

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 1
CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

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August 17, 2023
Start: 10:24 a.m.
Recess: 3:36 p.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Selvena Brooks-Powers, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joann Ariola
David M. Carr
Amanda Farias
Ari Kagan
Farrah N. Louis
Mercedes Narcisse
Carlina Rivera
Kalman Yeger

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Robert F. Holden
Gale A. Brewer
Christopher Marte
Vickie Paladino
Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate

A P P E A R A N C E S

Rich Davey, New York City Transit President

Jal Patel, Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Deputy Chief Financial Officer

Dr. Allison C. de Cerreno, Metropolitan
Transportation Authority Bridges and Tunnels
Chief Operating Officer

Will Schwartz, Metropolitan Transportation
Authority Deputy Chief for Government and
Community Relations

Erica Burson

Evelyn David

Assemblyman Lester Chang

Brit Byrd, planner in the office of Brooklyn
Borough President Antonio Reynoso

Julian Wong, transportation student

Nader Henry, yellow cab taxi driver

Wayne Chen, yellow cab taxi driver

Andrew Schloss, New York City based transit-
riding urban planner for Flix North America

Tiffany-Ann Taylor, Vice President for
Transportation at the Regional Plan Association
and representing Congestion Pricing Now Coalition

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

Dan Rodriguez, representative of Coach USA, its subsidiaries, and President of the Bus Association of New Jersey

Susan Lee, Founding President of the Alliance for Community Preservation and Betterment

Gregor Winkel

Zach Miller, Director of Metro Region Operations for the Trucking Association of New York

Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters

Valerie Mason, President of the East 72nd Neighborhoods Association and co-founder of the Coalition in Opposition to Congestion Pricing.

Irving Lee

Patrick Condren, Administrator of the BUS4NYC Coalition

Briana Carbajal, State Legislative Manager at WE ACT for Environment Justice

Richard Chow, New York Taxi Worker Alliance member

Norman Winaventura

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

Felicia Park-Rogers, Director of Regional
Infrastructure Projects at Tri-State
Transportation Campaign

Phil Wong, President of Chinese American Citizens
Alliance Greater New York

Christopher Johnson

Raul Rivera, Taxi and Limousine Commission driver
advocate

Rick Horan, Executive Director for QueensLink

Bhairavi Desai, Executive Director of the New
York Taxi Workers Alliance

Brandon Buchannan, American Bus Association

Eric McClure, Executive Director of StreetsPAC

Yiatin Chu, President of Asian Wave Alliance

Lucy Koteen

Penelope Katsaras

Peter Petino, member of Brooklyn Chamber of
Commerce and New York State Messenger and Courier
Association

Jean Hahn

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

Jeff Rose, owner of Attitude New York Chauffer
Transportation and President of the Limo
Association of New York

Jane Lok

Glen Bolofsky

Maria Danzilo, Executive Director of One City
Rising

Rick Russo, Chief Operating Officer of the
Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

Tom Lo, small business owner

Christopher Schuyler, Senior Staff Attorney with
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
Disability Justice Program

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a sound check
3 for the Committee on Transportation and
4 Infrastructure. Today's date is August 17, 2023,
5 being recorded by Danny Huong (phonetic) in the
6 Chambers.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Can everybody settle
8 down, please? Settle down.

9 Good morning and welcome to the New York
10 City Council hearing of the Committee on
11 Transportation and Infrastructure.

12 At this time, can everybody please
13 silence your cell phones?

14 If you wish to testify, please go up to
15 the Sergeant's desk to fill out a testimony slip even
16 if you already registered online.

17 Written testimony can be emailed to
18 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that is
19 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

20 At this time and going forward, no one is
21 to approach the dais. Thank you for your cooperation.

22 Chair, we are ready to begin.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [GAVEL] Good
24 morning and thank you for joining today's hearing of
25 the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on

2 congestion pricing and the MTA's fiscal future. I'm
3 Selvena Brooks-Powers, and I have the honor of
4 Chairing this Committee.

5 Before we begin, I would like to
6 acknowledge that today marks an exciting experiment
7 at the Council. We are piloting a new paperless
8 approach to hearings. In order to reduce our paper
9 use, today's Committee Report can be accessed
10 digitally with the QR code located on our Committee
11 sign in the back of the Chamber. All Council Members
12 will also be accessing the Committee Report and other
13 relevant documents on the tablets. I hope that with
14 lessons learned from today's hearing, this can become
15 a new model for the City Council going forward.

16 In April 2019, the Fiscal 2020 New York
17 State Executive Budget authorized the MTA to
18 establish a Congestion Tolling Program, commonly
19 known as congestion pricing in the Central Business
20 District, the area of Manhattan south of and
21 including 60th Street. The goals of congestion
22 pricing are several. It promises to reduce traffic on
23 the City's overcrowded streets and improve air
24 quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by
25 encouraging New Yorkers to utilize public

2 transportation. Most importantly for the MTA, it will
3 provide an important new revenue source for the
4 Authority as the State requires that all congesting
5 tolling revenue goes towards funding MTA capital
6 programs. This presents a meaningful opportunity to
7 ensure our subways, buses, and commuter rail systems
8 continue to meet New Yorkers' needs in the near- and
9 long-term. Overall, the MTA anticipates collecting
10 net revenue sufficient to generate 15 billion dollars
11 for the MTA capital program through the tolling
12 program.

13 The MTA has expressed that this funding
14 is necessary to help modernize the City's subway
15 system including updating the City's outdated
16 signaling system and making the subway more
17 accessible for people with disabilities. The launch
18 of congestion pricing in the City is now imminent,
19 but it is crucially important that it be implemented
20 equitably. For far too long, transportation agencies
21 in the city have underinvested in transportation
22 deserts. Residents in outer borough neighborhoods
23 often have few public transit options and have rarely
24 seen new investment to improve what options do exist.
25 It is my hope that today's hearing will explore how

2 to ensure that MTA's congestion pricing program is
3 launched in a way that is equitable and that prevents
4 unintended hardships in vulnerable communities
5 citywide.

6 Although the State, not the City Council,
7 will decide who will be exempt from congestion
8 pricing, we hope to have a dialogue and ask a few
9 questions regarding exemptions and how they will be
10 implemented.

11 For example, State Law requires that the
12 program exempt disabled persons from the congestion
13 charge. How is the MTA implementing this exception?
14 What additional exemptions to the tolling program
15 should be considered? How will taxis, for-hire
16 vehicles, and private buses be impacted? What
17 provisions will be made for low-income New Yorkers
18 living in transit deserts? And what about our seniors
19 or those with medical appointments in the Central
20 Business District?

21 We hope to discuss these potential
22 exemptions and their effects on the tolling
23 structure.

24 It is also crucial that congestion
25 pricing revenue is spent equitably, including by

2 improving core transit infrastructure in
3 transportation deserts. We will talk today about what
4 the MTA plans to do with the tens of billions of
5 dollars that congestion pricing will generate. We are
6 interested in hearing about cost controls the MTA has
7 in place to make sure that congestion pricing revenue
8 is wisely spent.

9 The Committee is also interested in
10 discussing how the MTA will measure and analyze the
11 effects of congestion tolling on New Yorkers, the
12 environment, and revenue streams in a way that is
13 transparent and clearly defined.

14 We'll also discuss the MTA's future
15 operational fiscal outlook. The world has
16 dramatically changed since the State first approved
17 congestion pricing four years ago. With the global
18 pandemic fundamentally reshaping our society, the
19 pandemic altered the behaviors of riders and drivers
20 alike as ridership plummeted under citywide stay-at-
21 home orders. The uptick in hybrid working continues
22 to adversely affect ridership levels and the MTA's
23 ability to generate farebox revenue, which accounted
24 for approximately 40 percent of the MTA's annual
25 operating budget prior to the pandemic.

