCK JOSEPH: Thank you very much Chair Brooks-
23 Powers. So far already in October, we already
24 reached our one billionth subway rider. This pushes
25 two weeks earlier than last year and two months

1 earlier than 2022. So, we estimate that we will
2 surpass the number from last year. We're still
3 collecting the data, it's ongoing and we'll be able
4 to report back out to you once the end of the year
5 comes to pass.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And what is this
8 years average week day ridership and average weekend
9 ridership? How does that compare to the ridership of
10 2023 from the data the agent know already?

11 FRANCK JOSEPH: Yeah, ridership is going up
12 across the board. This October is the highest, we've
13 seen the highest ridership post pandemic. We also,
14 one year looking at weekends, we'll take Friday's for
15 example, we have two Fridays in this month already
16 but we've had over 4.4 million riders, which is the
17 most post-pandemic as well. So, people are coming,
18 they're using the system and we're maintaining that
19 you know good service. Safety is important for us as
20 well to continue to track our customers back onto the
21 subway system.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And are more middle
23 school and high school students using the subways now
24 compared to a few years ago?
25

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1
2 FRANCK JOSEPH: Well, the one thing that we can
3 say is we have approximately 350,000 students who use
4 our subway system daily and we've seen because of
5 OMNY, which we you know, we have our student OMNY
6 cards which were launched this school year. We're
7 seeing more taps and so you know in terms of the
8 specific numbers for elementary and middle school
9 students, we'd have to get back to you for that data
10 but we can report on our daily ridership across the
11 board with students.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Does the MTA track
13 the demographics of subway surfers?

14 MICHAEL KEMPER: The demographics of the subway
15 surfers apprehended. Is that the question?

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: If you have
17 apprehensive versus you know just subway surfers
18 because I know that MTA has put out a number of over
19 like 400 individuals that have been subway surfing
20 but then there's a different number in terms of how
21 many have actually been killed from the act versus
22 how many have been apprehended. So, just broadly
23 speaking -

24 MICHAEL KEMPER: So, broadly speaking from my
25 knowledge and it's pretty in depth in relation to

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1 this subject matter. There's not one demographic
2 that's leading the charge if you will in relation to
3 subway surfing. It's crossing different
4 demographics, different neighborhoods throughout the
5 city.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I really wanted to
8 kind of get a sense of like are they predominantly
9 young teenagers, older adults?

10 MICHAEL KEMPER: I apologize, could you say that
11 one more time?

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I was trying to
13 understand if they're predominantly young teenagers,
14 older students, or adult? Trying to understand like
15 the age range.

16 MICHAEL KEMPER: So, I think Chief Gullotta is
17 the one who mentioned the average age is 14 years old
18 for - these are the subways, the hundreds of subway
19 surfers that have been taken into custody over the
20 last course of a year or two. I think what's
21 interesting or disturbing or should concern everyone
22 as the average age of the apprehended. He mentioned
23 9 years old. I believe in recent past, there was an
24 11 year old that was killed while subway surfing and
25 you know we're hyper focused or focused on the deaths

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1 caused and we need to be very mindful of the real
2 serious you know injuries. You know life altering
3 injuries that are occurring to these kids that fall
4 while subway surfing also. But young, 11, 12, not
5 shocking is the norm to hear for you know a 12 year
6 old. Just yesterday, you know there was a 17 year
7 old, there were three individuals that the NYPD
8 Transit Bureau did a nice job on apprehending subway
9 surfing. A 17 year old, I believe a 13 year old and
10 maybe a 14 year old and if you're asking me, that 17
11 year old is old when dealing with subway surfers.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for that
14 detective. Do you know where they live? Like what
15 schools they go to or other information that can help
16 form a picture of the population?

17 MICHEAL KEMPER: Sure, I think the NYPD would be
18 better suited to ask where they live but we collect a
19 lot of data. A lot of what we do is data driven
20 working with our partners and the different agencies,
21 how the MTA partners with the NYPD, with DOE, with
22 DYCD data. The collection of data is very, very
23 important. You know I've often said proper
24 deployment is critical and really the data we collect
25 by train lines. We could speak about top train

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1 lines, top days of the week, top - peak hours of the
2 day, high periods of the year locations also, schools
3 in close proximity of the train lines.
4

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Can you give us a
6 line of sight for that?

7 MICHAEL KEMPER: Right of the top of my head, the
8 seven line in Queens. That seven line in Queens is
9 an elevated line that you know is the overwhelming
10 location where we're experiencing subway surf - not
11 the only but it's a location that attracts subway
12 surfers for a few different reasons. It's an
13 elevated line. It's relatively flat. It's extremely
14 scenic and this all fits into what's driving subway
15 surfing. What is fueling subway surfing in large
16 part is social media and putting it up on social
17 media. So, that backdrop on the seven line brings a
18 lot.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Hmm, in 2023, at
20 least five people died during subway surfing
21 incidents compared to a total of five people in the
22 previous five years combined. This year, there have
23 been at least six deaths. How do subway surfing
24 incidents this year and last year compared to
25 pre-pandemic years and does the MTA have the data on

1 those incidents going back to the 2000's or early
2 2010's?

3
4 MICHEAL KEMPER: So, that's a great question and
5 let me try not to complicate this. I'll try to be as
6 easy as I can about this. We often talk I just
7 mentioned, data is so important but we have to have
8 confidence in our data and we have to have the best
9 data in our disposal. Throughout the years, there's
10 been different ways that the MTA collects data, and
11 you know just a couple years ago, track intrusions,
12 we weren't separating subway surfing. It was all
13 lumped into track intrusions. Back in March of 2024
14 you know is really when we began sharing and
15 combining all the data available. What data am I'm
16 talking about? MTA data and NYPD data and creating a
17 unified data set including all reports of subway
18 surfing by MTA employees. You know reports of that,
19 including 911 calls, including people sending
20 information in through text or social media and
21 putting that together.

22 And we are seeing the numbers go up in reported
23 subway surfing incidents if you will but we need to
24 be mindful that we're adding stuff in to get a better
25 data, to create a better data set. The drone program

1 that the NYPD began, I'd like to say that's a game
2 changer when it comes to you know fighting subway
3 surfing. Those numbers are now included in the
4 overall numbers. So, the numbers are higher than
5 they were just a few years ago but they may be higher
6 because we're adding more types of information
7 reported into it. If that makes sense. I hope I was
8 clear.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No, that's helpful
11 again with perspective. Now, from your vantage
12 point, have there been - are there errors with this
13 many subway surfing deaths? I know it's kind of
14 complicated based on what you're saying about how the
15 data is collected and looked through but like is
16 there an error in particular that you've seen this
17 many subway surfing deaths?

18 MICHAEL KEMPER: So, the data you know I have
19 confidence that the data has gotten much better. You
20 know and again we share this data intelligence, data
21 driven deployment with the NYPD. We you know just to
22 describe how this works in all level of communication
23 and you know I don't think it's a secret you know
24 where I was sitting five weeks ago. I was the Chief
25 of Transit for the NYPD five weeks ago, so if anyone

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1 understands this topic, I think it would be me having
2 experienced it firsthand and you know just seeing and
3 living and actually responding to these tragedies
4 firsthand and speaking about it and being very
5 outspoken publicly about it. You know, so the
6 ability to be in this seat right now and continue and
7 really expand upon our working relationship is great
8 and is going to be helpful in so many different ways
9 but we are at number six for the year unfortunately.
10 I truly believe and I say this with all sincerity,
11 have it not been for all the efforts, everyone plus,
12 so many more people are putting into this topic. I
13 believe there would be more deaths and tragedy and
14 injuries. I truly do.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Have you found that
17 there's been a particular time of day or day of the
18 week when subway surfing is more common and does it
19 happen before school, after school, or on weekends?

20 MICHAEL KEMPER: Yeah, it's going to I think
21 Jeremy, you want to jump on that. Yeah, we have that
22 data.

23 JEREMY FEIGELSON: Sure. Chair, we do track that
24 and we can tell you and all the Council Members that
25 we see spikes in this behavior on weekdays in warm

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1 weather when school is in session in the after school
2 hours and they were actually according to our
3 numbers, drops off during July and August when school
4 is out of session, which suggests that this has
5 become a tragic form of afterschool activity.
6

7 MICHAEL KEMPER: We could drill down to the hour,
8 1500 to 1600, the day of the week, the train line,
9 the train stop. I mean, that's how strong our data
10 collection has gotten.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'd like to
12 acknowledge we've been joined by Council Member
13 Krishnan. When we tackle danger to the people using
14 our city streets, we don't just ask people to be
15 safe, we design our infrastructure to facilitate
16 their safety. Has the MTA looked at or looked into
17 structural changes that could meaningfully curb
18 subway surfing?

19 FRANCK JOSEPH: For years, even decades now, we
20 have continued to look at engineering solutions to
21 make our system as safe as possible. As we continue
22 to see this trend of you know reckless and dangerous
23 behavior, it's something that the team has been
24 charged with due to pending litigation. You know
25 unfortunately we're not able to go into you know too

1 much detail around some of those engineering
2 solutions but wanted to let you know that our team is
3 committed. We're looking at you know every possible
4 solution. We have to also take into account not just
5 the safety of our riders but also the safety of our
6 employees who maintain the subway cars and also
7 understanding that whatever solutions that we come up
8 with, there are multiple car classes, right? If you
9 are talking about 6,500, over 6,500 train cars,
10 multiple classes as well. And so, the engineering
11 solution is not just you know a one stop fix. We
12 really have to look at it in a multifaceted way but
13 we continue to do this work and you know MTA Chair
14 Lieber and New York City Transit President Crichlow
15 have been keeping you know the teams feet to the fire
16 in looking at this. And so, we look forward to
17 sharing more as we look at what possible solutions
18 exist.
19

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: We have some guests
21 in the Chamber. Hey guys. Is there a way to modify
22 the emergency exits to prevent access to the roofs or
23 subway cars while still allowing them to serve their
24 intended function? I know the R211 that the MTA
25 rolled out about a year or two ago, there's a lot of

1 functions that allows the conductor, for example, to
2 look into each car. Like, is there a way to modify
3 the emergency exits to prevent access to the roof of
4 the subway cars?
5

6 FRANCK JOSEPH: Yeah, I mean once again, you know
7 I'll reiterate that any engineering solutions that we
8 look at, we have to make sure that we're thinking
9 about the safety of our passengers as they're on them
10 when it comes to exactly what you said, when it comes
11 to exiting during emergencies. Thinking through
12 safety of our employees. When it comes to also
13 maintenance. We also have to think about the
14 structure itself right. We have you know some of our
15 cars are outside - many of our cars are inside, in
16 the tunnels and so we have to think about the
17 infrastructure itself and what is actually possible.
18 So, we're exploring all of those solutions and we'll
19 continue to do so.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I think we could
21 agree that inaction is not going to be the answer
22 that we're looking for. So, exploring what is
23 possible, taking all those points into consideration
24 and making sure that we're looking at that
25 infrastructure to see how we can modify it to address

1 this is going to be critical to be able to combat
2 some of this stuff that we're seeing. What
3 infrastructure changes designed to discourage subway
4 surfers for example, like warning signs or labels on
5 the outside of the emergency exits? Are any of those
6 implemented, been explored?
7

8 FRANCK JOSEPH: Yeah, I mean we have signs
9 telling you know our customers not to utilize you
10 know the doors unless it's an emergency. Also, on
11 our train cars particularly the ones that go on our
12 trains, particularly the ones that go outside, our
13 conductors every five minutes are instructed to tell
14 our customers, our passengers, our conductors are
15 instructed to tell our passengers that if they see
16 anyone riding on the outside of a train car to please
17 alert an MTA employee. They then go to our - a
18 notification goes to our OCC Operation Control
19 Center, which alerts the NYPD. We're also looking at
20 things such as if people are bunching on certain
21 parts of the platform and so, we're doing a lot not
22 just with signage but also actively engaging our
23 customers and letting them know that if they see any
24 type of dangerous behavior to alert us so that we can
25 not only stop the train. Then once the train is

1 stopped, we'll ensure that there's no one on the
2 outside of the train before it moves forward. So,
3 we're putting many different you know protocols and
4 processes in place to address people utilizing the
5 doors when it's not an emergency as well as making
6 sure that our customers are being partners with us in
7 this and being vigilant and looking to see if there
8 are people who are conducting themselves in a
9 dangerous manner, alerting us so that we can you know
10 take the proper measures.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What would it take to
13 implement infrastructure changes that could make a
14 difference? Would it take a total redesign of our
15 subway system and cars from the ground up? Or are
16 there incremental measures that we can implement?

17 FRANCK JOSEPH: It's a multifaceted approach.
18 There are you know engineering solutions as I stated
19 earlier whether it's to the cars, whether it's
20 looking at the infrastructure itself, our tunnels,
21 and we're exploring all of those to see what are some
22 of the measures that could be implemented you know
23 immediately? And you know this is something that as
24 I stated earlier, we're going to continue to look at.
25 We have been looking at. This is not an issue that

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1 is new to us and I want to ensure the Council of
2 that. Hearings like today are crucial, they're
3 important. It's important that we share this
4 information. We are continuously looking at how do
5 we ensure that we have a safe system? That all of
6 our riders can get on the train and can get back
7 home. Can get to their appointments. Can go see
8 their families can get to school, can get to work and
9 so, we're exploring all of that and we are going to
10 continue to look at what it looks like to make our
11 system safer whether it's through our train cars,
12 when we're procuring new train sets. What does that
13 look like to have safety mergers in place and as you
14 mentioned earlier Council Member, you know the R211's
15 are a perfect example of some of the increased safety
16 measures that we put in our train cars and it's
17 something that as we look into the future, we'll
18 continue to do so.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: About a year ago to
21 MTA, together with the city's agencies unveiled its
22 Ride Inside Stay Alive Campaign. How much funding
23 and man power was dedicated to this campaign?

24 JEREMY FEIGELSON: Chair, we don't track that as
25 a specific budgetary line item. What I can tell you

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1 is that what the MTA has contributed to that effort
2 is first and foremost the resources of our creative
3 team. We paired up as that great student team from
4 High School of Art and Design under leadership of
5 Principal Maximillian Re-Sugiura with the same folks
6 at the MTA, the same professionals who design all the
7 messaging that goes out to our customers across
8 subway bus and commuter rail. We also have
9 contributed the resources of our digital screens and
10 our advertising channels within the system.
11

12 So, the student voices that you're hearing in the
13 cars, in the stations, you know that's an MTA
14 resource. The digital screens where you see the
15 signage you know which we have here, you know which
16 is still up there today. You know we saw it this
17 morning, you'll hear the student voices every day in
18 our system and those are our resources. So, it's a
19 very substantial contribution, it's just not one that
20 we track in terms of the dollar expense.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Is there a reason you
22 don't track that?

23 JEREMY FEIGELSON: Well, we've been focused on
24 just you know making contributions as opposed to
25 counting them Chair. The staff time you know is -

1 these are people who are working for us full-time
2 every day on lots of initiatives, so it might be a
3 little bit challenging to break it out. So normally
4 the contribution of the screen time and the audio
5 time, it's just not something that we would typically
6 measure.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How do you measure
9 the effectiveness or success of the campaign? Is
10 there a way to determine whether it's a change in
11 behavior?

12 JEREMY FEIGELSON: Well, that's something we work
13 on every day and I would underscore we really
14 appreciate being brought to the table together today.
15 I want the Chair and all the members present to know
16 that we are at the table together every day. All the
17 agencies that you see here today and more. We are
18 talking regularly, meeting regularly and trying to
19 come up with better answers to exactly the question
20 you've asked, which is what kind of interventions are
21 going to be impactful. So, I would commend
22 especially DYCD for leading the conversations
23 directly with students because we need to hear from
24 them. It's all about meeting the kids where they are
25 and we're continuing to do that. We are working on

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1 an updated messaging campaign and sort of Ride Inside
2 2.0 which we hope to launch sooner rather than later.
3 So, all those efforts, the messaging and the
4 measuring of the messaging are ongoing.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Today, looking back
7 at the campaign, do you believe that this is an
8 approach we should continue working on or is there
9 another direction we should be moving towards to
10 tackle this problem?

11 JEREMY FEIGELSON: Well, I think it's both Chair.
12 I think there's no question this has to be kids
13 talking to kids. You know if it's the old folks
14 lecturing kids you know about a change in their
15 behavior. We all know that's not going to work, so
16 the idea of student led messaging, I think is the
17 absolutely the right idea and we're committed to it
18 and all of our partners are committed to it. Every
19 campaign needs to be updated and refreshed from time
20 to time and so we are going to - you're going to
21 continue to see this messaging but over time you'll
22 see additional and will help improve messaging as
23 well.
24
25

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm going to come
3 back to questions. I'm going to pass it to my Co-
4 Chair Council Member Salaam.

5 CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Thank you. I was thinking
6 about safety measures as it relates to alerting the
7 MTA, specially the conductors and I was wondering
8 what measures could be put in place you know just
9 thinking in my own brain, I said it would be great if
10 we had maybe temper proof security cameras a top the
11 police cars. That way the conductors and also the
12 MTA itself would know that there is something wrong
13 and can like slow the trains down in that particular
14 regard so that they could deal with the situation.