2 We hope to hear about how the MTA plans
3 to adapt to these changes in the years to come. In
4 May, the State enacted its Fiscal Year 2024 Executive
5 Budget which sought to help balance the MTA's books.
6 This budget included increases to the City's payroll
7 mobility tax and the City's contribution to the MTA
8 for the cost of paratransit services and directed a
9 portion of future casino revenues to the MTA. The
10 Committee looks forward to hearing how additional
11 City taxpayer funding will be spent by the MTA and
12 how the City's contributions to paratransit impacts
13 its management of the program.

14 The budget also funded several new and
15 exciting initiatives, including a free bus pilot,
16 automated bus lane enforcement, and targeted upgrades
17 to subway services. We look forward to hearing more
18 about how these programs will impact rider experience
19 in New York City.

20 In July, the MTA released its Calendar
21 Year 2024 Preliminary Operating Budget, which totals
22 19.8 billion dollars. These expenses are funded
23 through a combination of resources including 5.1
24 billion dollars from farebox revenue. This is a
25 significant reduction from pre-pandemic farebox

2 projections, which exceeded 6 billion dollars
3 annually. The plan includes a 4 percent fare and a
4 5.5 percent toll increase to be implemented in August
5 or September 2023. This increase is expected to
6 generate approximately 205 million dollars annually
7 in farebox revenue and 133 million dollars in toll
8 revenue. The Committee looks forward to hearing from
9 the MTA about its planned fare and toll hike as well
10 as their plans to improve its service and
11 accessibility in the wake of these increases.

12 We are also hearing one resolution today
13 for which I serve as the prime sponsor. Resolution
14 number 390 concerns the proposed QueensLink Project,
15 which would reactivate transit along the long dormant
16 corridor of the Rockaway Beach branch of the Long
17 Island Railroad. The resolution we are considering
18 today calls on the MTA to conduct a comprehensive
19 environmental impact study on the viability of
20 QueensLink, building on a letter from last summer
21 signed by 17 City, State, and Federal officials
22 calling for such a study.

23 Finally, I note that the Department of
24 Transportation and the Taxi and Limousine Commission
25 were invited to today's hearing. The Administration

2 has an important role to play in helping to
3 coordinate the implementation of congestion pricing,
4 and, while I'm disappointed that the representatives
5 from the Administration are not here to answer the
6 questions that are specific to their role, the
7 Committee will be following up with a public letter
8 with questions to the Administration.

9 In this spirit, I want to express my
10 sincere appreciation to the MTA for joining us today.
11 I look forward to hearing from them as well as
12 advocates and members of the public.

13 I want to thank my Staff and Committee
14 Staff as well for their hard work, Mark Chen, Council
15 to the Committee, Samuel Breidbart, Council to the
16 Committee, Kevin Kotowski, Senior Policy Analyst,
17 John Basile, Senior Policy Analyst, Michael Sherman,
18 Senior Financial Analyst, Benjamin Fang from the
19 Speaker's Press Team, Jack Seigenthaler, my Policy
20 and Budget Director, and Renee Taylor, my Chief-of-
21 Staff.

22 I'd like to acknowledge we have also in
23 attendance today Council Members Farah Louis, David
24 Carr, and we have Council Member Joann Ariola online,
25 and we are also are joined by Council Member Kagan

2 and Holden, Council Member Brewer, and we are also
3 joined by Public Advocate Jumaane Williams.

4 Now, I'd like to invite the Public
5 Advocate to offer remarks.

6 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE WILLIAMS: Thank
7 you very much, Madam Chair.

8 My name is Jumaane Williams, and I am in
9 the still existing office of Public Advocate for the
10 City of New York.

11 I want to thank Chair Brooks-Powers and
12 the Members of the Committee on Transportation and
13 Infrastructure for holding this hearing. Thank you to
14 President Davey and the entire time of the MTA for
15 being here.

16 In June of 2023, the final federal hurdle
17 in the implementation of congestion pricing in New
18 York City was cleared, marking the first time in the
19 United States that a congestion pricing program is
20 set to become reality. For years, New York City has
21 been ranked as one of the most congested and traffic-
22 clogged American cities. Per the program, drivers
23 would be charged a fee to enter Manhattan south of
24 60th Street, one of the world's busiest commercial
25 districts. The fee has yet to be set and will be

2 determined by the MTA, which is overseeing the
3 tolling program, which is also anticipated to
4 generate 1 billion dollars annually for MTA capital
5 projects. Congestion pricing, which is slated to
6 begin next year, aims to reduce traffic and pollution
7 and provide much-needed transit improvements. I am in
8 support of these goals and proudly have been so since
9 relatively few of us were doing it in my first term
10 in office, and want to emphasize that the pursuit of
11 these outcomes should not be at the expense of
12 others. I urge the Traffic Mobility Review Board to
13 be conscientious of ongoing concerns raised by
14 workers who rely on their vehicles, low-income
15 drivers, residents and businesses within the Central
16 Business District Tolling Zone, and neighbors of the
17 surrounding communities.

18 I do know that there might be some
19 discussion about exemptions. They should be few and
20 far between and slightly more discounts. Without
21 those, there will be a disproportionate financial
22 burden on taxi, for-hire vehicles, Uber, and Lyft
23 drivers, and also the relatively few low-income
24 drivers who go into the City. I do think there should
25 be a discount for Uber and Lyft drivers. I would be

2 remiss if I didn't say that I think the burgeoning
3 industry of Uber and Lyft did add some of the
4 congestion that we're speaking about. Without some of
5 the discounts, we may see fare increases and a
6 decrease in demand for taxis and for-hire rides. For
7 rideshare drivers, the Review Board should find a way
8 to ensure that rideshare companies are responsible
9 for the fees, not the individual drivers, and the fee
10 should not be the full proposed 23 dollars nor should
11 drivers be tolled for multiple trips. Furthermore,
12 low-income drivers who may live in transit deserts
13 and rely on their vehicles as a result, of course
14 this is relatively few, should also benefit from
15 discounts and a limited number of tolls. It is my
16 understanding that the MTA has already conducted
17 studies and assessments on these proposals, and it is
18 my hope that they follow through to mitigate negative
19 impacts to low-income and working-class New Yorkers.

20 Additionally, another concern relates to
21 unintended consequences for residents and businesses
22 within the tolling zone as well as the surrounding
23 communities. Small businesses in the tolling zone
24 have shared worries that congestion pricing may lead
25 to lower foot traffic, and freights and deliveries

2 may potentially be impacted. I am a proponent of
3 utilizing public transit where applicable, but as we
4 know transit access is not equitable across the city,
5 thus cars may be one of the only means of
6 transportation for some. There are also environmental
7 concerns in regards to diverted traffic from
8 congestion pricing. In particular, I think of low-
9 income communities of more color that may see greater
10 traffic pollution in response to drivers finding
11 alternative routes throughout the city. They may end
12 up parking in these neighborhoods and take up
13 additional parking spaces which may lead to greater
14 traffic build-up. Places like Northern Manhattan and
15 the South Bronx, which have the highest death and
16 disease rates of asthma in the country, do not need
17 to bear the brunt of more pollution. While congestion
18 pricing is ultimately moving forward, and it should,
19 expeditiously, without pause with the goal of
20 improving environmental outcomes, we must ensure that
21 it does not end up becoming merely a redirection of
22 existing traffic pollution. Perhaps there's a way we
23 can prevent people from parking day to day outside of
24 those communities.

2 I hope the Traffic Mobility Review Board,
3 the MTA, and the DOT keep all the aforementioned
4 concerns in mind and collectively devise and
5 implement a congestion pricing program that is
6 equitable across the board, mitigates financial
7 burden on New York City's working class and
8 communities of more color, and improves environmental
9 outcomes. Every New Yorker deserves a chance to live,
10 work, and play in the city we call home, and that
11 includes improving transportation access and outcomes
12 for all. I actually just want to say as a driver,
13 cyclist, and pedestrian, my family comes from a
14 family of drivers, we do know that cars are the most
15 protected, most dangerous, and carry the least people
16 on the road, yet we have the most infrastructure for
17 them. That is something that we definitely have to
18 change. Most working-class and low-income New Yorkers
19 do not drive in daily. They take mass transit. If
20 you're driving daily into the city, you're doing so
21 mostly, mostly because you want to do so out of
22 convenience, and if we are going to change things,
23 that means we have to change things. I know that this
24 it is difficult for some folks, but we have to, and
25 the money gained would be used to make better mass

2 transit for most people who travel. The preference
3 would be people not driving during those hours in
4 midtown, but, if they do, I think congestion pricing
5 makes the most sense to do what we need to do.

6 Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you so
7 much.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you and
9 I will now as the Committee Council to go over some
10 procedural items and swear in the representatives
11 from the MTA.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BREIDBART: Thank you,
13 Chair. I'm Sam Breidbart, Council to the Committee on
14 Transportation and Infrastructure for the New York
15 City Council.

16 Our first witnesses will be from the MTA,
17 Rich Davey, New York City Transit President, Jay
18 Patel, the MTA Deputy CFO, Dr. Allison C. de Cerreno,
19 MTA Bridges and Tunnels COO, and Will Schwartz, MTA
20 Deputy Chief for Government and Community Relations.

21 I will now administer the oath. Please
22 raise your right hands.

23 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
24 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this
25

2 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member
3 questions?

4 ADMINISTRATION: [Inaudible response]

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BREIDBART: Thank you.

6 You may begin when ready.

7 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Thank you. Good morning
8 and thank you for having us here today, especially
9 the Chair Brooks-Powers who we've been able to work
10 together a number of projects and I look forward to
11 continuing to do that. We appreciate the opportunity
12 to be back with you all today.

13 As mentioned, I'm Rich Davey, the
14 President of New York City Transit. I'm also joined
15 by the MTA Deputy Chief Financial Officer Jay Patel,
16 MTA Bridges and Tunnels Chief Operating Officer
17 Allison de Cerreno, and, as mentioned, Will Schwartz
18 who runs our Government and Community Relations for
19 the MTA.

20 I apologize in advance for going on a bit
21 long today, but there's much to report since I was
22 before you last March.

23 I was here last March to discuss our
24 budget, and, in a few short months, the MTA situation
25 has changed dramatically for the better. The enacted

2 Fiscal 2024 State Budget included a framework for a
3 long-term stable funding for the MTA for years to
4 come. Chair Lieber, myself, and the entire leadership
5 team at MTA are grateful to the Governor and the
6 Legislature for their bold leadership on addressing
7 the MTA's fiscal cliff. Not only did they choose to
8 address it head-on, which is not the typical one-shot
9 solution that's occurred in the past, but deploying a
10 long-term fiscal improvement.

11 At our July board meeting, we presented
12 the July financial plan showing for the first time in
13 anyone's recollection at the MTA five straight years
14 of balanced budgets through 2027. All our operating
15 agencies, my friends at the commuter railroads
16 included, are now crushing ridership records. I'm
17 incredibly proud to say that subways have carried 4+
18 million riders a day several times now, and I would
19 expect we'll be breaking records when school comes
20 back in a few weeks.

21 Buses are holding strong, and paratransit
22 is even exceeding its pre-COVID ridership totals
23 thanks to strong ridership and strong service there.
24
25

2 This is key because continued gains in
3 paid ridership as mentioned by the Chair is vital to
4 the Fiscal Plan becoming a reality.

5 I want to quickly pass it to Jay Patel, a
6 colleague of mine who worked very closely in putting
7 and crafting this together with the Legislature and
8 the Governor's Office, to walk through the details of
9 the enacted State budget as it relates to MTA's
10 funding. Jay.

11 DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PATEL:

12 Thanks, Rich. As mentioned, since the State's Fiscal
13 2024 budget was enacted in May of this year, the
14 MTA's finances are in a dramatically better state
15 than they were when we presented the February
16 financial plan to the MTA board.

17 Key elements of the funding package
18 include an increase in the payroll mobility tax paid
19 for by the City employers that will generate
20 approximately 1.1 billion dollars in recurring
21 revenue to the MTA, a one-shot appropriation of 300
22 million in 2023 paid for by the State of New York, an
23 increased contribution from our partners, the City of
24 New York, on paratransit. Under the new framework,
25 the City will cover 80 percent of costs, up from the

2 50 percent or approximately 165 million dollars over
3 the next few years. 100 percent of the down-state
4 casino licenses when they awarded, that's up to three
5 of them worth a total 500 million each, and either 50
6 percent or 40 percent of the recurring tax revenues
7 from those casinos will be dedicated to the MTA,
8 depending on whether they are located within the five
9 boroughs or one of the down-state suburban counties.
10 65 million is earmarked to bring the planned biannual
11 fare increase down to our standard 4 percent rather
12 than the 5.5 percent that was under consideration as
13 part of our 2023 budget when we presented and adopted
14 in December 2022.

15 Lest you think the MTA is getting off
16 easy in this plan, the final funding plan in the
17 budget calls for our operating agencies to deliver
18 400 million dollars in recurring savings starting in
19 2024. Rich and his team are already delivering for
20 efficiencies at New York City Transit while Cathy
21 Rinaldi is delivering the same for Long Island
22 Railroad and Metro North.

23 Furthermore, we are challenging the
24 agencies to do more, hoping to push the 400 million
25

2 in annual savings to 500 million in the outyears
3 beginning in 2025.

4 The MTA's finances are on stable ground
5 and include the largest labor contract for TW Local
6 100 ever negotiating. Having been ratified earlier in
7 the summer, this contract sets the pattern for our
8 other bargaining units. This is an important piece of
9 the financial plan, and we are pleased to achieve a
10 good contract for the largest bargaining unit at the
11 MTA in good faith.

12 Rich, I'll pass it back to you to discuss
13 some other good news out of the enacted State budget.

14 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Great. Thanks, Jay.

15 I was beyond excited that the enacted
16 budget didn't just address our fiscal cliff, but it
17 indeed invested in more transit. Thanks to a 35-
18 million-dollar investment in the budget, we are
19 increasing subway service in the off-peak hours,
20 midday, early evenings, and weekends. These are
21 periods of time that we're seeing the strongest
22 ridership recovery relative to the pandemic,
23 particularly as New Yorkers redefine their "9 to 5
24 commute." This is already underway as we rolled
25

2 increased service on the J, G, M, 1, and 6 lines with
3 more to come.

4 Also, as part of the State's budget, we
5 are going to study the impact of fair-free buses
6 through a limited pilot on one route in each borough.
7 The five routes were selected in conformity with the
8 legislation included in the budget requiring the
9 pilot and will allow us to learn the impacts of this
10 concept. The pilot will launch on the BX18, the B60,
11 the M116, the Q4 both limited and local, and the
12 S4696 later this month.

13 Finally, from the State budget, I'm
14 especially excited about a provision to expand
15 authorization for automated cameras so we can build
16 on the successes of our ABLE program which help keep
17 non-buses out of our bus lanes, a big pet peeve of
18 mine.