15 Then I thought about how you know we watch the
16 news in the morning and we're trying to plan our day
17 and figure out how to get to work. Often times
18 there's cameras on the highways that allow us to
19 navigate the best roles and things of that nature and
20 I'm wondering if that same so to speak system is
21 being considered or already inside of the MTA?

22 MICHAEL KEMPER: So, technology is always
23 advancing. We're not where you're explaining right
24 now. With that said, the network of cameras in the
25 subway system is vast. It's tremendous, every subway

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1 station in New York City in some way shape or form
2 has video surveillance and some more than others.
3 You know if you want to talk, using technology in
4 particular cameras, to combat subway surfing that's
5 being done, it's being done you know so many cameras
6 the MTA has the NYPD is watching in real time, real
7 time and with the addition or the supplement of the
8 drones, that's why I said like game changer. I mean
9 the cameras are fixed. The drones are mobile.
10 They're moving. The quality is excellent. You know
11 the value of capturing a subway surfer on video is
12 enormous for so many reasons. I think the most
13 powerful takeaway from the capturing and on video is
14 showing it to mom when mom or dad comes to pick up
15 junior and junior says, "I didn't do nothing. It
16 wasn't me; it was my friends." And the video clearly
17 captures junior subway surfing. I think kids would
18 lie to their parents but you know I've said it so
19 many times that there's no greater partner in our
20 efforts to combat subway surfing than a concerned
21 parent. And this is what we're talking about, the
22 parent coming and actually seeing it. Just so much
23 more value than the slap on the wrist that the
24 apprehension is going to create.
25

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1 I think we need to you know really, really
2 understand video is being used. It's always
3 advancing but the driving force in my opinion and I
4 think as you ask other people that are dealing with
5 this, is social media and the you know the attention
6 surrounding it. Why are these kids subway surfing?
7 Once you ask yourself that question and then come up
8 with a reason, you got to really focus in on that
9 reason and many reasons. It's not the sole driving
10 force but in large part it is and it's offering them
11 attention, likes, clout and we're talking about
12 young, immature, impressionable kids here. We're
13 talking about 12 year olds.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: In that same regard, I'm
16 thinking about those visits that have been happening
17 where you know the NYPD may show up at the home of
18 the - I don't want to call them offender you know but
19 you know perhaps maybe bringing credible messengers
20 like the - I know you said something about the 17
21 year old. In my estimate, that's an old person as
22 well when it talks about subway surfing when you have
23 9 year olds or people as young as 9 year olds and
24 maybe even younger unfortunately.

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1 But I'm wondering in terms of that, has there
2 been any thought about bringing those types of
3 credible messengers either to the homes when there's
4 visits being made to deter children from
5 participating this risky behavior from folks who are
6 credible messengers?
7

8 MICHAEL KEMPER: So, I'll give it to Chief
9 Gullotta. The answer is yes and to your point, it's
10 again uhm, we just had this conversation at least
11 another conversation on this exact topic. We spoke
12 about refreshing this campaign, the Ride Inside,
13 Stay Alive campaign and you're probably going to see
14 exactly what you're talking in that but Joe.

15 JOSEPH GULLOTTA: Yeah Chair Salaam, I couldn't
16 agree with you more about the credible messenger part
17 of it. So, when I took over approximately three
18 weeks ago and we had one of the deaths, one of the
19 things I noticed right away was where it was
20 occurring. A big part of it would be in Queens and
21 the Rockaway's along those lines. I have two
22 detectives that came with me from my previous
23 assignment. One grew up right there in Rose Avenue,
24 shot it with a seven line. The other grew up in the
25 Far Rockaways. I immediately saw the need for them

1 to get out there and visit with the 44 repeat
2 offenders that we had. That was impactful. They got
3 out there to the top ten and they're still doing it
4 to this day and they're from that neighborhood. One
5 of my detectives grew up right a block away from the
6 seven line. The other takes the A-Train every day to
7 work. They went out and talked to the parents and I
8 believe that had significance. One mother almost
9 collapsed to the floor when they knocked on the door
10 because she thought her son had died from subway
11 surfing.
12

13 To that end, I think we're close to getting a few
14 of the young people that we've talked to to be that
15 credible messenger and that's going to be the goal
16 going forward of these visits. It's a deterrent but
17 it's also you know some of the information they gave
18 us was so invaluable about why it's done, how it's
19 done and a few of them say we're not doing anymore.
20 So, those are the ones we're really looking to really
21 concentrate and to be our credible messenger to go
22 forward with us.

23 CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: And also uhm, you know the
24 NYPD has extensive interaction with youth on a daily
25 basis, particularly the departments youth

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1 coordination officers and the school safety agents.

2 Do these officers play any role in combating youth
3 risk taking behaviors? Youth risk taking behaviors
4 like subway surfing?
5

6 JOSEPH GULLOTTA: Yeah, I could say that. We're
7 getting to the schools. I think we talked to close
8 to 3,000 kids so far with more plan. Me and Mark
9 have discussed that as well, our rideshare was going
10 to be a big part of that as we go forward at the
11 problem stations, at the location to gauge youth
12 before they get on the train. That's a key component
13 to this.

14 And secondly, when it comes to education, us
15 going to the schools, for me, it's personal. I go
16 home every day; my wife's a guidance counselor in
17 middle school in a public school here and we have
18 these discussions every single day about the youth at
19 that particular age, so over the dinner table, we
20 have these frank discussions. She's talking to these
21 kids, working with these kids. So, I think I have a
22 very good insight into what we have going on and me
23 and Mark discussed it, the guidance counselors going
24 forward could be a big component of what we have
25 going on as we partner up with YCO's. And I'm going

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1
2 to go back to my wife being a guidance counselor, she
3 works extensively with her YCO's so I think that's a
4 valuable tool. We're going to put in place going
5 forward to keep it going.

6 CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: I'm just going to pause for
7 a second for Chair Rivera to recognize the school.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Good morning everyone. I
9 just want to say hello to these classes, these
10 wonderful students from the Clinton School. I just,
11 I just want to just add, I want to thank the
12 leadership of this Council because this issue we care
13 about very, very deeply and we want you to know that
14 your government is looking out for you and is
15 listening and maybe many of you didn't know Zachary
16 but we know that this particular issue affected your
17 school community, and we want you to know that we are
18 working to ensure that we can reach as many students
19 as possible with information and education and
20 outreach.

21 So, I want to thank you for visiting City Hall.
22 I'm very, very proud to be your Council Member and I
23 hope you enjoy the rest of the tour. Thank you very
24 much.

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: That's exciting. Children
3 involving themselves and really participating and
4 seeing what we do and especially as it relates to
5 something so important that they may be paying
6 attention and they're showing us that they're paying
7 attention. So, thank you for acknowledging them and
8 wow, this is great.

9 You know I want to know is there any targeted
10 outreach efforts by YCO's or local precincts and
11 neighborhoods that have experienced high rates of
12 subway surfers? I know that there was data that
13 showed that it wasn't necessarily one demographic or
14 another but I'm wondering if there maybe something
15 that we can -

16 JOSEPH GULLOTTA: Yeah, so when we take a look at
17 it, it's predominantly along that seven line. Those
18 schools along the seven line, those are the ones
19 we've identified and those are the ones we're really
20 looking to get into because it really seems to be the
21 bigger problems on the seven line and it's simple
22 just because the geography of how that train system
23 weighed out and then if you watched Spiderman
24 Homecoming. At the end of that movie, spiderman's on
25 the seven line riding that train.

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1 So, that's where we want to get. We want to get
2 to those schools along the seven line. That's the
3 focus. That's where we see most of our calls.
4 That's where most of the repeated fenders come from
5 and we have a couple schools that I have identified
6 that we're really going to look to make sure we
7 concentrate on.
8

9 CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Wow. We may have to perhaps
10 tap into the movie industry as it provides that kind
11 of messaging because you know quite often, I'm an
12 avid double 07 slash, you know but of course I know
13 I'm not doing any of those kinds of things but you
14 know sometimes when children see these things, it's
15 like oh, that's cool. Spiderman was on the train or
16 swinging from a line you know.

17 JOSEPH GULLOTTA: And I got to tell you when I
18 watched a movie recently with my kids. I was struck
19 by at the end of the movie that he was riding the
20 seven line and take this position, it really struck
21 me.

22 CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Wow, yeah. The NYPD has
23 expanded the use of home visits to juveniles caught
24 on subway surfing. What I want to know is what
25 information does the department provide to families

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1 at the time of the home visit and who conducts these
2 visits? When do they occur? Are parents usually
3 receptive to the NYPD? And does the NYPD have any
4 information on tracking individuals who have received
5 home visits? Are they less likely to engage in
6 repeat risky behavior?
7

8 JOSEPH GULLOTTA: Like I said, I think that's
9 where we focused on, especially when I first took
10 over taking those top ten with two detectives that I
11 know are top notch and speaking with those parents
12 and it was received incredibly well. One of the
13 juveniles was missing and my detectives go personally
14 involved with that particular child. We're still in
15 contact with the mother. There's two of the
16 juveniles that attend who we're still currently in
17 contact with. So, I think it's very impactful to
18 have those. Our NCO's and YCO's are conducting the
19 ones as well on a local basis for each district but I
20 really saw the benefit of getting two credible people
21 from that neighborhood to go out and speak and that
22 really, it's been well received by the parents.
23 Literature is given, videos are shown and then like I
24 said, two of the youth have really given us a lot of
25 information about why it's done. The peer pressure

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1 that goes involved with it and if you watch some of
2 the drone footages, you'll have 13, 14 kids up on
3 that thing and they're doing acrobats. They're
4 jumping around. They're jumping from the train. So,
5 you know when you hear subway surfing, we think
6 they're standing up on that train. The one mission
7 that was spoken about earlier, the social media
8 component, I watched these videos and my heart is in
9 my throat every time I watch it. It's not just
10 simple standing on top of a train. It's way more
11 than that and when you watch it and you're watching
12 the live feed, which we have, it's heart breaking
13 because you're praying those no tragedy that comes
14 from it.

16 CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Are there procedures for the
17 NYPD to notify MTA conductors when they receive 911
18 calls or otherwise become aware of an individual
19 riding on top of the subway cars?

20 JOSEPH GULLOTTA: So, we have constant
21 communication with the MTA. I think it's one of the
22 unique things in the New York City Police Department.
23 It doesn't happen anywhere else. We have a direct
24 line in. As far as you know contacting conductors
25 directly, I would have to get back to you on that but

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1 we do have direct contact with the MTA through rail
2 control and we can work very closely with them as it
3 addresses to any public safety issue. But I have to
4 get back to you further about us contacting
5 conductors directly.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: Are there protocols in place
8 for trains to slow down to ensure the safety of the
9 individual or individuals riding outside of the
10 subway cars?

11 FRANCK JOSEPH: Yeah so Chair, once we are
12 notified that there is someone riding on the outside
13 of a train, I'll speak particularly on the elevated
14 platforms. The train does stop. There is a
15 notification that goes to the Operation Control
16 Center and you know we alert NYPD. NYPD alone with
17 MTA response. We ensure that there is no one who is
18 on the outside of the train before the train moves
19 further. And so, our conductors are being vigilant.
20 The rest of our team is being vigilant and we're
21 ensuring that we're stopping safely where possible,
22 where feasible and once we stop, we then will ensure
23 that you know that the train is safe. There's no one
24 on the outside and we can continue with the ride.

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: And is the trains conducted
3 directed to wait at the next station until the police
4 - I'm assuming that that's -

5 FRANCK JOSEPH: Yeah, so we often times whenever
6 there's an emergency, you know whether it's Law
7 Enforcement or other emergency responders, we're in
8 constant communication to ensure that whatever that
9 emergency is and particularly in this matter, subway
10 surfing that everything is clear and it's safe for
11 the train to move forward. So, we're always in
12 communication as you know was stated earlier,
13 ensuring that the control center and NYPD are on the
14 same page before we can proceed.

15 CHAIRPERSON SALAAM: I'm going to come back
16 later. I'm going to pass it to Joseph, Councilman
17 Joseph.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Chair Salaam.
19 Regarding the Ride Inside Stay Alive Campaign, which
20 schools and how many students were involved in
21 creating resources for the campaign?

22 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, various schools as we
23 shared the initiative was spearheaded by Art and
24 Design High School. Principal Max was here today. A
25 specific group of students, I'm not sure of the

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1 entire number but they were super excited about being
2 a part of this initiative and we got the commitment
3 from this principal to continue to have - to be a
4 part of it and to invite more students to be a part
5 of the overall campaign.
6

7 As it relates to the voice that you hear, the
8 PSA's, that was various schools throughout the
9 system. We can get you a specific number of schools,
10 names of schools and the number of kids that
11 participated.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And which schools, can you
13 also add which schools? Thank you. How does DYCD
14 and DOE measure the effectiveness of this campaign in
15 changing young people's attitudes, behavior, reducing
16 incidents of subway surfing?

17 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: So for DYCD we clearly want
18 this to stop to lessen a stop, right? The effect of
19 this campaign is not only reaching the young surfers.
20 There's also reaching the families, making sure
21 they're engaged in helping us to stop, to make them
22 aware, to message to everyone in the community of
23 what's going on.

24 For us is making sure that our young leaders are
25 out there also messaging for us. The effective of

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1 this campaign is to involve everyone and having young
2 people for us who are participating in our programs
3 and our students and our schools, to make sure that
4 they're out there messaging. To make sure that this
5 is an effort as a community.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Right but young people are
8 the ones carrying the message that it is dangerous to
9 subway surf, not me, not the older generation but the
10 young people reaching out to each other and making
11 sure that the message is peer to peer right? They
12 listen to each other more than they listen to the
13 adults and I think they carry a heavy, a weight. Go
14 ahead.

15 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: Along with the young people,
16 also the community overall. So, parents need support
17 as well. So parent to parent, peer to peer in every
18 which way correct.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And does the parent
20 receive support as well?

21 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: So, if a parent is identified
22 as in of support, whether it's NYPD or New York City
23 Public School, they provide support through their
24 resources and if there's any support that DYCD has
25

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1 available, we jointly come together to make sure that
2 there's an array of services in every which way.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: What's the number one thing
5 you get when you meet a subway surfer that - what
6 causes them? Are we identifying the root cause of
7 why would someone want to risk lives just for whether
8 social media likes or whatever the reasons are? Have
9 we identified some of the root causes?

10 DEVIN DANTZLER: Sure. Thanks to our partnership
11 with DYCD in focus groups, some of the root causes -
12 well, the number one root cause across the board was
13 social media. That's one thing. We also learned
14 through the focus groups that there's a subculture of
15 subway surfing. A sense of belonging. A way to
16 distinguish themselves from others are some of the
17 drivers for this.

18 It also was worth mentioning as part of our
19 efforts as a working group, we engage in a number of
20 different agencies and our colleagues in DOHMH,
21 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene also help us
22 to understand there can be an addictive component for
23 some of our young people. The adrenaline rush, the
24 dopamine release, some of those things are also
25 driver's for the behavior. Now, the young people

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1 themselves didn't use that terminology but they speak
2 about the adrenaline rush. How free it feels to be
3 on top of the subway car. So, those are some of the
4 things we learned from the young people themselves
5 about the drivers.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: During my little
8 research around subway surfing, I know this started
9 in the 80's. What is different today from what was
10 happening back then?

11 MARK RAMPERSANT: Social media.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah, number one social
13 media?

14 MARK RAMPERSANT: Social media.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Alright.

16 KEVIN DANTZLER: It's the instant recognition.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: The instant gratification.

18 KEVIN DANTZLER: The dare devil you know acts
19 that these young people are doing right. So, in the
20 80's, I mean I wasn't here in the 80's but in the
21 80's -

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I wasn't there either.

23 KEVIN DANTZLER: Don't do the math. We didn't
24 have - you didn't have the ability to get likes and
25 the more likes you got, the more, the more, the more,

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1 right? I have never seen anyone or group wanting to
2 be liked more than our young people.
3

4 MICHAEL KEMPER: Look, years ago, you were subway
5 surf depending on how many people you went by saw
6 you, 50 people, 100 people. You know, you put the
7 right video on the right social media platform, it's
8 being seen by millions, millions.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. What plans does
10 DYCD and New York City Public Schools have for
11 involving more youth in the future development of the
12 campaigns?

13 KEVIN DANTZLER: Well, I'll go first. One thing
14 that we're trying to do, we have Borough Student
15 Advisory Council's otherwise known as BSACs. As we
16 mentioned in our opening remarks, we have engaged
17 Staten Island BSAC because there are unique
18 conditions that exist in the Staten Island Railway.
19 We're expanding that to all the BSACs across the
20 city. Every single borough has a BSAC that's made up
21 of a number of representatives from schools in that
22 borough. And so, getting their input is also
23 important we believe.

24 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And what age group are we
25 starting with that?

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1 KEVIN DANTZLER: Middle school.

2
3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I think we should start - if
4 we're talking about 9 year olds right, 9 year olds
5 are 4th graders. I think we should start from the
6 bottom. We should trickle it down to elementary
7 level. So, a 9 year old is in 4th grade, so that's
8 still elementary level.