19 Under this new authorization, the MTA and
20 our partners at New York City DOT will be able to
21 enforce bus-related traffic violations such as double
22 parking and illegal parking at bus stops. Again, I
23 want to thank the Chair for your support on this
24 issue and the 34 City Council Members who voiced
25 their support which was included, which was also

2 instrumental. Your constituents and our 1.5 million
3 bus customers appreciate your advocacy.

4 While not directly resulting from the
5 budget, once we knew we were on stable footing
6 financially, we were finally able to advance the
7 long-awaited second phase of our widely popular e-
8 hail on demand paratransit pilot under the leadership
9 of Chris Pangilinan and his team. We are proud to be
10 tripling the number of participants in the pilot for
11 nearly the exact same budget. We look forward to
12 seeing how this program works with real parameters in
13 place and with a more representative sample of our
14 customers from the Access-A-Ride customer base.

15 I mentioned earlier that ridership is
16 growing, and, in addition, we are setting a standard
17 for service for New Yorkers. For the first six months
18 of 2023, subways averaged 84 percent weekday on-time
19 performance, the best six months we've had in at
20 least a decade. Buses are almost 85 percent on-time,
21 and paratransit is doing better with 96 percent of
22 broker trips and 97 percent of primary carrier trips
23 completed on-time. Customers are telling us there is
24 a difference. Customer satisfaction since I've joined
25 in the last 18 months has grown across all three

2 modes. 6 in 10 of our subway customers say they're
3 satisfied or very satisfied, 65 percent of our bus
4 customers satisfied or very satisfied, and 75 percent
5 of our paratransit customers satisfied or very
6 satisfied. Obviously, work to do, but we're making
7 great strides.

8 We've also come a long way in safety. The
9 Collaborative Cops, Cameras, and Care program put
10 forward by the Governor and the Mayor has made a real
11 difference in keeping customers and transit workers
12 safe and holding those who commit crimes underground
13 accountable. And thanks to our partnership with the
14 NYPD Transit Bureau, and I want to call out Chief
15 Kemper for his leadership in particular, crime
16 underground is down 4.4 percent year-to-date while
17 ridership continues to rise. It's important to all of
18 us that people feel safe and are safe using our
19 system.

20 On-time performance, safety, and
21 cleanliness are paramount for my team and me. That's
22 because these are the things that our customers and
23 your constituents truly care about. Customer
24 satisfaction I have said often is our north star.
25 Faster, cleaner, safer service is our motto, which is

2 why in addition to our efforts in service, we've
3 added 800 station and car cleaners over the last 12
4 months. Brand new customer service centers have
5 opened at 12 locations system-wide with more on the
6 way. Our station agents have come out of the booth,
7 the so-called token booth, for the first time ever
8 and are now assisting customers throughout the
9 station environment. That initiative was borne out of
10 New York City Transit's mandate to put our customers
11 first. Dozens of stations are getting a refresh
12 through our Station Re-NEW-Vation program when we
13 close a station for a weekend and go in and do work
14 and heavy clean. We will do 60 of these renovations
15 by the end of this year given that they are
16 leveraging, as I mentioned, existing track work and
17 shutdowns so customers won't feel additional pain.

18 I'm also pleased to report that we've
19 opened 100 bathrooms at 50 subway stations with
20 bathrooms at five more stations opening up by the end
21 of the month.

22 Finally, as you know, we are moving full-
23 steam ahead on congestion pricing, having completed
24 the federally mandated environmental assessment for
25 the Central Business District Tolling Program, and

2 the infrastructure is being installed as we speak,
3 and the Traffic Mobility Review Board has begun
4 meeting, in fact, they'll be meeting later today, to
5 continue work toward their statutorily guided process
6 which will make formal recommendations to the TBTA
7 board for the program's framework.

8 As President of New York City Transit, I
9 need to say I am an enthusiastic supporter of
10 congestion pricing, and we need it now. Not to just
11 reduce the insane gridlock that slows our buses,
12 emergency vehicles, and our paratransit vehicles, but
13 also to improve public health, meet the State's
14 ambitious climate goals, and, most importantly, fund
15 MTA's historic 2020 to 2024 capital program.

16 The money raised from congestion pricing
17 is going to help pay for much-needed upgrades that
18 will bring our transit system into the 21st century
19 from accessible stations to new rolling stock like
20 our brand new R211 subway cars on the A line, Madam
21 Chair. In fact, we rolled out our fourth this week.
22 They are cutting edge subway cars replacing 50-year-
23 old trains, currently eligible for the AARP, running
24 on the A and C lines. That is what congestion pricing
25 is going to buy, investment in our transit system so

2 we're excited about taking this next step in the
3 approval process.

4 Before I conclude, I do want to take a
5 moment to voice both my personal appreciation and the
6 MTA's as well for the Mayor, the Speaker, and this
7 Council for increasing the funding for the Fair Fares
8 program in the enacted City budget. Chair Brooks-
9 Powers, I know how hard you and your Colleagues
10 worked to push for more, and we continue to support
11 increasing the eligibility threshold to 200 percent
12 of the federal poverty line, but progress is
13 progress, and we applaud you for prioritizing Fair
14 Fares in this budget.

15 As we at the MTA look for ways to curb
16 fare evasion, the first step should be to ensure that
17 anyone who cannot truly afford the fare that help is
18 available. We offer discounts for disabled and
19 elderly customers, but the City's Fair Fares program
20 has been a vital lifeline for those who qualify. We'd
21 begun inviting Fair Fares staff to attend my bi-
22 weekly transit talks, and we're also piloting some
23 satellite office hours with Fair Fares at our new
24 customer service centers.

2 I'm proud to share that the Department of
3 Buses and the MTA customer team have been busy in the
4 streets over the last two weeks engaging directly
5 with bus customers, meeting with over 25,000 riders
6 at bus stops, and sharing information on how to ride
7 transit for reduced fares through the Reduced Fares
8 or Fair Fares program along with the importance of
9 fare compliance, and we are making progress on our
10 commitment to reduce fare evasion. A huge thank you
11 to the members of my Eagle team who are critical to
12 supporting this historic expansion of bus fare
13 payment.

14 We need an all-hands-on-deck for this
15 watershed moment for mass transit in the region.
16 We're determined to deliver for New Yorkers. Again,
17 thank you for having me and happy to take your
18 questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so
20 much for your testimony and for your presence today.

21 We'll jump right into some of the
22 questions. I want to start with congestion pricing
23 implementation and funding. What is the current
24 timeline for the implementation of congestion pricing
25 and what steps have been taken to date?

2 PRESIDENT DAVEY: I'll give maybe some
3 broad and ask my Colleague, Dr. Allison de Cerreno,
4 too.

5 As mentioned, the statute is pretty clear
6 once we received the federal FONSI if you will, then
7 it's to the six appointed representatives on the
8 Traffic Mobility Review Board to consider, among
9 other things, exemptions as you mentioned and the
10 implementation of this. As I also mentioned in my
11 testimony, we actually are starting to implement the
12 infrastructure or install the infrastructure so when
13 that process is complete, we'll be able to flip the
14 switch if you will, but there's still a process to be
15 had. I'll let Dr. Cerreno maybe comment on a little
16 more.

17 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Thank
18 you, Rich, and thank you, Council Members.