9 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yup and a very concerning level
10 as well because under elementary school age right,
11 these are young people who are more supervision than
12 in our middle schools I would say and uhm, you know
13 they shouldn't have the ability to do that. So, we
14 will definitely double down to our little guys and
15 our campaign going forward will include more voices
16 of the young people and I mean not only the young
17 people who we are trying to deter from the behavior
18 but young people who are actually committing the
19 acts. Who have made the decision not to do it
20 anymore because they may have been a witness of their
21 friends going down or in some cases, they may have
22 almost went down themselves. But young people who
23 are saying enough is enough and how can I help
24 someone to help themselves? So, we are tapping into
25 that resource as well.

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay good. How does New
3 York City Public Schools incorporate danger of subway
4 surfing into existing health and safety curriculum?
5 If so, at what grade level again?

6 KEVIN DANTZLER: We are working with partners to
7 design curricula. In fact, every two weeks we have a
8 working group for subway surfing that consist of a
9 number of different agencies and we invite guests to
10 give us input and expertise. We've engaged diversion
11 programs, not for profits who work with some
12 populations that engage in subway surfing to get
13 their ideas about how we can structure curriculum and
14 resource guides that teachers can use in classrooms
15 to make sure that they are able to let the students
16 know before they engage in subway surfing about its
17 dangers and its consequences.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I hope you're engaging some
19 young people to sit at the table as well as you
20 develop this curricula because it's about them. And
21 so I hope you're planning with them as well.

22 KEVIN DANTZLER: Our young people have said
23 nothing about them without them is for them and we're
24 taking that to heart.

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1
2 MARK RAMPERSANT: And our important, important
3 partner in this respect and many of them don't know
4 that they're an important partner for this initiative
5 is our parents and that is definitely a voice that
6 will be at the table. That's a voice that we
7 continue to incorporate in everything we develop for
8 young people and as our partners in the NYPD have
9 shared, many of our parents are super surprised that
10 their young people are even you know committing these
11 kinds of reckless behavior. So, to educate our
12 parents is super important and whether the
13 conversation is happening at the dinner table or on
14 the way to school, we want to make sure that our
15 parents are our allies in this space as well. So,
16 they are not excluded from the planning and the
17 presentations as well.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And what resources are you
19 providing for parents? What resources are you
20 providing for parents?

21 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah, so currently it's really
22 the presentations outside of the awareness, the
23 awareness that has been done but going forward, the
24 work that we're doing around the lessons, the lessons
25 created for teachers, for young people we plan to use

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1 our PTA, CEC's, our parent groups, our parent
2 coordinators who host these meetings. Educate our
3 school safety agents who do the community outreach
4 work where they're doing presentations for school
5 staff and parents, utilizing all of those supports to
6 reach our parents and meet them where they are.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And are we also making sure
9 that we're using language access? Since we have many
10 families English is not their first language, the
11 child may be the only one that speaks English in that
12 household. So, language access would be very
13 important. Are you using any of the platforms like
14 Jupitar to send out message to parents? Like, parent
15 teacher conference is coming up this week. Are we
16 sending out those messages to parent teacher
17 conference staff? That could be one of the items on
18 the agenda as teachers discuss, meet with parents.
19 Across the city this week is high school parent
20 teacher conference, so I'm hoping that on platforms
21 like Jupitar send out text messages about assignments
22 and all that. I think that should also be embedded
23 in how we reach so many parents across the city. So,
24 I think that would be one idea as we engage parents
25 PTA's, SLT's. Even the SLT's in the building should

1 be addressed in how they can be a partner and a voice
2 in this work as well.

3
4 What role does the school counselors and social
5 workers; I've always asked that and the psychologists
6 play in identifying and addressing youth at risk of
7 engaging in subway surfing? And one person we
8 usually leave out of this conversation, attendance
9 teachers play a very important role because I was
10 reading one of the stories. I realized that one of
11 the students left out. Attendance teachers play a
12 role and they can be a partner with our social
13 workers and our guidance counselors and also helping
14 in this work. So, please let me know how we engage
15 the social workers, psychologists in identifying
16 them. How have you used them?

17 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah, so the unfortunate part
18 is really the social workers as it relates specially
19 to subway surfing. It is usually sort of after the
20 fact, right? So, the subway surfing sort of actions
21 that students display are not that evident outside of
22 maybe just sort of being absent. But many of the
23 students are engaged in school, right and do this
24 stuff after school and so forth and the schools are
25 never the wiser.

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Sometimes they do it in
3 front of schools. Somebody was doing it at 8:00
4 a.m..

5 MARK RAMPERSANT: Somebody does it 7:00 a.m.

6 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Before school, yeah, before
7 school activity too.

8 MARK RAMPERSANT: 100 percent right and there's
9 no way for schools to know this information and so
10 what we've done is in partnership with the Chief, is
11 every case of a student who is engaged by the NYPD,
12 New York City Public Schools will get notification.
13 Just yesterday, we have three young people who were
14 found on the top of the train and they were safely
15 removed and that information was provided to New York
16 City Public Schools and by the time those young
17 people entered the building, there were guidance
18 counselors and support caring adults waiting them at
19 the door to have conversation about this at risk
20 behavior. Of which, many of our young people don't
21 believe that the schools will ever get knowledge of,
22 right? Because the connection between the law
23 enforcement professionals and the school staff
24 doesn't reach that far but based on this new found
25 relationship in this respect, this is an added that

1 the Chief and I are doing and it's not about uhm
2 providing student information or violating FRIPA or
3 other practices. This is around taking away the
4 students ability to remain invisible to the school
5 that these are the behaviors that they are
6 participating in after hours. So, rest assure that
7 every case of a subway surfing incident, whether the
8 young person made it on or outside of the train or
9 otherwise. An attempt or an actual act we are
10 utilizing the supports of our guidance counselors,
11 social workers and other caring adults to have
12 conversations with those young people as well as do
13 outreach to the parents and we are going to ask that
14 principals are constantly monitoring the attendance
15 and overall behavior of these young people so that
16 there is no repeat of the action.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Okay, thank you. Earlier I
19 asked this question and the number one answer was
20 social media. So, what is New York City Public
21 School Policy on students use of social media, cell
22 phones during class time? And how does that policy
23 address or prevent the viewing of sharing of harmful
24 contents such as subway surfing?

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1 KEVIN DANTZLER: Well, we do have policies.

2 There's no cellphone use during instructional time.

3 That's a New York City Public School Policy. With

4 respect to social media overall, we have responsible

5 digital citizenship and that's given every school

6 year and this is actual curricula that's part of

7 that. That include appropriate online behavior,

8 responsible use of social networking sites, as well

9 as cyber bullying and other things. So we do take

10 steps to make sure we educate our young people about

11 the appropriate use of social media.

12 I will also mention that on our ex platform,

13 formally known as Twitter, we have anti-subway

14 surfing messaging on that as well as on Instagram.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Is it embedded in any of the

16 let's say the New York City Public School devices

17 that you give out to students?

18 MARK RAMPERSANT: It is not and that's a great

19 idea.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I'm taking notes. I'm

21 dropping gems for you. Take notes.

22 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah okay.

23

24

25

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And the citizen, in the
3 Digital Citizens curricula; I'm familiar with it.
4 When was the last time was it updated?

5 MARK RAMPERSANT: We'll get back to you on that.
6 We'll find out from our IT folks, preinstalled on all
7 New York City devices.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yup, that's how we did it.

9 MARK RAMPERSANT: An update, yup that makes
10 sense.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: How does the social me- hmm,
12 hmm, go ahead.

13 MARK RAMPERSANT: The other part of your question
14 that I want to be frank about is a teacher, an
15 educator of any kind wouldn't have access to a young
16 persons personal phone in the sites that they're
17 visiting. It is only when someone sees something and
18 says something that we become aware of what sites
19 young people are on, what sites they're frequenting.
20 Just this weekend, there's an unfortunate, fortunate
21 incident that occurred on a New York City train where
22 two gentlemen found a young person attempting to
23 climb on the top of the train, which was full of
24 passengers. And these people, these gentlemen, they
25 saw something and they did something.

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Hmm, hmm.

3 MARK RAMPERSANT: And they brought him out and
4 they roughed him up and I don't mean physically
5 roughed him up. They verbally roughed him up and it
6 was interesting to hear his response to them when
7 they asked why you were doing what you were doing.
8 He said, "I was just trying to have fun. I was just
9 trying to have fun." And the gentlemen asked, "what
10 is fun about risking your life and why do you think
11 you get to do that and all of these people get to
12 suffer if in fact you fall from this train?" And
13 this young person looked at him and he just said,
14 "well, I didn't know it was that serious. It's not
15 that serious for me."

16 And then another gentleman stepped up and said,
17 "yes it is serious. I had someone who lost their
18 life doing something reckless. They are not here
19 anymore. What you don't understand is, once it's
20 done, it's done." And a lot of what we are talking
21 about here today is around educating young people and
22 the enforcement of the NYPD and the engineering of
23 the MTA but we don't recognize that we have millions
24 of riders who have a collective responsibility to do
25 exactly what those gentlemen did today.

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1 You don't sit there and watch young people risk
2 their lives. You step up and you do something about
3 it and even if that something is as simple as picking
4 up the phone and calling to say or knocking on the
5 conductors door to say this is what I just witnessed,
6 do something. Do something because young people bank
7 on the fact that we're not going to do anything.
8

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, how does social media
10 policy address youth mental health in general in New
11 York City Public Schools because we've been hearing
12 the number one root cause is social media and how are
13 we addressing that with young people?

14 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah, so you know this is a
15 real hard one for us right and so we are trying to
16 help young people understand that it is important to
17 take a break from the cell phone right. If you think
18 about what young people - just think about what we
19 deal with on a regular basis with our cell phones.
20 Many of us for the purposes of our job but for some
21 of us, for the sheer entertainment of being straight
22 up nosy right? We want to know what's going on. We
23 want to know what is happening, where it's happening
24 and who it is happening to. And our young people
25 have this amazing, amazing connection to social

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1 media, to the point to where many of them can't even
2 put the phones down. Let me give you an example.
3 Many of our New York City Public Schools have taken a
4 position to collect cell phones from students, right
5 collect cell phones from students from at the door
6 and one of the ways by which we can guarantee you 100
7 percent parent participation in open school night, is
8 give the cell phones back on open school night right?
9 And you will get parents to come up and have a
10 conversation about that but right now, our
11 conversation with parents is, we for the purposes of
12 ensuring young peoples mental health, we want to take
13 phones from them. "No, you're not. No, you're not.
14 Your not going to take my child's phone because I
15 need my child in an event of an emergency. I need to
16 connect with my child in the event of an emergency."
17 But young people are doing some of the most heinous
18 things that you can imagine, including what we're
19 here to talk about today. But the mere fact that
20 one person can make one video post and 1,000 people
21 show up to one location. That is the power that this
22 machine that we're trying to fight against has over
23 the minds of our young people, right? And so, when
24 you ask about the mental health effects of the phone,
25

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1 some of the things that we're doing is we're trying
2 to get the kids to put the phones down. We're trying
3 to enforce, enforce responsible usage in schools and
4 ensure that they're not using them in the classroom
5 and on stairwells and others, right? When you have
6 young people willing to be suspended as opposed to
7 giving up their phones, we are really in a
8 challenging place right now, right? And young people
9 don't believe and I'm not speaking for all young
10 people when I see this. They don't believe that you
11 know what's best for them as it relates to my cell
12 phone that you didn't pay for. My cell phone that
13 you didn't pay for and the challenges that teachers
14 have to endure on a daily basis combating the issue
15 of cell phones in classrooms, it's unbelievable.
16 It's hard but we are fighting the fight every day.
17 We're thinking about different ways and innovative
18 ways by which we can get young people to put the
19 phones down but they shared some things with us.
20 While you're focused on our cell phones, other
21 technology exists. For instance, the meta glasses.
22 I don't need my cell phone in my hand to have a
23 conversation or visit sites, right? My watch. I can
24 have a whole conversation on my watch or text through
25

1 my watch and other technology that we are not
2 advanced enough yet in schools to really combat and
3 every single day, this is getting more and more and
4 more advanced and we have to figure out different
5 ways to meet our young people where they are and
6 utilize technology to do exactly that.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, we have to catch up New
9 York City Public Schools? Technology is leaving you
10 all behind and uhm, so in another words, is there any
11 mental health support? Is there any counseling
12 providing to young people, especially after they
13 found subway surfing? Is there any mental health
14 support that's provided for these young people?

15 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yes, as I shared with you
16 today, thank God that we didn't have a tragedy but
17 we're meeting those young people at the door and all
18 of what's being provided for them is exactly what
19 you're describing. And in the unfortunate cases,
20 where we do have a young person that goes down and
21 all of the friends in the communities that are
22 effected by this, we also provide supports in that
23 respect. And not only the supports in the school but
24 if there are external supports needed for the student
25

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1 in the community, we're doing that as well. So,
2 that's the long way to say yes now.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Is New York City website has
5 a social media guidelines for youth under 13 and 13
6 and above and are you considering updating those
7 guidelines to include information and discouraging
8 engagement on harmful online trends, such as subway
9 surfing?

10 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yes to all of that. Definitely
11 yes to updating social media guidelines to ensure all
12 of the harmful and dangerous things that effect our
13 young people directly. Unfortunately there is
14 something new every day challenging our young people
15 from gummies and vaping and everything else that you
16 can name and I don't need a hearing on that, I'm just
17 sharing something with you.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you for the idea.
19 Chair, Chair Stevens.

20 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah, so yes, definitely and
21 always looking for different ways by which we can
22 meet young people where they are. One of the things
23 that Public Advocate Williams stated was, we're
24 telling kids about the no but what are we telling
25 them about the yes? What is in place of? So, when

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1 we tell you, "don't subway surf," what do we want you
2 to do?

3
4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Correct.

5 MARK RAMPERSANT: Right, we want you to
6 participate in the 56 sports that are available to
7 our schools. So, one of the 900 after school
8 programs that exist throughout our system. With the
9 46,000 plus students that participate on a daily
10 basis. From badminton to cricket to swimming to you
11 know you name it. In the 50 something different
12 programs, or should I say clubs that exist in our New
13 York City Public Schools and I'm talking about one
14 school in particular that has 50 something clubs
15 because every time a young person says to this
16 principal, "we want this." The principal gives them
17 that, right and many of our schools offer these
18 opportunities for young people all they have to do is
19 ask from dance to step, to swimming to you name it,
20 they make it come to fruition and how do we compete
21 with a moving train?

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Make sure young people know
23 where to find the resources as well and don't just
24 say they exist but it would be nice for them to know
25 where those resources live.

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1
2 MARK RAMPERSANT: Absolutely.

3 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Are there specific
4 communities or schools that where subway surfing
5 incidents are more prevalent? If so, where and how
6 are resources allocated to target those specific
7 areas?

8 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, specifically around subway
9 surfing, I'll be honest with you, I couldn't answer
10 the question as to where it's generally focused. I
11 know that we get these reports, some of which we get
12 directly. Some - we have formulated a new
13 relationship to ensure that we get that on a regular
14 basis. As that relationship forms and we are getting
15 more information about these cases, I can better
16 answer the question of where we're seeing this most
17 prevalent and then I can get back to your office.

18 MICHAEL KEMPER: So, just on that, we could talk
19 about subway lines. We talk about that seven line;
20 you know I think elevated for obvious reasons. Seven
21 line, that J-line going over to Williamsburg Bridge,
22 I'm thinking about for the scenic background and
23 that's the draw in my opinion, the line is the draw.
24 Where they're coming from is not necessarily right
25 there. In other words, they don't have to live

1 adjacent to the seven line. They could be coming
2 from you know different boroughs. You know I've
3 heard people; this is not only a New York City issue.
4 You know this issue is going on in other cities and
5 there are kids from other cities coming to New York
6 for the New York City backdrop. So, I hope I
7 answered- you know I hope that question is clear.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Are we seeing more boys or
10 girls? How are we looking at -

11 JOSEPH GULLOTTA: From our context, I can tell
12 you just going back to the schools for a second, we
13 do track the schools and we do see the ones along
14 that seven subway line as being - and we're going to
15 share that information with them and that's when we
16 do our education piece. That's how we do it. We
17 track what schools, where we see it presently and we
18 can see what schools they're coming from. So, really
19 along that seven line would be one of the places we
20 see the most amount of students from, coming from.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. Are we seeing
22 more boys or girls?

23 JOSEPH GULLOTTA: We're seeing mostly boys but we
24 do have a share of girls doing it and just recently a
25 pretty horrific incident with a young lady and if you

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1 ever see those videos and see the picture of what
2 happened to her afterwards, I still have nightmares
3 about it. It's that horrific when you look what a
4 train does to a human body. She survived but her
5 life will be forever altered.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I'm passing it now over to
8 Chair Stevens.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hello, good afternoon
10 everyone. I will try to keep it as brief as possible
11 because I know colleague who want to ask questions
12 and I'm last on the list, but nonetheless, one of the
13 things and I think I said this in my opening
14 statement and even from listening and it's nice to be
15 able to listen to everyone's testimony but the
16 running thing of saying like, it's social media. I
17 find that to be a little lazy on our part because we
18 all know it's not just social media because again, I
19 remember growing up. I know kids who subway surfed
20 and this was something that was being done then and I
21 think that there's other things especially thinking
22 about how this - and it was even said that it's the
23 subculture. A lot of those folks who are in that
24 subculture actually are not online are people who
25 want to be off the grid and so, I think that we have

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1 to make sure that when we're even thinking about this
2 and talking about it and framing it, to thinking
3 about how we're exploring all spaces because yeah,
4 social media can be one of the driving factors but
5 it's not the only one. And so, I'm a little
6 disheartened that it's been so much focus on that and
7 even the only real campaign that's being done is
8 being done on social media. Because thinking about
9 specially young people and it's hard and I'm not
10 saying we all have the answers but I think that we
11 also have to think about what are other ways that we
12 reach those young people who aren't necessarily on
13 social media and who you don't know because they're
14 not on there right? And so, we have to - for me,
15 always thinking about well, what is the other side
16 especially when it comes to young people?

18 I do like that I'm hearing a lot of like trying
19 to get young people to be a part of these
20 conversations and that's the route that we should be
21 going because they're the ones with the answers.
22 Clearly, it's none of any of us, right? We're not
23 young people. I say it all the time and so I'm a big
24 proponent of making sure young people are in the room
25 and actually giving the solutions to the answer.

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1 But there is a follow up question I wanted to ask
2 because I know when Jessica was speaking from DYCD,
3 she said that there's a lot of supports that's given
4 to parents. That DOE is working on a collaboration.
5 What supports exactly are those supports that parents
6 are given? Is this supports that we're talking about
7 after incidents? Are we just talking about supports
8 in general? I know DOE said they were doing it like
9 through parent coordinators and PTA's but what other
10 supports are being given? Because I think even
11 saying through parent coordinators and PTA's, that's
12 not enough because we know most parents don't go to
13 PTA meetings and parent coordinators are overwhelmed
14 because they have so many things to do. So, when
15 we're talking about supports, what does supports
16 really look like for these parents, especially
17 parents and schools that had incidents around it and
18 programs as well?

20 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: Hmm, hmm, okay, so there's a
21 variety of supports. So one, DYCD and New York City
22 Public Schools, we have an array of services.
23 Depending on the situation, depending on a case, a
24 family may be going through something and it's
25 different from one family to another. I think that

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1 one of the most important things that we've been able
2 to do is be able to identify if there is a family in
3 need of something based on their situation that we've
4 been able to connect either to whether it's a
5 guidance counselor or certain services within the
6 school or a provider in their neighborhood. I think
7 the most important thing that we need to always
8 remember is that families and communities sometimes
9 trust their community and being able to connect a
10 family or a parent to a provider, a local nonprofit
11 or someone that they actually see every day and being
12 able to say like, you know there are services here.
13 Whether they're services of any kind of services,
14 whether it's pantry services, whether it's
15 immigration service or whether it's just counseling.
16 Just overall information so we have been able to make
17 those connections as to like, if there is someone
18 that is in need for a particular neighborhood or they
19 prefer a different neighborhood for whatever reason,
20 that we can actually make those connections.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, great because everyone
23 knows I'm a big proponent of making sure that we are
24 equipping our providers to be able to handle certain
25 situations. And so, my question to you is how are

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1 you working with providers to give them the things,
2 the resources that they need in order to support
3 these families when you're making these referrals?

4
5 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: So, with subway surfing, with
6 any type of at risk, any type of need, we engage our
7 providers to find out what are those needs? What are
8 all those trends? What exactly is happening so we
9 may be able to have those discussions and be able to
10 come together and figure out if there is something
11 that is lacking in a community for a particular
12 reason then we can come together and work together of
13 making sure that we partner with whomever we need to
14 partner to make sure that we have those - filling
15 those gaps or if we're able to leverage other
16 resources that people may not be familiar with. If
17 someone's not familiar with a certain nonprofit that
18 is available and they're providing those services,
19 the most important thing is to make sure that we
20 share.

21 So one, I want to say is being able to have
22 providers speak to each other so they can share
23 information. They can know what's in their community
24 they can leverage. It's not about competition, it's
25

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1 about making sure that we're all working together as
2 a community.

3
4 Two, being able to understand if there is a need,
5 then how can we work together to be able to address
6 those needs? And the other piece of it is to
7 continue conversation. This situation here is
8 actually something that is impacting many people and
9 as this campaign makes people aware of what's going
10 on, they begin to now speak up as to like, so what is
11 it that we need to do? What is the next step and
12 these conversations are taking place and will
13 continue to take place as we engage all types of
14 individuals, youth and parents.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, thank you and just to
16 follow up because I think that obviously all those
17 things are amazing and we should be making sure
18 providers have the information and working together.
19 Music to my ears because if anyone comes to my
20 hearing, that is what I've been preaching for for the
21 last three years. So, thank you for listening.
22 However, are we ensuring that they have the resources
23 and will DYCD be asking for additional funding this
24 year to provide it with the providers? Because I
25 never think that it's fair that we give providers

1 more work but never give them the resources to
2 actually implement the work. And so, if you guys are
3 saying that you're doing focus groups and you're
4 doing these things. What is your plan to ensure that
5 providers have the absolute necessary resources to
6 provide it and not just doing it off of love and
7 actually being able to provide the service?

9 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: No absolutely.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, will you be asking for
11 new needs?

12 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: At this time, we're going to
13 be working with programs to explore and to find out
14 what are -

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, we're here now so I
16 will be looking forward to this budget season of
17 hearing new need because if we're saying it's an
18 issue and we have all of these agencies here working
19 together now, it clearly is a need if you know we're
20 saying that this is an issue and something we want to
21 address because we cannot allow providers to just do
22 work for free. I don't believe in that.

23 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: Absolutely.

24

25

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Thank you. What role does
3 DYCD believe it should be playing in educating and
4 engaging and preventing subway surfing?

5 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: The role of making sure we
6 partner and continue the message of New York City
7 Public Schools to make sure that we share whether
8 it's curriculum, whether it's the campaign message or
9 any other information that we're able to find through
10 our focus groups that we share with our partners here
11 at the table.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, I know that you just
13 said that you guys are doing focus groups to get a
14 better understanding with the youth to engage - who
15 have been engaging in subway surfing. What's the
16 feedback has the agency received about the
17 motivations other than social media that are having
18 these young people engage in these high risk
19 activities?

20 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: Absolutely. So, as mentioned
21 before and just to you know a sense of belonging, a
22 sense of being able to belong to a group, belong to a
23 community, being able to have likes. And I know you
24 mentioned social media but it's likes, whether it's
25 social media or any one that can actually say like,

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1 "hey, you're really good at what you're doing and
2 keep doing it." So, those are the kind of things
3 that we're noticing and we're hearing from. The peer
4 pressure. The peer pressure to actually see other
5 folks doing it and figuring that this is what they
6 need to do. And so, these are the kind of things
7 that they've mentioned and they shared with us.

9 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And so, even just thinking
10 about those things that you're saying. None of them
11 are new or things that we don't know as adults and
12 educators and folks who have worked with kids for a
13 number of years. So, how are we then looking at the
14 programs that we're providing to then reflect that in
15 the programming to ensure that we're trying to at
16 least reach it? Because I think some of that is the
17 issue right, especially someone has said at the dais
18 that they are seeing it done during after school
19 hours. That's when we are at our prime right?
20 That's when we're supposed to be game time. So, what
21 are we doing to use that information from the focus
22 groups to say, maybe we're not hitting the mark
23 anymore in the programs. That they don't feel
24 belonged. That they're not getting the likes and
25

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1 getting the connection, so how are we using that to
2 reevaluate some of our programs?

3
4 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: No, absolutely and that's the
5 key goal. Being able to engage all types of youth.
6 To be able to tell us whether or not is there any new
7 ideas? What are they hearing? What are those
8 trends? So, we're right now looking; we're speaking
9 to young people. We are looking into our programs
10 and engaging other folks that are involved in the
11 development to make sure that we are including
12 feedback and ideas and just also engaging other
13 partners that maybe able to support in this effort of
14 developing these new programs.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Could you please explain
16 DYCD's role in collaborating young people to create
17 peer to peer outreach programs to combat subway
18 surfing and has the agency found success with those
19 efforts?

20 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: Absolutely, so one of the
21 first things that we were able to do is joining
22 partnership with New York City Public School in this
23 campaign, was to be able to engage our participants
24 from our programs to be the voice over, to be the
25 messengers. We believe that it's important that it's

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1 peer to peer. The message is from young people and
2 if you hear them, they identify that they're either
3 from Queens or they're from a particular neighborhood
4 to be able to make those connections to those young
5 people who are out there, you know subway surfing.
6

7 So, that's one area. Outside from that is
8 creating those credible messages but ambassadors.
9 There's credible messengers also as friends or are
10 folks that are - that people look up to to be able to
11 say, outside of subway surfing, there's other ways to
12 look up to young people and within themselves and
13 their community. So, we look forward to tapping into
14 that.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And so, even with the peer
16 mentorships, like we said, subway surfing has been
17 around for a number of years. Have we looked at
18 reaching out to adults who have done subway surfing
19 in the past to also be some of these incredible
20 messengers and talk about that experience and how are
21 we bringing that into the fold?

22 KEVIN DANTZLER: Yes we have. As I mentioned, we
23 have a biweekly subway surfing working group and we
24 invite guests. We have invited former subway surfers
25 who are willing to lend their voices. We try to be

1 mindful that we don't exploit their pain but again
2 that they can hail through helping.

3
4 One individual who subway surfed one time; he's
5 in his 30's now but he subway surfed a single time
6 and as a result of that he's now blind and he's
7 willing to lend his voice, efforts and energy to our
8 campaigns. We've reached out to other folks. We do
9 intent to even reach out to parents and loved ones
10 who have suffered losses because of this activity.
11 We try to be very sensitive to make sure that they
12 understand we are trying to use this in a way to stop
13 others from engaging in it but making sure we don't
14 exploit them.

15 So, yes, the suggestion you make is a great one
16 and we are moving forward in that.

17 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, because I think it's
18 just important and not just folks who have been
19 injured or hurt or whatever. I think that it's
20 important especially younger folks are much more
21 likely to explore things that are a little bit more
22 dangerous and looking for a general - and as we get
23 older, obviously we become a lot more cautious around
24 how we are moving around and like but I think it's
25 always important especially people who have a very

1 similar experience to have the opportunity to share
2 and work together because like right, someone who has
3 never done it, might be like, "that's crazy, I would
4 never" or as another person like, "no, I get it. I
5 did it and this is why I did it." And have that type
6 of connection and have some type of like mentorship
7 program or groups where they can come in and be able
8 to interact with young people who have had these
9 incidents and also, you know who we know done it or
10 who have been picked up by NYPD.
11

12 And so again, I just want to say that I think the
13 collaboration here is one that we typically don't see
14 right so I want to give you all credit because I
15 don't be giving credit all the time, so I'm going to
16 give you all credit today right. Especially all you
17 all working together and all that so these are the
18 things that I like to see. So, to not have a crazy
19 Chair, I would love to always see the agencies
20 working in harmonious and actually trying to address
21 these things in a real way, so.

22 What steps are being taken to ensure the
23 increased enforcement by NYPD is compelled by
24 positive engagement and preventative outreach led by
25 DYCD and DOE? So, how are we working with NYPD so

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1 it's not just enforcement and what does this whole
2 collaboration look like?

3
4 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah, so I'll talk to you from
5 the relationship established with New York City
6 Public Schools and the NYPD. The work around just
7 really advising and bringing to our attention that
8 young people have been deterred from you know riding
9 on the outside of the train, short of what I shared
10 with you, it's not from New York City Public Schools
11 as a punitive measure. We want young people to know
12 that we know, right? We know at the school level and
13 we care. And here are some of the ways by which we
14 want to show you that we care. We're partnering with
15 our village, which includes all of the stakeholders
16 outside of the school to tell us about your behaviors
17 outside and let me tell you about what we're going to
18 do for you in school. We need to engage young people
19 and that's what we're doing to redirect some of those
20 energies to something a little bit more a lot more
21 positive than getting on the top of the train. And
22 some of what you heard today about the sense of
23 belonging and the sense of wanting to be a part of
24 something greater in the social media stuff. That's
25 one piece of it but we've learned in conversations

1 with some other young people that time, time is
2 different right? Young people who support themselves
3 after hours because mom works two jobs right? And
4 there are other family members that are not in place
5 in the house. And I speak specifically about one
6 young person who we're mentoring who was a subway
7 surfer and I mean an avid subway surfer and can tell
8 you about how often they go up and when his friend
9 went down, how they celebrate right, his death right
10 by going up and doing it again in his honor, right?
11 And so, we are intentional about allowing young
12 people this space to share the reasons why and help
13 them to find different ways by which they can fill
14 that gap.

16 KEVIN DANTZLER: Now, so I'll just add in terms
17 of complementing the increased NYPD enforcement,
18 we're trying our best to make sure our children
19 aren't court involved. So, as I mentioned before, we
20 have the New York City Law Department who is another
21 partner on this effort. We have the Department of
22 Probation, another agency partners in this effort to
23 find out about diversion programs and to your point,
24 how can we, if someone is on probation, how can part
25 of their probation requirement be that they

1 contribute to our PSA's? And so, to your point,
2 we're trying to make sure we pull everyone together.
3 We're not here to celebrate; it's great we
4 collaborate and that's awesome but a question was
5 asked before about how we measures effectiveness.
6 Changed behavior is the best indicator of the
7 effectiveness of our efforts and we're working hard
8 on that.

10 JOSEPH GULLOTTA: Yeah and from the NYPD point,
11 it's multifaceted. It's not just about the contacts
12 we have. It's about the home visits. It's about the
13 16 schools we visited that hit almost 3,000 students
14 already. It's getting the YCO's engaged in this and
15 getting through the right schools and tracking, using
16 data to make sure we're hitting the right students in
17 the right place.

18 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: And in regards to our
19 partnership and we meet every, every two weeks right
20 that we meet? It's actually an opportunity for us to
21 have discussion, not only with NYPD but with everyone
22 as to you know us having conversation of those youth
23 development principals or what is the behavior?
24 What's going on and just having conversations that
25 maybe interagency, we never really had a conversation

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1 because we all have a responsibility in our role.

2 But coming together to be able to learn from each
3 other so then that way we know what we need to do
4 whether it's the curriculum or just the changes in
5 agency that we need to kind of like look into. So,
6 this is definitely something that we - we're still
7 working on it but it is actually something that is -
8 we're all learning from it.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And just my final question
11 is, how is DYCD collaborating with NYPD after an
12 incident occurs and what does the referral process to
13 DYCD entail?

14 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: So, what we've been able to
15 do is, we work with NYPD as they share with us
16 whether it's an incident or situation to be able to
17 connect the NYPD and the families to a provider. So,
18 we were able to identify nonprofits or -

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: And so and I guess and just
20 because I just want to be clear. So, I know before
21 like uhm DOE said that when an incident occurs, the
22 schools are notified. Are you guys notified? What
23 does that work look like? Not just like a kind of
24 general, I'm trying to get more into like the details
25 of what that process looks like. Are you notified?

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1 Do you like, kind of just find it on social media?

2 Are you guys part of it? I know you just said you
3 guys meet every two weeks.
4

5 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: When we meet yeah.

6 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: But when an incident
7 happens, how are you guys notified? How do you know
8 the families that might need a referral? What does
9 that look like? And not just this kind of general of
10 like, oh we -

11 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: Okay, so if there's a
12 particular situation where NYPD cannot match any
13 resources to a particular family, they will reach out
14 to whether it's New York City Public School or DYCD.
15 When they have reached out to DYCD, we've been able
16 to make those connections to nonprofit organizations
17 in the neighborhood.

18 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so much
20 Chair. Next, we will hear from Council Member Ariola
21 followed by Council Member Dinowitz.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you Chair. I'd
23 like to switch gears a little bit to Reso. 59, which
24 Chair and Majority Leader Selvena Brooks-Powers,
25 Council Member Bob Holden and myself are putting

1
2 forth. It's well known that I have supported the
3 Queens link since before I was in office and since we
4 have been seeing the daily struggle of our
5 communities and what they face when it comes to
6 transportation. Southern Queens is a transit desert.
7 You know you hear that term a lot but Southern Queens
8 and Eastern Queens is a transit desert with few train
9 lines and an inadequate bus service, it is well past
10 the time that residents of our borough receive the
11 fast and reliable public transportation they deserve.
12 Sometimes which can easily be achieved if the Queens
13 link because a reality.

14 That's why we have been pushing for an
15 environmental impact study to determine how this rail
16 line would serve the communities along its route.
17 This is a key step to get the wheels turning but
18 we've hit quite a bit of resistance time and time
19 again from the MTA. It seems that the MTA is much
20 more focused on making life more difficult for people
21 from my borough for congestion pricing than it is in
22 making public transportation more viable and
23 attractive for options for millions of potential
24 riders. Without having a reliable train line like
25 the Queens link, to get into the city, our residents

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1 are likely to use their cars, forced to use their
2 cars in order to get from one place to another. And
3 thus they would be made to pay an unfair congestion
4 pricing tax. At the end of the day, we have to
5 understand that we need real solutions. Right now,
6 we're having a much needed reconstruction of some
7 tracks along the A-Train line that will connect the
8 city with the peninsula and Council Member Brooks-
9 Powers and myself are working with the MTA to try and
10 shuttle people around, get an extra bus, get a
11 reduced rate on the LIRR. That wouldn't even have to
12 be a discussion if we had the Queens Link.
13

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Sorry I'm going to
15 have to ask you to wrap it up.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: So that is why it's
17 important that you really pay attention now and do
18 what we need to have done for our residents. Thank
19 you for the time.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I don't
21 know if MTA wants to respond or not?