19 Yes, as Rich explained, we received our
20 Finding of No Significant Impact on the environmental
21 assessment in June of 2023, recently. We subsequently
22 began working with the vendor responsible for
23 construction who has already begun to finalize the
24 system design and to begin installation of the toll
25 system and infrastructure around the Central Business

2 District so some of you may have seen some of what we
3 call poles and mast arms. They look a lot like the
4 regular traffic signal and light signal poles and
5 mast arms that you see around the city already, but
6 you'll notice slightly different equipment hanging
7 off. The vendor has up to 310 days from that June
8 date to finish the design, finish the installation
9 and construction and the testing of the system before
10 it goes live. As Rich mentioned, the Traffic Mobility
11 Review Board has begun their meetings so that they
12 can develop their recommendations.

13 Importantly, as part of this process,
14 after we go through the TMRB process, there will be a
15 formal process with the Board for the State
16 administrative procedure process which includes
17 additional hearings at that time, and subsequent to
18 that by Statute, we have a 30-day required period of
19 testing to ensure that everything is working
20 smoothly, and we also have a 60-day requirement for
21 additional outreach and communication beyond what
22 we've already done and we continue to do to ensure
23 that everybody understands how this is going to
24 actually run, what they need to do as they come in
25 and out of the Central Business District.

2 Finally, I just want to also make clear
3 for folks at the tail end of it, after go live, there
4 is also a required 60-day period where we sort of let
5 people learn how to use it before we address anybody
6 who hasn't paid appropriately or on time so it gives
7 a little bit of time for people to learn.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: With the
9 infrastructure being installed already, what does
10 that coordination with the City look like? Has there
11 been coordination with the City?

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Yes,
13 we've been coordinating with the City since the
14 initial legislation was passed. Within 60 days, we
15 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with City
16 Department of Transportation. They are heavily
17 involved with us on the infrastructure and have been
18 all along. That includes the design pieces, that
19 includes the locations, that includes everything that
20 we continue to do now in terms of where we're going
21 to be locating the infrastructure and when it is
22 happening, when it is actually going in. We also,
23 through my Colleague, Will, here have been ensuring
24 that the different community groups are aware as
25 infrastructure starts to go up in their area.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Would I be
3 able to get a copy of, and the Committee, get a copy
4 of the MOU?

5 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Yeah.
6 In fact, it's actually in the final EA but we can
7 send...

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: okay.

9 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Or
10 work with Will to get that to you.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: That would be
12 great to pull out.

13 Is there a point person or team at the
14 MTA that is specifically tasked with coordinating
15 with the City?

16 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Chair, that would
17 be me and my team.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay.

19 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: We've been
20 communicating with Council Members in the Central
21 Business District as infrastructure is going out. As
22 Dr. de Cerreno pointed out, the timeline is dictated
23 by DOT permits so intimately involved, and we've been
24 sending out a weekly look-ahead to the communities so
25 that they know what's coming and that there's point

2 of contacts, there is information available with the
3 workforce out there if members of the public have
4 questions. We're trying to be as clear as possible.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What is the
6 role of the Department of Transportation as you are
7 in this implementation phase?

8 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Allison, you want
9 to take that?

10 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO:
11 Certainly. Again, they've been actually involved from
12 the get-go. They're actually a co-project sponsor on
13 the environmental review. They are responsible along
14 with us and New York State Department of
15 Transportation, which was the other co-project team
16 member, all three agencies are responsible for
17 different aspects of the mitigation that will be
18 implemented as part of our findings from the final
19 environmental assessment, and we work very closely
20 with them, as I mentioned, as we go out to the
21 different communities to ensure that everybody
22 understand what is happening.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: That's
24 interesting information because what's been shared
25 with me is that the City looks at the MTA as the one

2 of having the full authority so being defined as a
3 co-project sponsor is interesting.

4 Will the MTA prioritize capital spending
5 on servicing mass transit deserts whose residents
6 disproportionately bear the burden of congestion
7 pricing?

8 PRESIDENT DAVEY: I think the answer is
9 we're going to be prioritizing transit investments
10 across the five boroughs and beyond for sure. I can
11 tell you that one thing that continues to concern me
12 running an agency, an organization that was built in
13 part in 1904, that there's a lot of investment we
14 need to make in things that everybody in this room,
15 we don't see on a day-to-day basis, whether it's
16 power, fan rooms, communication. Certainly, we're
17 going to be spending a lot of money as part of this
18 on our ADA accessibility program, which seeks to get
19 to 95 percent accessibility on our subways in the
20 next 30 years so suffice to say there are a lot of
21 investments we need to make across New York City
22 Transit and, of course, bridges and tunnels and the
23 railroads, but, as I mentioned, there's a lot of our
24 investment that will help those folks in transit
25 deserts and in other places across the city for sure.

2 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I just want to add
3 to that as we had you stand with us at an event the
4 other day announcing a Far Rockaway ticket so beyond
5 capital infrastructure, there's policy goals that we
6 can work towards, and that was a joint goal
7 identified in the New New York Panel between the
8 Governor and the Mayor to make railroads more
9 affordable in New York City. That's been a priority
10 for Chairman Lieber as well. We don't always accept
11 the term of a traffic desert. Often, people are
12 referring to rail deserts, which is fair because the
13 subway does not go everywhere in the five boroughs,
14 but there are communities where we have railroad
15 access that has previously been unaffordable for
16 people to say the least so we have incrementally made
17 that more affordable, taking what was a weekend-only
18 City ticket program, we moved it to a seven-day-a-
19 week pilot program in the off-peak, and we are now
20 proud to announce that starting next week, you're
21 going to see what we call Universal City Ticket with
22 a peak ticket price and an off-peak ticket prices,
23 but that's going to make the commuter railroads much
24 more affordable and approachable for many communities

2 that previously didn't see them as an affordable
3 option.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I will say I'm
5 a bit concerned with the response in terms of like
6 looking at in terms from a five-borough perspective
7 so when I talk about equity, right, it's not everyone
8 starting from the same vantage point because there
9 are communities that have been left behind for a long
10 time so it's being able to allow them to catch up and
11 then being able to jump leaps and bounds together,
12 and so all along the MTA has shared that with
13 congestion pricing, this money would be prioritized
14 for transportation deserts, and so I'm very zeroed
15 in, laser-focused on what that could look like and what
16 that will look like because congestion pricing can't
17 just solely be about revenue being generated. It has
18 to also be about how communities that are
19 marginalized are going to be taken into account with
20 this as well.

21 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I think it's a
22 fair point you're raising, and I just want to point
23 out, specifically let's talk about Southeast Queens.
24 For almost 30 years, that community was promised a
25 New Jamaica bus depot. This capital program, the...

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: That's already
3 paid for. That doesn't count.

4 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: No, no, but, Madam
5 Chair, that's being paid for by revenues in this
6 capital program which will ultimately be supported by
7 congestion pricing. Hollis Station, other priorities
8 that you've raised, and we have examples around the
9 city that we're happy to provide offline, but I do
10 want to emphasize that there are major investments
11 being made in the outer boroughs that have been long
12 overdue and asked for by your community that will be
13 supported by congestion pricing revenues.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Which capital
15 projects does the MTA anticipate spending the money
16 collected from congestion pricing?

17 PRESIDENT DAVEY: I think, again as Will
18 said, that the money collected is supporting the 2024
19 Capital Plan so the capital plan we're currently in.
20 It's expected to raise about a billion dollars which
21 should be able for us to be able to leverage 15
22 billion dollars in capital spend, again across the
23 five boroughs, so that's what it's designed to do, is
24 to pay for that current plan, which, as mentioned
25 again at least for New York City Transit, almost 2.5

2 billion dollars in ADA upgrades, we've purchased the
3 R2-11 cars. As you know, Chair, those go through your
4 District. As I made the joke, they're replacing the
5 AARP cars we have, the 50-year-old cars. There's a
6 whole host of other projects. Signal upgrades. If you
7 haven't been down to the City Hall signal room, I'm
8 happy to take you there on a tour. A few weeks ago, I
9 did, and the signal components were literally
10 installed in the 1950s if you can imagine that. It's
11 going to really be focused on both state of good
12 repair and for hopefully in the future to allow us to
13 expand services we are in some key locations as I
14 mentioned in my testimony.