22 FRANCK JOSEPH: You know first I'll say as a
23 person who lived in southeast Queens for most of his
24 life and Chair Brooks-Powers has been my Council
25 Member for many years and you know I definitely

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1 understand the sentiments that folks have and that's
2 why we're taking a multifaceted approach as you
3 mentioned. Things that we're doing to improve
4 service such as you know work on that A line and I
5 know last week we had the open house with you know,
6 with many members here and other elected officials
7 from southeast Queens. We're also looking at the
8 Queens Bus Network redesign. You can look to our
9 community assessment and some of the work that we are
10 looking at actively and you know for us, we want to
11 continue good, faithful conversation on how to ensure
12 that we're having good service and reliable service
13 at that for all New Yorkers. It's very important.
14 It's the reason that we all are here. We understand
15 that transportation is the lifeblood of New York City
16 unlike other cities where the city grew and then they
17 put transportation. New York City is one of those
18 rare gems in the entire world really where the
19 transit system expanded and then the city grew around
20 the transit system. So, we understand that when
21 you're riding that subway or when you're on that bus,
22 you're able to you know have that millionaire or
23 billionaire standing next to you. That working class
24 mother right and it brings all of us together. And
25

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1 so, for us ensuring that we are putting the best
2 service out there is of utmost importance and we will
3 continue to look at the best way to do that for all
4 New Yorkers.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: But this Reso. asks for
7 the MTA to look at an environmental impact study for
8 the Queens link. Do you we have your commitment to
9 take a look at that? We've asked over and over again
10 but now we need to pass a Resolution to make sure
11 that it gets done. So, no matter when we get the
12 impact study, whatever you're doing, the Queens link
13 is always omitted. So, what is the MTA's commitment
14 to looking at the possibility of an environmental
15 impact study for the Queens link?

16 FRANCK JOSEPH: Yeah, I mean I'll say as I
17 mentioned earlier, we have our community assessment
18 which kind of speaks to some of the work that we're
19 looking at when it comes to service across the city.
20 And so, that assessment is something that we are
21 continuing to engage with and push, and we welcome
22 the Council to also share as you're doing Council
23 Member, you know the needs that you see are very
24 important and we're willing to have a good faithful
25 conversation.

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1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Is the Queens link
3 involved in as a part of that assessment? Is the
4 Queens link a part of that assessment?

5 JEREMY FEIGELSON: Council Member I think the MTA
6 will just have to get back to you to continue the
7 conversation for better or worse what you got here at
8 the dais here today is the anti-subway surfing team.
9 We are very open to continuing the conversation and
10 very, very aware that Queens has born the brunt for
11 decades of underinvestment in the expansion of
12 transit. We all know through these ghost maps out
13 there of lines proposed and never built going back
14 many years and far too much of that sort of ghost
15 system is in your district, in your neighborhoods.
16 We get that and we're very open to continuing the
17 conversation. I just don't want to over represent
18 what the three of us are able to get into today.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. We're
20 going to move now to Council Member Dinowitz.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you for the time.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Thank you Chairs. Mr.
23 Rampersant, I just want a little clarity on some of
24 your testimony please. You had said that in
25 presentation to be given to superintendents and most

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1 recently to Brooklyn High School principals this past
2 September, are there other boroughs and other levels
3 of schools that have received the same presentation?
4

5 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, the work that was done in
6 September was done in conjunction with two specific
7 superintendents, Superintendent Ross and
8 Superintendent Prayer who both saw this was an
9 important enough issue to bring all of their
10 principals together at a meeting and request that we
11 bring in the presentation on subway surfing. It's
12 the long way of saying the superintendents are
13 requesting specifically. I'm not sure of how many
14 were requested thus far.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: So, okay so it sounds
16 like it is just some schools and Brooklyn
17 specifically and the reason I'm asking is because
18 well, I love hearing about the connections between
19 agencies. I heard a lot about the seven line and
20 that for example is in Queens. And I heard a lot
21 about the average age being 14, which means I will
22 guess half are on average below 14 in middle school.
23 And so, I'm very interested to know what efforts,
24 other efforts are being made to ensure that the
25 schools are receiving and providing these

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1 presentations in the areas along the seven line and
2 of course in my district, where we have I think nine
3 L-stations that are elevated above ground. So, it
4 sounds like these presentations are voluntary. It
5 sounds like they're not as targeted as they can be
6 given the great connections between these agencies.
7 Would you say that's a fair assessment?
8

9 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, I would say somewhat fair,
10 right? We were intentional about doing the
11 presentations for every superintendent and advising
12 them of the reason for the presentations. What we
13 did do is we gave the contact information for the
14 presentations to every superintendent so that they
15 would have the opportunity to reach out directly to
16 our partners and offer them an opportunity to come
17 and present for their schools. Not every school has
18 taken advantage of it right but I can get you a more
19 sound number of schools where the presentations have
20 occurred and the efforts that we are making to ensure
21 that every school is advised of the ability to
22 partake in these presentations.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Chair if I may?

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: One final question
25 please.

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1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Just one final question
3 but on that topic I would suggest that as the
4 Department of Education you could provide more
5 guidance than just it being voluntary. You know I
6 have a school in my district that's doing a town
7 hall, I'm sure they would love a little more guidance
8 and support centrally for this specific issue.

9 My other question is for I guess the MTA and NYPD
10 and it involves technology regarding the drones. I'm
11 hearing a lot about drones. I'm a big fan of use of
12 technology. What is preventing the MTA from
13 installing cameras on the tops of its 6,500 or so
14 train cars, which I think it sounds like it would be
15 more efficient, more cost effective and you wouldn't
16 have to wait or hope that a drone is circling
17 overhead in over to get the footage and get the
18 important information you need.

19 MICHAEL KEMPER: So, I'll start with that. So,
20 sometimes what sounds easy it's not easy.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: That's why I'm asking.

22 MICHAEL KEMPER: IT's not practical. There are
23 certain areas - I'll give you an example and we've
24 thought about it a lot and I got to be very careful
25 because there is pending litigation over this exact

1 subject matter with the MTA but just in vision a
2 train elevated with a camera on top going into the
3 tunnel and there's an inch and a half, two inches of
4 overall space separating the top to the fixed tunnel.
5 That's one example of why it's not practical and
6 doable if that makes sense.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: I mean, it sounds like
9 it makes sense for some of your lines.

10 MICHAEL KEMPER: Some of them.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: You know the geometry
12 of your like how many are available but I would
13 imagine some lines are available and in between cars,
14 I would imagine there's space for cameras as well.

15 MICHAEL KEMPER: So, yeah and you know we talk
16 about cameras. You know the MTA and the Chairman has
17 been speaking about the importance of cameras, the
18 value of cameras and the investment made by the MTA
19 in relation to outfitting every subway car in New
20 York City with a camera and his timeline was
21 aggressive. He stated and he challenged us at the
22 MTA to get every car outfitted by the end of the
23 year, this year.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: But does that include
25 cameras in those in between spaces?

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1
2 MICHAEL KEMPER: So some yes and some no, that's
3 why it's a conversation that the newer train cars
4 come free outfitted with different types of
5 technology. There are video cameras being placed
6 inside train cars. There are video cameras being
7 placed inside conductors cabins as we speak. Here's
8 what I can say. Upwards of 93 and 94 percent of all
9 train cars in the New York City subway system have
10 some sort of a video camera installed in it. We'll
11 be at 100 percent at the end of the year.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Right, so I want to be
13 respectful of time and respectful of the Chair. I'm
14 asking specifically addressing this issue.
15 Technology either on top of the train cars or if
16 that's not feasible, between the train cars where
17 kids, children, are climbing up and you may not see
18 that from inside the car but you would see that
19 between the cars.

20 MICHAEL KEMPER: So, some train cars have the
21 ability to capture kids going in between the train
22 cars on video and some don't. But this is a topic we
23 are constantly in discussions with to see how we can
24 do better with the emerging technology. The drone is
25 an example of an emerging technology that we came

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1 across just a few months back that intrigued us and
2 we piloted it for you know, for lack of better words.
3 We piloted and it's uh if you're asking me my honest
4 opinion, it's having success in this very subject
5 matter.
6

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Good.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yeah, thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: We're going to move
11 on to Council Member Hanks followed by Rivera.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Thank you Chairs. I just
13 wanted to thank you for having this important
14 hearing. I also wanted to say hello to my dear
15 friend Chief Gullotta. It's sad to see you go but
16 I'm glad to see you're here in this capacity.

17 My question revolves around more about the
18 campaigns that we're using to deter this type of
19 activity. Are we using more when I was - I'm dating
20 myself but you know in the 80's it was you know a
21 scared street and the implications of what that
22 reality is, photographs, pictures, testimonies that
23 are also used to help deter this kind of behavior but
24 I also want to know, is there a budget implication
25 that you would be looking to ask the City Council for

1 to address this issue whether it be in your
2
3 respective agencies or collectively?

4 MARK RAMPERSANT: So, so far there hasn't been a
5 scared straight approach to this right? What we've
6 tried to use are the collective voices of their peers
7 to help sort of deter. I am, I don't want to date
8 myself either I mean I'm a pretty young guy. The
9 scared straight model is a model that had some
10 positives as well as negatives for young people and
11 some of the thought around utilizing those measures
12 to reach young people can be you know long term
13 damaging in the thoughts. You heard -

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: That's how we were raised.

15 MARK RAMPERSANT: Yeah, well you know we were
16 built a little different. Yeah, your friend who you
17 continue to shout out here the Chief right, I'm just
18 trying to figure out why the rest of us are not
19 getting that kind of love but let's move forward.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Staten Island.

21 MARK RAMPERSANT: I get it. I made the
22 connection and that's why were intentional about
23 shouting out Staten Island in our testimony. The
24 scared straight model has not been sought out by New
25 York City Public Schools, at least in the campaigns

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1 that we've done thus far. We thought the voice of
2 their collective peers would be helpful enough to try
3 to deter. As well the voice of former subway surfers
4 who have been a part of and who have lost friends to
5 this. We thought that that would be a more friendly
6 approach to address a very serious issue. As it
7 relates to the funding that is needed to do this. I
8 mean we are in the process of figuring out what the
9 leverage is going forward. We definitely want to
10 double down and get more granular in the approach of.
11 So, we will definitely get back to Council with that.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Thank you and thank you
13 Chairs.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. We're
15 going to go over to Council Member Rivera but first,
16 I'd like to acknowledge that we've been joined by the
17 Clinton School. The seventh grade class from Council
18 Member Rivera's district. Hi guys.

19 CROWD CHEERING

20 Council Member, oh sorry, you wanted to finish a
21 statement. Sorry about that. Council Member.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Hi, I'm sorry about that.
23 I'm just, I want to thank you all for being here. It
24 is such an interesting day to see this wonderful
25

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1 student body. These young kids that are here from
2 the Clinton School. I just want you all to - you can
3 clap for yourselves. Let me tell you, you all are
4 amazing and spectacular okay.
5

6 CROWD CHEERING

7 I think what is so interesting about today and
8 actually quite difficult is you know this school has
9 been personally effected in the past with losing one
10 of their students and again, I just want you all to
11 know to honor Zachary, to honor our young people and
12 just want you to know the government is listening.
13 That we're really trying to do something to ensure
14 that we are taking on the issues that really affect
15 us so, so deeply.

16 So, I want to thank you all because like I really
17 believe that you care. I want to thank the
18 leadership on this dais and I believe in your
19 comments and in your testimony that you - I can hear
20 and I can feel the regret right and the efforts
21 because we are doing a lot around this issue but it
22 has been around a long time. I mean, we've had
23 people doing this documented since the late 80's, the
24 90's and now with social media, it is really, really
25 difficult. I truly do believe that you care. I've

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1 heard the PSA's. I take the train probably every
2 day. I funded teen centers in our New York Public
3 libraries. We have funded after school programs to
4 keep kids busy. There's so many things that we're
5 trying to do as Council Members but it is so
6 different when you hear directly from someone and
7 you'll hear from Norma soon, from Ms. Nazzario on her
8 story. We have the attorney general suing Tik Tok
9 because of how social media affects children's health
10 and leading to dangerous outcomes. And so because my
11 time is already up I'll just ask you know the number
12 of tragedies just this year is so startling right, so
13 we need more outreach. We need more education. We
14 need more interaction with young people. We need a
15 social media blitz because we're not going to take
16 Tik Tok overnight or even regulate it the way that we
17 probably think it should be.

19 So, are you anticipating funding streams in order
20 to expand and really grow our strategies in these
21 local councils, in the social media, in direct
22 interaction with young people? Because we want to
23 help. We really, really, really, really want to
24 help. But we're also limited on what we can do. Is
25 there some sort of federal funding? Are we looking

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1 at something that can help grow the strategies that
2 we have implemented that we know that are working?
3 Thank you for the time.

4
5 MARK RAMPERSANT: Well, on behalf of New York
6 City Public Schools I can say without any level of
7 uncertainty that there is no one answer. There is no
8 one answer. Yes to all of those things that you
9 described right. It is going to take a media blitz
10 right using the very media that kids are using to
11 advertise what they believe to be great. We have to
12 combat that by using social media. We have to reach
13 out federal to have their input and have them
14 emphasize the importance of these social media
15 companies, not showing these things right and we have
16 use scared straight tactics and other tactics to try
17 to reach young people but there's nothing like
18 education right and we're going to have to do
19 education in different ways. We're going to have
20 educate young people, educate parents, educate our
21 overall community about the responsibility to do
22 their part to ensure that young people are not doing
23 the very things that they don't know is going to be
24 hurtful and harmful to them.

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1 The thing about young people is they don't think
2 it can be me and it could never be me. The other
3 part of being young is we never think we get old.
4 The unfortunate part about never thinking you're
5 going to get old. Some of that may be a reality for
6 some of our young people who make these bad choices.
7 So, the answer to your question yes, to all of those
8 things. What is the funding stream that it's going
9 to take and what is the amount of money that it's
10 going to take to get us to have a media campaign that
11 is going to really, really make a difference in this
12 space. I don't know the answer to that. I know that
13 the collective minds are in the room. You just
14 pointed out on the Clinton School and I think that
15 the some of what we are looking for in terms of
16 answers are in this exact room. It's going to be the
17 voices of the young people. It's going to be the
18 voices of all of us in this respective government and
19 it's going to be higher government to answer this
20 question of you know what is it going to cost to save
21 a life of a young person?
22

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I just want to thank you
24 all because I want to align myself with all the
25 comments made by my colleagues, especially the Chairs

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1 of these Committees and just to add of course the
2 voices of young people. I think the surveillance, we
3 know the frequented lines and I will tell you as
4 someone who has stood in City Field parking lot and
5 seen a train, the seven train roll by with someone on
6 top of it, it's going to be something I will never
7 forget at the very least, in addition to the stories
8 that you will hear later today in testimony.

9
10 So, I want to thank you. I want to thank the
11 students also for really participating and looking at
12 local government in action and just know that we're
13 working really hard for everyone here, all families.
14 Thank you so much to this dais. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

16 CROWD CHEERING

17 Next, we will hear from Chair Joseph followed by
18 Chair Stevens and then I will wrap up with my final
19 round of questions.

20 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Chair Brooks-
21 Powers. Quick question for MTA working on social
22 media companies to scrub subway surfing videos from
23 their platform. Is New York City Public Schools and
24 DYCD coordinating their efforts by using social media
25 to promote positive message and activities that

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1 replace those videos and glorify and not glorify
2 subway surfing?
3

4 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: So, DYCD through our social
5 media we are. Currently we're engaging in
6 participating young people to message out through our
7 social media about our programming. Our just overall
8 activities and just opportunities available but we
9 definitely continue to utilize our young people to
10 make sure that in social media, they share the
11 campaign and just any information that has to do with
12 this issue.

13 KEVIN DANTZLER: Likewise for New York City
14 Public Schools. All of our platforms, we do include
15 anti-subway surfing messaging to combat some of the
16 messaging they're receiving on other platforms.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Well is MTA allowed to scrub
18 the social media? What's the communication with
19 social media platforms? Are you allowed to scrub
20 them once these videos are posted? What is the
21 partnership between social media platform, MTA, NYPD,
22 New York City Public Schools?

23 JEREMY FEIGELSON: The social media companies
24 Chair can scrub and do at our request. We have a
25 daily process where our safety team is checking the

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1 social media platforms with a main focus on Tik Tok
2 and Instagram because those are the two where we
3 think most of the social media behavior sort of
4 focuses and congregates. So, our team checks those
5 platforms on a daily basis. If we flag a video that
6 shows this dangerous behavior or celebrates it, we
7 ask that it be taken down and the companies have been
8 very responsive. We erupted about 11,000 videos have
9 been removed. We don't stop there. We also ask that
10 not only it be taken down but that the companies
11 apply it's called a hashing, it's like a digital
12 fingerprint that allows them to spot that video if
13 someone comes to post it again. So, once it's down,
14 the hope is it's down forever and it's not going to
15 keep popping up.

17 And we have also asked that they not just stop at
18 removing the videos but also add safety messaging of
19 their own. I can tell you Chair that this morning
20 when I went on Tik Tok and entered subway surfing as
21 my search term, I got the safety message back instead
22 of seeing any videos. And we think that's a good
23 approach. It's not a perfect approach because the
24 kids will keep working around it and looking for
25 other ways to tag their videos to avoid blocks like

1 that but it's a good step. And the next piece where
2 we've been pressing social media companies to do
3 better, is to detect and block these videos in an
4 automated way so that we're not dependent on the
5 efforts of human beings at the MTA. These companies
6 as Chief Kemper said, have awesome technology and
7 we'd like to see it deployed so that they can spot,
8 detect and remove these videos out without the human
9 intervention.
10

11 Anything we can do to reduce the presence of
12 videos, reduce the glorification of the behavior. We
13 hope it will reduce the behavior itself.

14 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Are you also looking at
15 Instagram and I did a search yesterday there's quite
16 a few videos on there with a lot of likes.

17 JEREMY FEIGELSON: Yeah, I hope I said Instagram
18 as well as Tik Tok before but absolutely those are
19 the two platforms we are most focused on and one
20 concern we hear back from the social media companies,
21 just so you're aware, is some of those videos that
22 you're seeing may be news stories about subway
23 surfing which include the images. We're very
24 concerned that that in itself glorifies the behavior.
25 We'd like to see the news organizations consider you

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1 know using that footage maybe in a more limited way.

2
3 The social media companies have told us that they
4 will sometimes take a different approach if it's a
5 video posted by a news organization. It might be a
6 first mimic concern versus a video posted by a young
7 person celebrating their own behavior and glorifying
8 it which they are willing to take down immediately.

9 So, that's an impression and Chair Salaam, I love
10 your comment about James Bond. I know that when my
11 son and I go to see those movies and he gets on top
12 of the train car and everyone else in the theater is
13 cheering and I'm going please and the next movie
14 could be just Ride Inside and everybody stays alive.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And there's video games
16 right around subway surfing. I think there's one
17 specifically it's called Subway Surfing.

18 JEREMY FEIGELSON: There is a game called Subway
19 Surfers and we've spoken to some of the young people
20 about that and we've reached out to all the companies
21 to see if the availability of that game you know can
22 be limited.

23 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: And if they do have those
24 games right maybe at the end of the game, there's a
25 messaging to say that maybe we should not imitate

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1 this because it's not a safe thing. This is not a
2 reality, it's a game. So, I'm hoping that message
3 can be reached over to game companies as well.
4

5 JEREMY FEIGELSON: Yeah, from your lips to the
6 companies ears Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: I hope they're listening.
8 Is New York City Public School coordinating, advising
9 and sharing information with DYCD, NYPD, and MTA to
10 supplement their efforts in ways to combat surfing?
11 How often are you guys talking? I hope it's every
12 day because the problems arise every day and they
13 come up with new challenges right? And as we're
14 trying to combat that, I'm sure the young people are
15 innovative.

16 KEVIN DANTZLER: Well we have formalized meetings
17 every other week but we speak on an almost daily
18 basis. To your point unfortunately, when incidents
19 take place or we're made aware of any sort of contact
20 regarding subway surfing, we communicate across the
21 board with every single agency that's involved.

22 MARK RAMPERSANT: And I am really happy for the
23 new found relationship that I continue to refer to
24 and the great work and relationship with Chief Kemper
25 who made it his business to avail every resource

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1 through his respective area to New York City Public
2 Schools to help combat some of this but one of the
3 things that we are newly introducing into the
4 conversation is that regular daily input of
5 information as it relates to young people who are
6 attempting, who are actually committed anything
7 around subway surfing, so that we can ensure that
8 they get the help that they need at our respective
9 schools.
10

11 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Chair Stevens. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Well, one of the things
13 that I love the most is when we have a hearing in a
14 real time, people be like, "hey, ask this question.
15 What's going on?" So, that's what's happening right
16 now. So one of the things that actually has
17 occurred. My office is right outside 170, so we have
18 a train station that's outside and my staff sent me
19 pictures of young people train surfing and there has
20 been a lot of talk as Council Member Dinowitz stated
21 about the seven line and what that looks like. And
22 so, I know DOE kind of already talks about its been
23 more of a superintendent initiative and don't worry,
24 I will be calling Harry as soon as we leave here
25 because they'll be doing one. But also just thinking

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1 about DYCD, have you identified local organizations
2 that are in the area to be doing this work? And then
3 also, alright I'm going to ask the next question
4 because I'm going to give you a break because this is
5 your first hearing with me, so I'll ask the next
6 question after that.

8 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: So, for DYCD, we are as folks
9 are identifying these lines and I believe it's either
10 the sixth line in the Bronx or some other lines -

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Number four.

12 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: Number four is being able to
13 identify these lines and being able to now engage the
14 provider. So, yes, we do plan to -

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So you haven't started that
16 already?

17 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: We have started providing
18 information on the campaign.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Hmm, hmm.

20 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: The provider meetings,
21 educating, making people aware but we do commit to be
22 able to provide information and engage the providers
23 yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, and just also to just
25 want to also just say even like the 44 has been great

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1 because my staff will be able to reach out to them.

2 We have a great working relationship with them and
3 they've always immediately jumped into action and
4 have been supportive but I think specifically like I
5 know obviously one of the things that I always say,
6 when people commit crimes, they don't intend on
7 getting caught. So, just because we're only seeing
8 it in Queens, doesn't mean it's not happening in
9 other places, so we need to make sure that we're not
10 only just targeting those places but in other places.
11 And specifically districts like mine that are
12 typically under resourced and people have so many
13 other things that we're dealing with that it might go
14 under the radar like, oh they're not doing it there
15 but literally my staff are sending me pictures in
16 real time of seeing it and having to coordinate with
17 the 44 to get the officers in to intercept the train
18 surfing situation so just want to make sure that we
19 are starting to work on a plan. Like I said, I will
20 be reaching out to my superintendents and they will
21 be on this as well but also thinking about how are we
22 providing those providers in the area?

23 But my next question is also thinking about how
24 are we using the CMS sites as well? Because I think
25

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1 it's also important like, they're not necessarily
2 credible messengers with that but I think that
3 they're already on the ground and they already have
4 different relationships with young people and so, how
5 are we using the CMS groups to also help combat this
6 as well?

8 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: I mean, they are our
9 providers as well.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I know, that's why I asked.
11 I know what you all are doing.

12 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: And being able to educate and
13 making sure that they're involved in the effort. So,
14 uhm yeah definitely moving forward.

15 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: So, have you guys already
16 started those conversations? Have you given them
17 information? Are you planning on doing some
18 trainings and those outreach? Are we putting them
19 into train stops to also at some of these high time
20 areas? Like, what is the plan? Because you know you
21 guys know how I am, I'm very much if you say it's a
22 priority, then what's the action plan to actually
23 show me that it's a priority?

24 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: No, absolutely I think your
25 suggestions are very key and important. We'll take

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1 that back and it's about engaging all our providers,
2 so definitely.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Okay, so I'll definitely
5 follow up to see how do we continue to provide the
6 CMS. And then another question that I got as we were
7 sitting here, one of the Vice Chairs of the
8 Neighborhood Advisory Board said, she was happy to be
9 hearing about this hearing but you guys have not even
10 used them to get this information out. So, how do
11 you plan on using the Neighborhood Advisory Board to
12 spread the word on the dangers of subway surfing?

13 JESSICA HERNANDEZ: Yeah, well it's about - like
14 I said, in making sure that we're including everyone.
15 Not only our youth programming, but also including
16 our adult programming and the NAB's. So, moving
17 forward, we'll definitely be including them in this
18 information as well.

19 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Yeah, so that was one of
20 the questions that came across as they have - she was
21 saying that they have - she heard about this hearing
22 and she was listening and wanted to like reach out to
23 just say that they think that they could have some
24 resources to be able to support this. So, I think
25 that we need to be thinking about this. Like you

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1 said, putting it out to everyone but we can't wait.

2
3 And so, I think that I'm always a person who how are
4 walking and chewing gum at the same time? And so, if
5 you guys have been meeting every two weeks, then my
6 expectation is that those things are expanding and
7 it's not staying within you and so, hopefully when we
8 have some follow up conversations, which I always do,
9 that we'll have more information on how you started
10 working with CMS groups. How are you making sure
11 that the providers in key areas are also able to do
12 outreach and be equipped for that and uhm is it
13 something that we could think about of possibly
14 having some CMS providers at some of the train
15 stations at high time hours? We have CMS groups who
16 are out there doing you know safety walks. Maybe we
17 need to be thinking about how are we then deploy them
18 to say we're doing safety time in the train stations
19 alongside with NYPD to kind of reach some of these
20 young people. Those are all the questions I have and
21 I see Chair Brooks-Powers is back, so thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you. I just want to
23 quickly add on to what Chair Stevens says, are you
24 also engaging community boards? Because they also is
25 another vehicle in getting messaging out to

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1 communities right? When we talk about extending this
2 information to communities. Does New York City
3 Public School work on curbing subway surfing come out
4 of a New York City Public School budget? Is there a
5 line budget for that?
6

7 MARK RAMPERSANT: There is a not a budget for
8 that. I will, I definitely know that with our
9 collaborative efforts to extend this campaign, there
10 will definitely be a cost that goes with that,
11 especially since we are utilizing the kindness of our
12 schools to make this come to fruition and while
13 Principal Max and Art and Design and others did an
14 impeccable job of working with our external
15 partnerships, we know that the school is doomed on
16 their budget and we can't have that be the case. So,
17 going forward that is definitely one of the things
18 that we're looking into.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: So, there's no dollar amount
20 attached to your marketing outreach that's done all
21 pro bono and using resources within New York City
22 Public Schools. So, are you going to be making a
23 budget request this year concerning subway surfing?

24 MARK RAMPERSANT: I am sure we are and you will
25 hear from us shortly.

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: We got you on record
3 because I better see a new need.

4 MARK RAMPERSANT: I'm sorry.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I got you on record, so
6 don't come back and be like, "oh we don't need it."

7 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Yeah, exactly so it's on the
8 record.

9 MARK RAMPERSANT: Oh, I didn't know it was on
10 record. We don't need - nah.

11 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: Got him.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Chairs.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you Chairs.
14 Just a couple more brief questions. I thank my
15 colleagues for getting into the social media
16 component of it because I think social media plays a
17 very big role in continuing to entice young people
18 into thinking that this is something wise to do. But
19 has the MTA studied as a global city with similar
20 transportation networks to determine whether they
21 deal with a similar problem? And if so, what
22 approaches have they tried?

23 JEREMY FEIGELSON: I'll go first. Chief Kemper
24 might want to comment as well. We talked to our
25 fellow transit agencies all the time about this issue

1 and other safety and sort of human behavior
2
3 challenges. Notice I said fellow agencies, I didn't
4 say peers because the New York City Transit System is
5 just absolutely unique in terms of its scale in
6 service and the breadth of service we deliver and the
7 amount of challenges we have to deal with. So, you
8 know those conversations happen all the time with
9 other transit agencies, not just in the US but
10 globally. You know so I'll make a call with about a
11 half a dozen transit agencies from around the world
12 just the other day talking about fair evasion
13 challenges for example. So, I can't say that we've
14 got a specific sort of remedy on the surfing issue
15 that's come out of those conversations but I wouldn't
16 expect again given the sort of unique scale of what
17 we're up against here in New York.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Understanding the
19 uniqueness of the MTA and separating that for a
20 moment and looking at other transit agencies
21 globally, have you seen any of that have been working
22 to address subway surfing because they have that
23 taking place as well and looking at them and saying,
24 "that seems like a good thing to kind of continue to
25 explore."

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1
2 JEREMY FEIGELSON: So, to your point, I could
3 speak about another city in particular. I had a
4 conversation with their Police Department about
5 subway surfing.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What city?

7 JEREMY FEIGELSON: Chicago and the way it was
8 described to me is that they had a similar - I'm not
9 sure about the scale as compared to New York City but
10 as far as their approach, you know consider me bias,
11 I thought we were collectively as you know all the
12 agencies working together, you hear what we're doing
13 and we've been doing this for quite some time. We
14 didn't just start doing this and you know I thought
15 that we were far ahead of what they were doing. But
16 to your point and that is a great point, I'm only
17 here five, six weeks and it's actually a good idea
18 for me to reach out to some other security officers
19 from other transportation agencies around not only
20 the country but the globe and see what they are
21 doing, so thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yeah, because I think
23 even in Asia, Asia's pretty forward in their
24 transportation and their transportation
25 infrastructure, so I would curious to see if they

1 experience things like that in terms of the
2 sensationalizing of subway surfing in one aspect.
3
4 But then how they respond to it also? Just to kind
5 of spark maybe some thought we could be doing here to
6 further work that - the agency have been doing and I
7 will echo Chair Stevens and commending the fact that
8 this is like one of the few instances when I've
9 actually felt that the agencies are communicating and
10 have been working together, which is amazing to set
11 that foundation. But obviously we have a lot of work
12 to be done when you see that in this year alone, the
13 amount of fatalities exceeds what we've seen over a
14 five year course.

15 So, that means that something is happening that
16 is moving more and more young people to do this and
17 the response has to be quicker and maybe we have to
18 look at other options to that.

19 FRANCK JOSEPH: And Chair, if I may add, at
20 Transit, we're part of an organization, a global
21 organization called UITB and it's you know,
22 transportation professionals coming together and
23 talking about various solutions including subway
24 surfing and we've actually been one of the leading
25 agencies on it. Thinking through what are you know

1 solves. We've shared you know our - the campaign
2 that we're doing. We've shared you know various
3 ideas that we have and people have you know also
4 shared information with us on what they're doing to
5 solve it and you know it's real disheartening because
6 everything that we're doing it frustrates us because
7 we haven't quite got that formula right to the degree
8 that we wish but we are one of the leading folks
9 around the globe when it comes to addressing this.
10 We're going to continue talking to our partners on
11 what they're seeing and so, I just wanted to let you
12 know that we are actively doing that.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No, I appreciate
15 hearing that. And I know it's been asked in a couple
16 of different ways but I'll just ask it as I get ready
17 to close. What additional assistance does MTA need
18 from the City Council and the city agencies to curb
19 the incidents happening? And what our next steps
20 from here? Because we wanted to have this public
21 conversation as a starting point. We are here as
22 your partners as well. So, I'd like to have a clear
23 idea of what our next steps look like.

24 FRANCK JOSEPH: Thank you for that. You know for
25 us, in terms of next steps, one thing that everyone

1 spoke about here is how do we update you know the
2 campaign that exists and you know bring that 2.0
3 version alive. On our end, we've been charged by
4 Chair Leiber and by President Crichlow to look at
5 what are some immediate solves that we can do. And
6 so, we are looking at that. You know you heard
7 earlier and I know Council Member Dinowitz kind of
8 pinned down on it a little more about cameras. We
9 were charged to have 10,000 cameras across all of our
10 fleet and we will have by the end of this year all
11 10,000 cameras in all our fleet, so every subway car
12 will have cameras. And I know that you know people
13 say hey where else can we place the cameras?
14

15 Recently there were two 13 year old girls who
16 were trying to climb on top of a train and the camera
17 did see them and we were able to stop them from
18 climbing on top of the train. So, we will continue
19 doubling down our efforts. We are going to look at
20 those engineering solves and revisit some things that
21 we've thought of in the past and see what is that
22 implementation process. What would that look like
23 and we'll continue have you know those good faith
24 dialogues with you and update you on what we are
25

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1 doing and working with our city partners here as
2 well.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And I'd like to
5 explore getting the locks that could be controlled
6 from the conductor between the carts. So, would love
7 to see - I know you guys just approved your next
8 capital plan by how we are able to prioritize funding
9 to explore maybe doing pilot program, to see if that
10 also can impact. Because we know that the seven line
11 is that line with the scenic route that they're going
12 for. Like, let's try and see how we retrofit the
13 seven train, the seven line train, to address that
14 because we know already where the majority is. We
15 know what they're looking for and so, next step is
16 being able to look at how we impact the
17 infrastructure. And I know at one point, MTA had
18 installed the glass barriers at some stations also as
19 a way of like preventing people from like jumping
20 onto the tracks and things like that. That pilot
21 program that you all were doing and I'm not sure how
22 it's going but just thinking about how we can move in
23 a pilot fashion to try and combat some of this and
24 thinking outside of the box on that. I would love to
25 see that and get a report out from the MTA on that.