15 One other important point, because this
16 will be across all five boroughs over the next 16
17 years, 17 years, which is our commitment to go to
18 zero-emission bus. I think the Public Advocate
19 mentioned earlier about air quality in some boroughs
20 and some neighborhoods in particular that have been
21 left behind, I couldn't agree more, and I think for
22 us to be able to find ways to deliver continued bus
23 service but that's not adding to negative air quality
24 is key, and so, as you know, we have a pretty
25 aggressive plan to go to zero-emission bus, largely

2 electric. We're also going to be testing hydrogen as
3 well, but that will be across the five boroughs over
4 the coming decade and half.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Will there be
6 like service enhancements? For example, I know some
7 of my Colleagues in my neck of the woods have shared,
8 for example, like the A-train. There are
9 significantly more A-trains that go to Lefferts
10 compared to Far Rockaway, a growing community in the
11 Rockaways. Will there be increase in A-train services
12 like towards the Rockaways. We are in the midst of
13 the bus redesign, and, at some point, I do want to
14 have a few questions on the status of the bus
15 redesigns, but with the bus redesign proposals that
16 we've seen, there are bus stops that are being taken
17 away, and so in communities that are dependent, like
18 when you look at Council Woman Lee's District, for
19 example, which has no train, no rail, just buses, or
20 you look in Canarsie and communities like Council
21 Member Narcisse's District that rely on buses, how is
22 this congestion pricing helping to get those New
23 Yorkers to where they need to go?

24 PRESIDENT DAVEY: In a number of ways. I
25 mean congestion pricing as a general matter will

2 reduce congestion in our streets which will help
3 speed up our buses. There's no question about that.
4 In the congestion pricing itself, again, as a way to
5 raise capital dollars will allow us to purchase those
6 electric buses I mentioned but also to retrofit the
7 20-I think-7 bus depots we have across the five
8 boroughs for charging stations as well so there's a
9 lot of infrastructure, sort of back-of-house if you
10 will, that's required to support that change so,
11 again, we're excited about that, but I was out front
12 earlier in saying that faster bus service, cleaner
13 air, and safer streets is what congestion pricing is
14 going to deliver.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: You mentioned
16 signal upgrades a few times. How long will that
17 project take and what lines would it be along?

18 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Eventually, the
19 expectation is over all lines, but right now we're
20 rolling it out across a few lines. The idea is to
21 replicate what we have particularly on the 7 line
22 now, right, so the 7 line has fully deployed CBTC,
23 communication based train control, and it is our best
24 performing line, it's our highest customer
25 satisfaction, and it allows us to run really tight

2 headway so at rush hour we're running two- to three-
3 minute service because we have a modern signal
4 system. The capital plan does call for, I'm not sure
5 the exact amount, but it's over a billion dollars in
6 CBTC, certainly on 6th Avenue, but the goal is to
7 continue to put out projects. The challenge we have
8 is balancing the need to provide service on those
9 lines while rolling out CBTC so you do see frequently
10 on the weekends and nights impacts to customers, some
11 service changes because that's typically when we get
12 all that work done so retire the legacy signal system
13 and bring in a new modern system that's, again, safe
14 and allows us to run more frequent service
15 potentially in the future.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The City's
17 Vision Zero is to bring traffic fatalities on the
18 City's streets to zero. Is the MTA working with the
19 Department of Transportation to incorporate complete
20 street treatments or the congestion pricing entry
21 points to ensure our streets are designed to enable
22 safe use and support mobility for all New Yorkers?

23 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: In general, the
24 answer is yes. I mean as Dr. de Cerreno pointed out,
25 not just on congestion pricing but anything relating

2 to our bus planning operations, the City's
3 implementation of Vision Zero, there is an all-time
4 partnership under this Mayor, our Administration, and
5 the Governor on coordination between MTA and DOT.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So in the
7 design and everything, that's already being taken
8 into account?

9 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Regular
10 conversations between our planners, their planners.
11 It's a very unique piece of MTA and DOT
12 interoperability where we operate a bus system on
13 their streets, and we do so in some instances under
14 contract with the City, but yes, absolutely.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Just going
16 back to the earlier question around the
17 infrastructure that's already being installed, how
18 many cameras will be installed as a part of the
19 tolling program and where will the cameras be placed?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: I
21 don't have the exact number of cameras offhand, and
22 I'll explain why in a moment, though we can get that
23 for you.

24 There are 120 what we call detection
25 points that will be around the Central Business

2 District or in some cases within. The vast majority
3 of them, again recognizing that it was important to
4 us to understand this is an urban environment and to
5 your earlier comment on safety, we didn't want
6 additional clutter. We don't want more out there than
7 we absolutely need so there will be 120 detection
8 points. A good number of them, I think it's roughly
9 35 of them, are on current infrastructure. Wherever
10 we can locate the toll system on current
11 infrastructure like walkways over the roadways or
12 sign structures that are already there, we're going
13 to do that. The remainder, as I mentioned, are poles
14 and mast arms, akin to what you already see out
15 there.

16 In terms of the number, each of those
17 poles or mast arms depending upon the size of the
18 roadway will have a different number of toll system
19 equipment components on it. Importantly, this is not
20 going to be like what some of you may be familiar
21 with if you've driven some of our bridges or tunnels
22 where you see the toll system and you see the cameras
23 and you see the E-ZPass readers and you see all the
24 different pieces. Again, to make this visually more
25 appealing and in essence almost make it fade away, we

2 have a single cluster housing for all of that so what
3 you're going to see, for example, on a one-lane road,
4 you're going to see just that single cluster
5 potentially, possibly two depending upon whether
6 there are bike lanes or bus lanes, right, and all of
7 it is housed inside that.

8 One last piece I want to point out, on
9 the FDR Drive and the Westside Highway, instead of
10 putting infrastructure at every single entry and
11 exit, which would've meant upwards of roughly 90 more
12 locations, 90 more poles or mast arms or other places
13 we needed this infrastructure, instead we're going to
14 be using an approach that uses an algorithm. It
15 allowed us to reduce the number of points where we
16 needed infrastructure and toll system equipment from
17 that roughly 100-something all the way down to
18 roughly somewhere around 15 combined. What that means
19 is that as vehicles come in on those excluded
20 roadways, they will be identified through the system,
21 either through their E-ZPass or the camera or a
22 combination, and they'll be an algorithm that
23 determines how is traffic flowing so, for example, if
24 it should be about 10 minutes to get to that next
25 point, the system will be looking for that vehicle

2 and, if in about 10 minutes it sees them, it'll be
3 like okay, they're still on that excluded roadway,
4 they don't get a charge. As long as they continue to
5 see them all the way around, that vehicle would not
6 be charged. If at some point they don't see them and
7 then they don't see them again, right, we want to
8 make sure that it's not just because something was
9 blocking something else, that will be built in and
10 ultimately then the charge would be made because we
11 would know that they had entered the District.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How much does
13 the MTA expect camera installations to cost?

14 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: It's
15 not specific to the cameras. Again, the camera is
16 part of the overall toll system..

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So how much is
18 that contract?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: And
20 so the overall contract, it's a
21 design/build/operate/maintain contract so it has both
22 the design/build portion and the operation and
23 maintenance portion, and it's somewhere just over 500
24 million, and it's roughly, not quite, but roughly
25 split between the two.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Is this a
3 recurring 500 million or does that go down because
4 once it's already designed and built..