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1
2 FRANCK JOSEPH: Definitely and since you
3 mentioned track intrusion, we have started putting
4 platform barriers as a way to tell our customers
5 where they should be standing as they're waiting for
6 the train. So, every month, you know we have a
7 couple of stations that we're targeting and we'll
8 continue to do so and we're exploring what does it
9 look like to kind of you know potentially expand
10 that. And so, we're looking at our platform barriers
11 and you know one to two a month that we're putting
12 the platform screen, doors we're not able to move
13 forward with but these barriers have proven useful.
14 We're hearing back, we have our surveys that we put
15 out every month and also our quarterly surveys.
16 We're hearing back from customers and saying that
17 it's very useful knowing where they should be
18 standing waiting or the train. That way you know it
19 decreases the potential of someone you know going
20 into the road bed and you know we've done other work
21 such as our blue light pilot where you know having a
22 particular colored lights and type of lights actually
23 you know decreases the likelihood that a person would
24 have adverse behavior, including jumping onto the
25 road bed. So, we've put that in a number of our

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1 stations across the system and so, we're looking at
2 many different avenues, not just to combat subway
3 surfing but also to combat track intrusion as well.
4

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for that
6 and then the last question will be on Queens link. I
7 know my colleague asked about it earlier. I know
8 most of the team here is focused on subway safety, so
9 hopefully you can answer. I just want to know if
10 there's been any internal analysis if the Queens link
11 project and the Queensway Park.

12 FRANCK JOSEPH: I'll say that in 2019 there was a
13 white paper on Queens Link and that study is also in
14 our 20 year needs assessment but we'll follow up on
15 anything further regarding that.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But did it take into
17 account the Queensway Park? Ideally, because I know
18 my colleague Council Member Schulman has worked
19 extremely hard on the Queensway Park and you know I
20 think the best of both worlds is for that community
21 to have their park but at the same time that the
22 right of way stays open for the Queens link for the
23 community that we're trying to bridge our
24 transportation gap for. And so, I know we've been
25 talking about it for a couple of years with the MTA.

1
2 I really would like to see a true study because I
3 know there was a white paper. I know it was included
4 in the document that you mentioned also and I saw
5 that when it was first released but I would really
6 like to understand it through a true study to
7 understand what that impact is. To know whether or
8 not this is the right way to go right? What is the
9 impacts on the ridership? What is the impacts on the
10 homes that it may have to traverse.

11 So, we won't know that was out of true study and
12 in the past I've offered also funding to do a study
13 that the MTA did not you know want to accept. They
14 were going to lock box it. So, you know right now I
15 would really love the opportunity to revisit this to
16 find out how we are able to address the two needs of
17 two different communities. One that wants open space
18 and should get it and another one that deserve
19 transit equity and should get it as well.

20 So, I do want to just request that the MTA
21 consider doing a proper study.

22 FRANCK JOSEPH: We hear you loud and clear and
23 I'll definitely will be circling back personally to
24 talk about this with you.

25

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Well, thank you all
3 for coming, being a part of this important
4 conversation. I thank Chair Leiber and President
5 Crichlow for their commitment to this conversation as
6 well. I really appreciate the MTA being a part of
7 this conversation as well as all of our city
8 agencies. As a mom, it's just been extremely
9 heartbreaking to see these videos and when Council
10 Member Riley reached out to me, he actually sent me
11 the video. When he observed it and it like shattered
12 me. And so, we've been full force ahead on this as
13 colleagues, as you saw how today the dais was full
14 because this Council considers this a top priority.
15 The Senator also was on. He had to jump for a
16 meeting. He will be submitting his testimony for the
17 record and this is something that is a concern for
18 him as well as Chairman for corporations in the State
19 Senate. And so, again, we thank you for your
20 partnership, for your cadence here, your transparency
21 here today in this conversation and I'm looking
22 forward to the next sets with working with everyone
23 here. Thank you.

24 We'll now go to the public testimony. I now open
25 the hearing for public testimony. I remind members

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1 of the public that this is a government proceeding
2 and that decorum shall be observed at all times. As
3 such, members of the public shall remain silent at
4 all times. The witness table is reserved for people
5 who wish to testify. No video recording or
6 photography is allowed from the witness table.
7 Further, members of the public may not present audio
8 or video recordings as testimony but may submit
9 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at
10 Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.
11

12 If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please
13 fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms
14 and wait to be recognized. When recognized, you will
15 have two minutes to speak on today's hearing topic.
16 Oversight, riding safely, addressing the dangers of
17 subway surfing, Reso. 59, a Resolution calling upon
18 the MTA to conduct a comprehensive environmental
19 impact study on the viability of the proposed Queens
20 Link Project. Reso. 187, a Resolution calling upon
21 the MTA to conduct a comprehensive environmental
22 impact statement from the Proposed Gun Hill Road
23 Electric Bus Depot charging facility. If you have a
24 written statement or additional written testimony you
25 wish to submit for the record, please provide a copy

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1 of that testimony to the Sergeant at Arms. You will
2 also email written testimony - you may also email
3 written testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov within
4 72 hours of this hearing. Audio and video recordings
5 will not be accepted. I will now call the first
6 panel and that will be Norma Nazzario who is the
7 mother of a young person who unfortunately lost their
8 life due to subway surfing. [02:55:36]- [02:56:26]

9 You can begin whenever you're ready.

10 NORMA NAZZARIO: Now? Hi, I don't know if it's
11 morning or afternoon. Before I tell a story about
12 Mr. Zach; I call him Mr. Zach. I don't know if I'm
13 allowed to comment on everything that I've heard this
14 morning, whether it's that NYPD, the MTA is no longer
15 here and the Department of Education.

16 So, before I tell the story, I want to say that
17 unfortunately, some or most of the statements that
18 the MTA mentioned unfortunately they're not accurate.
19 Just last night and every other night since Zach
20 passed away, I received subway surfing videos. Also,
21 I know social media is the number one but social
22 media could be easily banned. It could be easily
23 blocked. The MTA is physical, MTA could do a lot
24 more than social media. Unfortunately, they would be
25

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1 able to do like a [INAUDIBLE 02:57:44] since Zach
2 passed away. You could close the doors when there's
3 an emergency. You could have them open. That's the
4 only way that can subway surf. They kept on stating
5 that they're going to put the cameras - it's hard and
6 all that and it's not. It's really not, I'm sorry.

7
8 With that being said, I also wanted to also be
9 aware of what a couple of people mentioned that's
10 been happening for decades now. It's just not now
11 and the MTA got only statements, only statements and
12 announcements. They need to do action because Zach
13 didn't die in vain; I mean unfortunately social media
14 is their number one but MTA was able to do better
15 knowing that it was about 30 year this year.

16 Okay, so going forward, I know that I sound like
17 a broken record every time that I speak about Zach
18 and how he was and the subway surfing and social
19 media and all of that but the MTA sounded like - I'm
20 sorry, the MTA sounded like a broken record also and
21 social media as well and the video is still up and
22 the MTA have not done anything.

23 When I sound like a broken record, it's to avoid
24 other parents to sit here like I am and for other
25 kids to lose their lives. So, moving forward, again

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1 I'm sorry, my name is Norma Nazzario and I'm
2 Zachary's mom. Zach was an amazing son. He was so
3 smart, funny, and he had many friends and I think
4 also now that I'm talking about friends, I thank also
5 Miss Rivera and the Clinton School; that's Zachary's
6 school, for coming. They did a plaque and the plaque
7 is in the school.
8

9 He was an old soul and his favorite music Naat,
10 Kim Coal and Frank Sinatra, which I played in his
11 funeral. Zach was also looking forward to serving
12 his country by joining the Marines after high school
13 graduation. Zach always had an interest in history
14 and his teachers called him the historian. I loved
15 learning new things from Zach. Zach especially loved
16 to research the history of New York and the New York
17 Subway System.

18 Zach's interest in New York history led to him
19 being targeted by Tik Tok and Instagrams algorithms.
20 For those of you who do not know how an algorithm
21 works on social media, it sees that you like
22 particular content and gives you more of it. If you
23 continue watching, the algorithm will continuously
24 feed you by being in an all you can eat buffet
25 unfortunately. Zach's interest in the New York

1 Subway System led him to see subway train surfing
2 videos on Tik Tok and Instagram and then Zach
3 constantly bombarded with the same type of subway
4 surfing content all powered by Tik Tok and
5 Instagram's algorithms.
6

7 I often monitored Zach's phone and he even shared
8 with me harmless videos and funny pictures he saw
9 online but I had no idea he was being shown subway
10 surfing videos or that he would attempt to subway
11 surf at all. And on February 20, 2023, I was blind
12 sighted when the NYPD detective came to my home to
13 tell me that my son had died in a subway surfing
14 accident. I believe the dangerous subway surfing
15 we're seeing in New York is made worse by social
16 media. Social media can have a detrimental impact on
17 the mental health of our young people. It leads to
18 feeling of inadequacy. Hiding devils of anxiety and
19 depression and a fear of missing out like that school
20 was mentioning of missing out.

21 My son Zach developed some of these traits
22 himself because of social media but I couldn't
23 imagine he would die by being influenced, seeing
24 subway surfing on Instagram and Tik Tok. Even though
25 the MTA pushes initiatives to tell kids not to subway

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1 surf, like I was mentioning earlier, young people
2 have complete access to unlocked subway doors and
3 other access points that no alarms and other systems
4 in place to keep them out. Zach was shown exactly
5 how to easily access dangerous areas in the MTA
6 system and encouraged to do so on Tik Tok and
7 Instagram. He, Zach has a horn in his door that I
8 found and how did he get that horn? How? I also saw
9 a video unfortunately, he was twisting the sidewalk
10 and picked up the thing and just went under the
11 tracks. You know MTA, I heard everything that they
12 said and I'm glad that you guys are having this but
13 MTA is really not doing what they're supposed to do,
14 I'm sorry. Not only because I lost Zach, it's just
15 because of what I've been shown and what I know, in
16 fact that I have videos and stuff. It's outrageous.

17
18 I urge parents to keep their children off social
19 media as much as possible and talk to them about the
20 dangers of subway surfing. What parents see on
21 social media is not much different than what children
22 see on social media. I am here today holding Zach's
23 funeral card. No mother should have to carry their
24 child's funeral card with them. The MTA needs to
25 have systems in place like alarms, like they were

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1 saying. They don't have alarms. They don't want to
2 lock the doors and you know to keep children from
3 doing so. Accessing the tops and sides of the train.
4 Social media companies need to immediately remove
5 subway surfing like mentioned. They sound like a
6 broken record and they're not removing anything
7 because I receive them all the time. The MTA is just
8 saying about stop, talk to your friends doing this.
9 It's not enough.
10

11 Subway surfing contact and stop pushing these
12 trends to our children. And you guys, thank you,
13 need to take this danger seriously and warn both
14 children and parents of the consequences of subway
15 surfing. I wish I didn't have to be here today but I
16 hope change will come so that what happened to Zach
17 doesn't happen again to any other kid. One last
18 thing I want to say is that Zach had so much to offer
19 to this world. He was the light of my life and I
20 really hope that you guys can help me to stop this.
21 Not only for me, but other parents and other kids.
22 I'm sorry.

23 And I thank you and thank the NYPD for the
24 drones. I really wish that they would have done that
25 before Zach passed away. It's a great thing. The

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1 MTA is just - they need to do - their information is
2 inaccurate I'm sorry. I thank the school. The
3 school I'm looking for worked also to be with the
4 schools and I could go and speak with them. I also
5 want to say the last thing that thanks for having me
6 and I really hope that you guys can help to have this
7 done. I've been advocating for a year and nine
8 months. It's going to be in two days, the 20th that
9 he passed away and I've been with the Mama
10 organization, with the Common Sense organization.
11 I've been in the White House, I've been everywhere.
12 Governor Hochul, thanks to her that she signed the
13 two bills for Kids Safety Act and the data protection
14 for the kids. And so, I thank here and I thank
15 everyone for having me today and you could hear my
16 story and I don't want to pinpoint and put on the
17 spot to no one but you know it is what it is and if
18 I'm still receiving these videos and every time that
19 a kid dies, that's the first thing that when I open
20 my phone is like, you know we see you out there,
21 you're advocating and everything but nothing is
22 happening. They just keep on dying and you know I'm
23 not saying that I'm not doing. I'm trying my best to
24 do. You know I need more help like you guys. I need
25

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1 MTA to really do a change. Like I said, it's simple.
2 Just, I've been in trains. I called them the orange
3 trains. Those doors being locked for many, many
4 years and nobody had passed away, nobody had died
5 within the cart system because the doors weren't
6 open. So, if they can close them, if there's an
7 emergency open them. That's all I'm asking for you
8 guys to help me here and to help all the other
9 parents and for the kids not to - you know I really
10 thought that after I started advocating I didn't hear
11 of no more subway surfing, kids but then it started
12 again and I said, "oh my gosh, what happened with the
13 social media was going and MTA."

14
15 So, I'm sorry for the emotion and if you have any
16 questions -

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: You absolutely do not
18 have to apologize. We thank you for coming and
19 speaking to us through your grief and I think I speak
20 for all of us when I say our hearts break for you and
21 no mother, no parent, should have to bury their
22 child. I'm so, so sorry that you've experienced such
23 a loss and with my colleagues we're going to work to
24 do our best to make sure we hold the agencies
25 accountable so that we can see an end to this.

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1
2 NORMA NAZZARIO: Okay, thank you. Have a great
3 day, thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEVENS: I just wanted to just
5 reiterate that. I wanted to send you love and light
6 because a lot of times people take their pain and
7 they're not able to move forward. You are using,
8 turning your pain into power and you are making sure
9 that people are learning from what happened from your
10 son and making sure that other families are not
11 feeling your pain. So, I just want to say thank you
12 for being able to do that because that's not
13 something that everyone can do. And in addition to,
14 I think even hearing from you even the suggestions,
15 because I just turned to my Council and said, "wait,
16 why don't we have alarms on the doors?" That would
17 be an easy fix. And so, I think even some of those
18 suggestions are very important and we should
19 definitely be working together to think about how do
20 we continue to do that push for these things to
21 happen because as you can see, we have a Council who
22 wants to work with everyone to ensure that every one
23 is safe. And so, thank you for the work that you're
24 doing and I'm sending you all the love and light.

25 NORMA NAZZARIO: Thank you.

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you Miss Nazzario for
3 taking the invite to come here and share your story
4 and we will continue to carry Zach's memory with us.
5 Thank you for your - thank you.

6 NORMA NAZZARIO: Thank you for having me,
7 appreciate it.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Next we'll have Bruce
9 Hayne, Faran Sharif, and Sharon Brown Jeter. And as
10 they're coming forward, if there's anyone else that
11 wishes to testify, please get an appearance card from
12 one of the Sergeant at Arms. You can begin when you
13 are ready.

14 BRUCE HAYNE: My name is Bruce Hayne. I live in
15 Queens and I consider myself to be the foremost rail
16 transportation planner of my generation because you
17 see I'm not up against very much and I think to a
18 very large degree, this is intentional. It's been
19 going on for a long time. If you look at California
20 High Speed Rail, you'll see they built a whole new
21 line. It's six miles longer than - it's 111 miles,
22 it's 6 miles longer than the 105 mile line that was
23 built in 1870, which has a 50 mile tangent, perfect
24 for high speed rail. It should have been - anyway
25 you know and they spent \$3 billion on it when they

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1 already had the right of way, a better right of way,
2 a straighter right of way. It Sistra and it's going
3 to be too expensive to run.
4

5 Anyway, the MTA spent \$800 million on their
6 discussion on their - the consultant to look at uhm,
7 uh, the Rockaway Beach branch. It was supposed to be
8 comprehensive and then based on that, you paid - see
9 but that study shows - it runs the line through about
10 eight buildings. There are six town houses, there's
11 a nine story building, they've all got to come down
12 if you're going to do it the way Sistra planned it.
13 So, I intend to file a written thing and I hope that
14 if it's in window format, that pictures can be
15 included too because I point to the buildings that
16 need to be taken out to do it this way.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you sir.

18 BRUCE HAYNE: But the way to do it is connected
19 to the Long Island Railroad. That's way you have
20 capacity.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you sir.

22 BRUCE HAYNE: Sorry to get so confused. I don't
23 know these things are too short to say it. Thanks
24 very much.
25

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No problem. Thank
3 you sir.

4 CHAIRPERSON JOSEPH: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Faran.

6 FARAN A. SHARIF: Okay, I'll just go. Good
7 afternoon Council Members. My name is Faran Sharif
8 and I work as the Community Liaison for New York
9 State Senator James Sanders Jr., and I am here today
10 to testify in favor of Resolution 59 on behalf of the
11 Office of State Senator James Sanders Jr..

12 Council Members, New York City is blessed to have
13 the largest and most extensive transit system in the
14 entire country, which is managed by the MTA. It is
15 the largest transit agency in the world which works
16 around the clock to ensure that New Yorkers get to
17 where they need to and ensures that our transit
18 system is operating even at off peak times.