5 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO:
6 That's all-inclusive so that includes that initial
7 piece which is about half of that roughly to do the
8 installation, the design, the development, the
9 testing, and the installation, and then the second
10 portion of that over the period of time is for the
11 ongoing operations and maintenance of the system.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How long is
13 that maintenance for?

14 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: I'd
15 have to take a look. If I recall, it's about six
16 years once this is installed, but we can get back to
17 you with the exact number on that. It's been a while
18 since I looked at that part.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So the 500
20 million you believe is for six years?

21 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: If
22 you put it all together, yes, though it doesn't quite
23 work that way, but we can delineate that for you if
24 necessary if you'd like.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. I'd like
3 to talk about congestion pricing exemptions. Has the
4 MTA developed any criteria for thinking about
5 requested exemptions to the congestion pricing
6 scheme?

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: The
8 legislation requires that the Traffic Mobility Review
9 Board develop a recommendation for the tolling
10 structure. It requires them to look at the potential
11 for credits, discounts, or exemptions. Our role as
12 part of the final EA and the EA process was to
13 explore the different types of things that could be
14 out there and create sort of an envelope of different
15 types of scenarios that would allow the TMRB to have
16 some flexibility as they look across what they want
17 to consider for a recommendation.

18 As to the actual exemptions, discounts,
19 or credits, there are two that are required in the
20 legislation. There's the one for vehicles
21 transporting persons with disabilities and the one
22 for emergency vehicles. Again, I should just specify,
23 they're qualifying and authorized. As a result of the
24 environmental review process, we have a discount plan
25 that we have committed to for low-income drivers, and

2 then beyond that what we have ensured is through our
3 comment period, we received comments requesting 122
4 different types of exemptions or discounts. They
5 ranged from vehicle types to locations. We had all of
6 people living in this area or all the people living
7 in that area, all this type of vehicle or all that
8 type of vehicle, also types of trips, right, and also
9 types of workers among others, right, so there were
10 exemptions requests for different types of employed
11 individuals.

12 We also had, importantly, 55 different
13 types of requests to not provide exemptions,
14 discounts, or credits so for those where we were,
15 just as an example, we were asked to discount or
16 provide exemptions for people residing in certain
17 locations. We also got requests to not exempt people
18 residing in those same types of locations. All of
19 that is detailed in our final EA, and we can
20 certainly provide you with the list themselves as
21 well.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How will the
23 MTA implement exemptions for vehicles carrying
24 individuals with disabilities? Will individuals need
25 to apply ahead of time for exemption?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO:

3 Again, just to specify, the legislation requires the
4 exemption for vehicles transporting persons with
5 disabilities. What we've detailed in the final
6 environmental assessment is in essence those vehicles
7 that would qualify would be vehicles that have
8 government-issued disability license plates. We would
9 also have organizations, private or public, that
10 transport persons with disabilities including AAR,
11 Access-A-Ride, and including the broker vehicles that
12 are used for Access-A-Ride when they are making those
13 types of trips.

14 In terms of how the organizations will
15 apply, we're still finalizing the operating
16 procedures and the credentialling that will be
17 required, but we envision somewhere at least 60 days
18 prior, if not a bit more, to start putting out the
19 word, have all the forms, have everything available
20 so that people can start to sign up.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Will that
22 include the FHV's that will be transporting
23 individuals that have disabilities as well?

24 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: When
25 they're working through the service for AAR, yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Has the MTA
3 considered exemptions for individuals using emergency
4 medical facilities in the CBD. There are a number of
5 hospitals with emergency rooms, specialized services,
6 pediatric emergency rooms, urgent centers. Is the MTA
7 concerned that congestion pricing will deter people
8 out of the CBD from using those medical facilities?
9 For example, NYU is in the CBD and provides a lot of
10 specialized care there as well, and so has the MTA
11 explored potential exemptions in those instances
12 because I know in London they have a medical
13 exemption that exists in their program.

14 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: A few
15 things again, the TMRB holds the responsibility at
16 this point for making the recommendations. We're not
17 weighing in one way or the other.

18 With respect to the medical facilities,
19 we are aware that there are a number of medical
20 facilities. I know that Sloan Kettering also has some
21 facilities as well as some of the other hospitals
22 down in the Central Business District. We did not
23 find an adverse finding for this group, but,
24 importantly, we are aware of the..

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm sorry. I
3 missed a part of that. You said you did not find an
4 adverse finding for which group?

5 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: In
6 terms of people who are trying to get medical
7 attention in the Central Business District.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How did you
9 come to that finding?

10 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: We
11 looked at, in essence, reviewed how people get to
12 these facilities. Yes, some people drive. A lot of
13 people still take transit. A lot of people take taxis
14 and FHV's. We have, for those who are accessing
15 medical care who are low-income, they will have that
16 low-income discount. There are also different
17 programs in terms of tax reductions, in terms of
18 Medicare or Medicaid payments, to help people to
19 access medical facilities.

20 Importantly, with respect to London,
21 London also has a very different system because they
22 have a national system for their healthcare so it's a
23 very different way of addressing those who need to
24 get healthcare in general so it's...

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No, it shows a
3 commitment to people who need access to healthcare.
4 We pay for our healthcare exorbitant amounts and then
5 now to add on how we get there is, to me, I think
6 it's telling of how we view that population.

7 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I just want to add
8 again that we didn't express a position either. The
9 Traffic Mobility Review Board has the statutory
10 obligation to consider these questions that you're
11 asking so I just want to state for the record we're
12 not going to answer questions beyond the statutorily
13 defined exemptions today and, shameless plug, the
14 TMRB will be meeting today at 3 o'clock.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I hope they're
16 listening today.

17 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Well, they've been
18 listening to a lot of comments. Dr. de Cerreno, do
19 you want to talk about the number of comments that we
20 received through the public outreach process real
21 quickly?

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Yes,
23 certainly. In our early outreach, the early outreach
24 was before we issued the document, we had 19 public
25 sessions. There were 10 generalized sessions and then

2 9 sessions focused specifically on environmental
3 justice communities. At those early outreach
4 sessions, we had roughly 400 speakers, and we
5 received over 7,300 comments. We left the meetings,
6 we did the meetings virtually, I'll come back to that
7 in a moment, and we left them online, they're still
8 online for people to take a look at, and as of
9 December of 2022 in addition to all of those who
10 streamed live as we were doing the meetings, they've
11 been over 18,000 views as of December.

12 For the outreach, to make sure that
13 people were aware of what was going on, we posted
14 notices in over 40 newspapers throughout 28 counties
15 of the region, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.
16 We had posters in eight languages and English so nine
17 languages in total that were posted in every single
18 subway station, every single Metro North and Long
19 Island Railroad station, and in all of our buses so
20 that everybody could see what was going on. We also
21 had postcards issued. We worked with the TLC to issue
22 postcards to the TLC drivers, and we also sent
23 postcards to every resident that was five blocks
24 north and five south as well as along 60th Street to
25 ensure that people were aware that this was going on.

2 Of course, we also had press coverage and we used our
3 press releases, and we created a Listserv as well.
4 Anybody could sign up and say they wanted to be part
5 of this via our website which was also live and had
6 that information.

7 As part of that early outreach session or
8 series, we developed and held meetings with an
9 environmental justice technical advisory group. These
10 are individuals throughout all three states who
11 specifically work on environmental justice issues.
12 They were invited to participate, and we held
13 meetings with the government agencies. They were all
14 invited, again throughout the 28 counties.