19 However, New York City happens to have the
20 longest commute time in the country and within New
21 York City, southeast Queens is among those that has
22 the longest commute time in the country. Council
23 Members, it is time that we address this
24 contradiction of having the most extensive transit
25 system yet having the longest commute time in the

1 country. Our office believes that the Queens Link,
2 which would serve as the first rail line in Queens
3 connecting the northern and southern portions of
4 Queens, is the real solution. Queens Link has the
5 potential to cut down on commute time for those
6 living in the Rockaways traveling to Manhattan or
7 other parts of Queens. Queens Link has the potential
8 to make it easier for residents of the Rockaways to
9 access other parts of Queens such as Jackson Heights,
10 Forest Hills, Flushing, Astoria, Woodside, and etc..
11 The Office of Senator James Sanders Jr. is urging the
12 City Council to pass Resolution 59, so we can put an
13 end to the convenience of commuters from the
14 Rockaways and other parts of Queens once and for all.
15 And before I do end, I just want to note by saying
16 that this is my first time testifying in front of the
17 City Council in person, so it's really an honor.
18 Thank you so much and I look forward to speaking with
19 all of you soon.
20

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you Faran.

22 SHARON BROWN JETER: Hello, my name is Sharon
23 Brown Jeter and I would just like to say first,
24 remember Israel, Defend Israel. We want the hostages

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Please keep this on
3 topic.

4 SHARON BROWN JETER: We still want the hostages
5 freed.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Please keep your
7 comments to the topic.

8 SHARON BROWN JETER: I will and we want the
9 hostages -

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Please keep your
11 comments to the topic.

12 SHARON BROWN JETER: Yeah, I understand that,
13 that we still are in the real world.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Please keep your
15 comments to the topic.

16 SHARON BROWN JETER: Okay, remember Israel.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Please keep your
18 comments to the topic.

19 SHARON BROWN JETER: Thank you. I got that point
20 across. Now, the subway surfing is very easy. Let
21 the children who are interested in trains come to the
22 MTA and be trained how to use the trains. How to run
23 them just in case they're interested in working in
24 the MTA in the future. If they're interested in
25 doing stunts, let them have someone from the movies

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1 come and show them how to do stunts on the train.
2
3 Very easy things. These are not things to medicate.
4 These are not things to have therapy. If someone is
5 interested in climbing on a train, do not tell the
6 children you have never seen that before. I have
7 seen it done many times in a movie. So you can say,
8 "we do see things like this." "This is normal in the
9 proper setting." Not in a doctor's office. We can
10 go into a movie training. We can deal with the
11 Mayor's Office. They deal with the movies, with the
12 television. They deal with all that. We can have
13 someone coordinate from the Mayor's Office to the
14 MTA. They both work in the government. They can
15 say, "let's get the kid some training. Let's not
16 tell the kids you have this idea, this is wild, we've
17 never seen it on the planet." We watch movies.
18 We've seen people do things like that on trains. You
19 can also do something like that. Not in that
20 setting, we have a proper setting for you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. That's
22 actually really good feedback. Thank you.

23 SHARON JETER: Remember Israel.
24
25

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Have a
3 great day. Next we're going to go online. We have
4 Gabriel Herter followed by Matthew Paolucci.

5 GABRIEL HERTER: Hi, am I unmuted?

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: We hear you.

7 GABRIEL HERTER: Hi, uhm, so I would just like to
8 start off by saying, thank you for letting me speak.
9 I would also like to just address something very
10 quickly that I think it's a little insane that we
11 completely brushed over Queens Link when we spent an
12 hour and a half talking about something that is very
13 important mind you, subway surfing. It was
14 completely brushed aside. It is something that's
15 very important. I grew up in East Queens. Ozone
16 Park and Rockaway are inaccessible. I can't go to
17 the beach in my own borough because of how hard it is
18 to get there. I can't take any jobs because it's
19 impossible.

20 The infrastructure is there for trains but why
21 aren't we building upon it? Queens Link makes sense
22 on every level of the imagination. I have to take
23 the Long Island Railroad to Long Beach and it takes
24 the same amount of time as taking a bus to the
25 Rockaways in my own borough. It is infinitely

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1 closer. It is on the same coast. I want to know
2 what's in Ozone Park and what's in Richmond Hill?
3 I'm forced to travel over an hour to go anywhere. No
4 one in this area of Queens wants to go to most areas
5 of Brooklyn because of the distance and vice versa.
6 It would help the economic growth of New York to be
7 able to open up more accessibility to more jobs
8 around the city to places that people would normally
9 have extremely limited access to. And it's not fair
10 to build a park in a park that quite frankly already
11 has people walking around in that trail.
12

13 It's a humongous let down to New Yorkers and the
14 future of New York and quite honestly it feels like a
15 set back in development to not invest in better
16 accessibility. In order to have areas for both work
17 and the ability to escape life after work and further
18 explore the beauty that is New York. I was born and
19 raised here and all I or anyone else has ever wanted
20 was more accessibility to these areas. Why does it
21 make sense? One, improved accessibility and
22 mobility. It would connect underserved neighborhoods
23 with metered transit hubs, making it faster and
24 easier for the residents to travel within the borough
25 and beyond. This would benefit communities that

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1 current face transit deserts as was mentioned before,
2 and where residents rely heavily on slow or insanely
3 slow buses where - I mean to be frank; I've spent 20
4 hours in the cold, wet and you know it's late and the
5 bus is full and it goes right by me and I have to
6 wait another 20 minutes. Buses are not the answer
7 and on the growth and job creation, that would be
8 huge. I already touched upon that.

9
10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time is
11 expired.

12 GABRIEL HERTER: Other people have way more time
13 than me, I need another ten seconds.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Please make it short.

15 GABRIEL HERTER: Social equity and inclusion.
16 Transit has historically marginalized communities in
17 Queens leaving them disconnected from economic and
18 cultural opportunities. Queens Link would address
19 these disparities ensuring that all residents
20 regardless of income or location can enjoy the
21 benefits of improved transit. Environmental
22 sustainability, optimize land use and preservation of
23 existing community resources. These are all things
24 that you need to consider. Thank you.

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Next, we'll hear from
3 Matthew Paolucci followed by Abram Garfield Morris.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin. Please stay on
5 topic.

6 MATTHEW PAOLUCCI: Can you guys hear me?

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: We can hear you.

8 MATTHEW PAOLUCCI: Hello, perfect. My name is
9 Matthew Paolucci. I am calling today on behalf of
10 [AUDIO INTERFERENCE 03:20:18]- [03:20:24] research
11 group to be there today in person about students and
12 I'm calling on behalf on that organization. We
13 represent over a dozen campuses, over tens of
14 thousands of students across the state for the need
15 to push forward Queens Link through a study and then
16 an eventful inclusion in the MTA five year capital
17 program. But there is something that can be done
18 today. A lot of the conversation that happened
19 earlier in this meeting when we were talking about
20 Queens Link, it was what the MTA can do but right
21 now, the Department of Parks, is under advanced
22 design for the first section of the Queensway Linier
23 Park. It is essential, absolutely essential that
24 City Council Members who support Queens Link are in
25 communication with people from Department of Parks,

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1 making sure that when they are designing for this
2 first section of park, that they have received city
3 money and federal money for, that they include in
4 their design areas for transit. It is absolutely
5 essential. I wanted to get that point across first
6 and foremost.
7

8 Second, I want to talk about capacity of North,
9 South Roadway here. Right now, the state is
10 overtaking another \$1 billion expansion of the
11 Bandwidth Expressway. 15 years ago, there was select
12 bus service improvements, arguably traffic has gotten
13 worse. There is such a demand for north, south
14 travel in Queens yet we don't have a north, south
15 [AUDIO INTERFERENCE 03:21:54] and yet here is an
16 opportunity right in front of us. The right of way
17 is there. We wouldn't have to take a single home.
18 You wouldn't have to bore a tunnel under any houses.
19 The opportunity is there to expand north, south
20 transportation capacity. [AUDIO INTERFERENCE
21 03:22:09]- [03:22:17].

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time is
23 expired.
24
25

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1
2 MATTHEW PAOLUCCI: [INAUDIBLE 03:22:18]- and most
3 of the time in the outer boroughs, the concern is -
4 thank you. Please push the parks to include -

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Thank
6 you. Next we'll have Abram Garfield Morris followed
7 by Juan Garcia.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

9 ABRAM GARFIELD MORRIS: Hi, good afternoon.
10 Thank you so much for hearing me. I wanted to say
11 real quick about what was earlier said. As someone
12 who grew up in the city, we definitely need more fun
13 things for kids to do in the city. That's the real
14 root cause of why kids seek dangerous behavior. It's
15 really because we need fun things for kids to do.

16 I'm actually here to testify in favor of the
17 Queens Link Motion. I think it's really important
18 that we bolster our transit here in New York City.
19 It's absolutely critical and what the Queens Link
20 would do is just totally connect different subway
21 lines in communities that are currently completely
22 disconnected. The park Queensway that has received
23 federal funding, actually received its \$100 million
24 in federal funding from the connecting communities
25 grant and unfortunately, that piece of legislation is

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1 to remove highways and roadways that have separated
2 communities. And we're using that money to basically
3 pave over what could be a transit line that connects
4 communities. So we're in effect, doing exactly what
5 that piece of legislation was written to stop and to
6 bring justice to. So, I really advocate for the
7 Queens Link. It's very critical for these
8 communities to be connected and uhm, transit equity
9 is a matter of economic justice and racial justice.
10 New York City is one of the most segregated cities in
11 the world and if we're going to get real about
12 bringing justice to our city, we have to increase our
13 public transportation. We can't just ignore it and
14 frankly I'm a young person and if you build the
15 Queensway, it's like a death nail into better transit
16 in Queens. You have to build a Queens Link,
17 otherwise, when are you going to get this opportunity
18 again? It literally is a rail corridor that already
19 exists.
20

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time has
22 expired.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Next
24 we'll hear from Juan Garcia followed by Shawn Groce.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

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1 JUAN GARCIA: Hello, good afternoon everyone.

2
3 I'm just calling to also just continue with the
4 passing Resolution 59. Just to go off what Matthew,
5 Gabriel and Abram has been saying, I mean when you
6 hear everybody talk, we're all pretty young and we
7 all think this would be an amazing inclusion because
8 like people have said, there is no north or south
9 train service in Queens and it just would include so
10 many more div - it would include so much more
11 diversity for just traveling, whether that's leisure
12 or work. Because I think there is a lot of
13 opportunities where people my age and younger had the
14 opportunity either work in or near Ozone Park or the
15 beach but it just seems very inaccessible because
16 there's only like the Q53 and the Q52 buses that get
17 there and it's always packed. It's always packed.

18 There's really no downside to this like, from
19 what Queens Link was showing, there's already a lot
20 of train stations that just haven't been used for I
21 think over 60 years or something like that and they
22 want to include parks. I think Matthew was talking
23 about that and it was just such an incredible thing
24 that like, it just includes so much more community.
25 It involves the community more. You're able to

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1 explore the city way quicker and like have access to
2 just different people instead of just always staying
3 in the same neighborhood just because you can't take
4 a bus or a train there. And I think that's it, I
5 just really hope this Resolution gets passed because
6 there really is no downside to this. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Shawn Groce.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

10 SHAWN GROCE: Chair hello, can you hear me? Hi,
11 can you hear me?

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yes, we can hear you.

13 SHAWN GROCE: Yeah, I grew up in Regal Park,
14 which is to say I grew up less to be in one of the
15 best cities in the world and between two of the best
16 parks that the city had to offer. To the south I had
17 Forest Park and into the north I had Flushing Meadows
18 Corona Park. Most of my childhood was spent at these
19 parks. Having said that, all of my friends and my
20 best friend lived in Wood Haven in Jamaica Avenue.
21 In order to get to him, I had to take a train for an
22 hour and a half, must to the regret of my mom where I
23 had to go all the way to Sutton Boulevard to take the
24 J, which is incredibly slow to get from Wood Haven to
25 the J, versus a train that we smoked weed on this

1 path my entire high school career going on this
2 little road that no one was on that would actually
3 make my life better.

4
5 When I ended up getting a job, I got a job in
6 Brooklyn and I tried to the train for an hour and a
7 half, two hours each way, to get to Central Brooklyn
8 but I couldn't, so I tried to buy a car in order to
9 try and get there but I ended up having to leave my
10 home and get ostracized from my family because of
11 poor transit. I had to leave Regal Park. Now I live
12 in Brooklyn where I don't know anybody, where I don't
13 have any family, I don't have any community because
14 of a bad transit system. I wish that there could be
15 a Queens Link so I can come and see my family, so I
16 can go back and forth. The Queens Link is a link to
17 community and a link to people. It's not just some
18 stupid idea. Millions of people would be infinitely
19 helped for a whole bunch of more reasons than my own.
20 Please consider pushing forward the 59 and to do as
21 much we can about the Queens Link. I love Queens
22 with all my heart.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Next we
24 will hear from Anna Taktachev.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

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1 ANNA TAKTACHEV: Hi, hi, thank you. I want to
2 also testify in support of Resolution 59. I think
3 this is foremost an issue of equitable city planning.
4 When we have two competing proposals for a site, one
5 of them being Queens Link, one of them Queensway, I
6 think both deserve the opportunity to have full plans
7 side by side. This is an issue of equity for all of
8 New Yorkers. I grew up in East Queens. I grew up in
9 Forest Hills. I have rejected job opportunities in
10 Brooklyn. I've rejected job opportunities in Far
11 Rockaway because it's unfeasible to get there. When
12 I go out for recreation, specifically the beach, I go
13 to Jones Beach, just like Robert Moses intended
14 because there's so much [AUDIO INTERFERENCE
15 03:29:26]. The Q53 and 52 are so packed that it's
16 impossible to get to a beach and enjoy the economy in
17 my own borough. I want to go see shows at [AUDIO
18 INTERFERENCE 03:29:39]. I want to go surfing. I
19 want to see all the work the city has done to restore
20 the Rockaways following Sandy, but I only get to go
21 to Rockaway about one or two times a year and that's
22 not just talking about recreation. I'm talking about
23 economic opportunities as well. There are many
24 people who live in the Rockaways who can't get to
25

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1 work, somewhere like even Forest Hills because it is
2 such a long commute. I think Queens Link, unlike
3 Queensway would change the future whereas Queensway
4 would preserve the status quo in east Queens and
5 relegate east Queens just for one more lane, style of
6 development for generations. I think it's a
7 worthwhile plan for us to look at because if we don't
8 build a Queens Link, Queens will have more in common
9 with Long Island than the rest of New York City as
10 the city continues to grow. East Queens is part of
11 New York City too and I believe that the Queens Link
12 deserves at least [INAUDIBLE 03:30:40]. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Next
15 we'll hear from Rick Horan.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

17 RICK HORAN: Can you hear me?

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes, we can hear you.

19 RICK HORAN: Okay great. I'm not sure if I can
20 turn my camera on but I'll continue verbally. My
21 name is Rick Horan, Executive Director of Queens
22 Link, a nonprofit, all volunteer group to reconnect
23 the Rockaways and South Queens with the rest of the
24 borough and the city that the city was disconnected
25 from more than 60 years ago.

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1 Thank you Council Members Brooks-Powers, Holden,
2 and Ariola for proposing the Resolution to have the
3 MTA conduct at Queens Link EIS. I'm going to ask for
4 a little bit of time indulgence for this testimony
5 but I will make it as quick as I possibly can. New
6 Yorkers, especially those in the outer boroughs
7 depend on subways as distance and traffic conspired
8 to make buses impractical. Subways are part of our
9 DNA. This was confirmed in a recent poll by Senator
10 Addabbo where his constituents favored the skinny
11 strip of land they used for transit over parks by
12 three to one. Queens Link however includes both.
13 Yet as we meet here this morning, city planners are
14 busy designing two small parks that will be built
15 directly on top of Queens only north, south rail
16 corridor. How did this happen? The MTA claims that
17 as a New York City owned transit asset, they are not
18 responsible for decisions on its future use. That
19 could not be further from the truth. Their pattern
20 of delaying studies, inflating costs, and reducing
21 ridership have served to diminish its value to
22 provide cover to anybody who is against reactivation.
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1 Here is some history for context. In 2016, when
2 the MTA agreed to do a feasibility study, it stand
3 back, it was held for over a year -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time is
5 expired.

6 RICK HORAN: Even then completed it. When it was
7 initially released in October - when it was finally
8 released in October 2019, it still showed its
9 September 2018 cover date. But at that point it was
10 too late to be considered for the 2020, 2024 capital
11 plan. Mission accomplished. The study did confirm
12 however that it would carry 47,000 daily riders and
13 recommended that an EIS be performed. But consistent
14 with the MTA's desire to kill this project, it
15 claimed to build cost of \$8.1 billion.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Rick, we're going to
17 need you to wrap up. You could submit the rest of
18 your testimony in writing.

19 RICK HORAN: Okay. Thank you very much for your
20 time today.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I'm going
22 to just give it one moment for Assembly Member
23 Anderson to join. [03:34:17]- [03:35:37]. If anyone
24 wishes to testify, the written testimony, you have up
25

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1 to 72 hours to submit. You can submit it to
2 council.nyc.gov- excuse me, at
3 testimony@council.nyc.gov. I'd also like to include
4 in the record that Assembly Member Anderson had
5 previously along with his colleagues sent a letter to
6 the Technology social media firms calling for their
7 attention to this matter and of course with working
8 with our partners in the state to address this subway
9 surfing crisis and I thank my colleagues and Co-
10 Chairs for today's hearing. With that, this meeting
11 is now adjourned. [GAVEL]
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date November 30, 2024