15 That was our early outreach. After we
16 issued the document for public review, we had our
17 formal comment period, which included six hearings.
18 Some of you I know were part of them, and, for those
19 who were not aware, some of those meetings went well,
20 well into the early morning hours. They were hours
21 and hours long. We had over 550 speakers, over 11,000
22 views subsequently in addition to those, again, who
23 were streaming at the actual time.

24 All told, we received roughly 70,000
25 submissions. That was 55,000 form submissions and

2 about 14,000 individual submissions. Those individual
3 submissions had multiple comments so it was over
4 22,000 comments, all of which each and every one of
5 which has been responded to and was part of the final
6 environmental assessment that was issued.

7 During that period and later in the early
8 outreach, we also had an environmental justice
9 stakeholder working group so, in addition to the
10 technical advisory group that we invited, we wanted
11 to give people an opportunity to self-identify and
12 become part of a smaller group for meaningful
13 engagement, and that group was brought together after
14 the initial announcements because we wanted people to
15 have time to find out about it and ask to be part or
16 nominate someone else to be part of it so we held
17 those meetings as well.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
19 that. Public and private buses help alleviate
20 congestion by reducing individual car usage. Has
21 there been any discussion of creating exemptions for
22 such buses, commuter vans, carpools?

23 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Again, I think I would
24 just say all the exemptions are up to the TMRB so...

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But, to date,
3 has any conversation happened around it?

4 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Not that I'm aware of,
5 Chair, no. Again, there will be conversations today
6 at 3 o'clock with TMRB so I encourage that
7 conversation to happen there.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Similarly, the
9 MTA assesses other tolls on commercial trucks on a
10 per axle basis. Has it been considered in terms of
11 doing the same on trucks that enter the CBD?

12 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Same answer. Again, the
13 exemptions are the statutory bailiwick of the TMRB.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, so it
15 hasn't been discussed to date yet?

16 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I want to clarify,
17 depending on how you're referring to being discussed,
18 I don't think there's an exemption that someone could
19 conceive that has not been presented for the TMRB..

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Has it been
21 considered?

22 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: That body is
23 meeting now. We are not speaking on their behalf.
24 They're meeting again at 3 o'clock today, and we
25

2 would invite the Council to tune into that
3 proceeding.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. Lower-
5 income driver discounts, since we know that that is
6 included, we'll go to that then. Before I pivot to
7 that, another thing. In terms of exemptions and
8 conversations that have been had yet, in terms of the
9 yellow taxi cab, and this I would love to have had
10 the TLC here for this piece as well, I'm interested
11 in understanding how we are looking at, for example,
12 the yellow taxis in particular because the City, as
13 you know, has put a lot of money into trying to bail
14 out an industry that has been negatively impacted
15 through COVID, through a number of other different
16 factors, and they already pay a congestion tax. Does
17 this plan being implemented, does it look to add an
18 additional tax onto the yellow cabs? Is there any
19 type of relief that is being considered for the
20 yellow taxi cabs as well?

21 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: The
22 final EA found that there would be no adverse effect
23 on the taxis or FHV's if they were not tolled more
24 than once per day so there is a commitment in the
25

2 final EA to not toll these vehicles more than once
3 per day.

4 With that said, the TMRB by legislation
5 is required to develop a plan for taxis and FHV's, and
6 so, again, anything different than what's in that
7 final commitment will be discussed by the TMRB.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So the TMRB,
9 they still have the ability, if they so choose, to
10 create an exemption for the taxis as well?

11 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: It is
12 something they're allowed to consider.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay.

14 UNIDENTIFIED FROM GALLERY: (INAUDIBLE)

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Excuse me.
16 We've been doing real good. Let's keep order. We'd
17 like to keep everybody in the room.

18 Going to the low-income driver discount.
19 The MTA has committed to providing lower-income
20 drivers a discount for the congestion pricing toll.
21 How will drivers qualify for this discount?

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO:
23 Similar as with some of the other exemptions, the
24 ones that are required by statute, we are finalizing
25 the procedures and the processes at this point, but

2 we envision that there will be a credentialling
3 process where people will need to be able to
4 demonstrate that they do fall into the group that
5 would be considered the low-income discount. They'll
6 have to provide the credentials regarding the
7 vehicle, the registration, much like we do today, and
8 they will ultimately have a plan associated with
9 their E-ZPass account. They will have to use E-ZPass
10 for it. That's pretty typical of what we do for any
11 type of plan discounts, and, again, we'll ensure
12 that...

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So if someone
14 doesn't have an E-ZPass, they wouldn't qualify for
15 it?

16 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: In
17 order to have the plans, you would have to have E-
18 ZPass, but we are also reducing, one of the things
19 that we're aware of is that one of the barriers for
20 some customers to getting that E-ZPass is the E-ZPass
21 tag fee, that's a deposit that is reimbursed later,
22 but that can be a problem for certain people so we
23 are actually going to be doing away with that as part
24 of our commitments, and we will, in essence, help
25 people to get the E-ZPass. For those who cannot or

2 feel they're uncomfortable with prepaying, which is
3 what many people do by putting the credit card, TBTA
4 has many years now where we have offered a sort of
5 pay-as-you-go plan, and so they would be eligible for
6 that as well so they would not necessarily have to
7 lay the money, there would be no tag fee, our
8 customer service representatives will help them get
9 signed up, and then they'll have the E-ZPass with
10 that plan..

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm going to
12 try not to go down the E-ZPass path because there's a
13 lot of concerns in terms of the billing in Rockaway
14 in particular. I'm sure (INAUDIBLE) has shared
15 concerns through the years in terms of the
16 reimbursement program that happens and the hardship
17 it places on people.

18 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: If I can interject
19 for a second. We have a lengthy history with your
20 office and the Assembly Woman's office. Those that
21 have an E-ZPass account in good standing do not have
22 problems with the Rockaway Resident Rebate or the
23 Staten Island Resident Rebate. That's one of the
24 beauties of E-ZPass and on our TollsNY app, which
25 everybody should be using.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm not going
3 to go down that path. I'm going to stick to
4 congestion today, but I will welcome the MTA back to
5 have a whole hearing on that piece.

6 Will drivers be able to apply before
7 congestion pricing toll goes into effect for this
8 low-income driver discount?

9 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO:
10 Absolutely. Again, our plan is at the very least that
11 60-day outreach period that's required to have in
12 advance of the go-live period, and, once we have the
13 procedures and the processes and the documentation
14 developed, we'll determine what the appropriate time
15 is to get the word out, have the outreach, make sure
16 people know how to sign up and walk them through it.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Do you think
18 that you will be able to process this within 60 days,
19 these applications?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Yes,
21 or whatever, like I said, we will determine how much
22 time is needed. At the minimum, it will be the 60
23 days.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How is the MTA
3 going to make sure that individuals are aware of this
4 discounted program?

5 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: That
6 will be part of our outreach, which obviously has
7 already started, right, by making sure that people
8 are aware and they can access the document, but we
9 will have a formal outreach campaign to ensure that
10 people are aware.

11 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Again, that's
12 required by the State law that enabled the program.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What does the
14 outreach look like? I don't live in the CBD, but I
15 haven't necessarily received anything in the mail
16 about it, I haven't really seen any like advertising
17 around it, so what does the outreach look like?

18 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: As we're moving
19 towards that part of the process, there's a reason
20 you haven't seen it because we're not there yet, but
21 as we did with each phase, when we got to
22 infrastructure installation we began engaging with
23 the Community Boards, the Building Improvement
24 Districts, the local elected officials, we'll get
25 down to the customer level using our E-ZPass database

2 where we have a good way to communicate with our
3 customers through tolls by mail. We'll exhaust every
4 option that we have to make sure that we require the
5 Statute and go beyond. It's in our best interest that
6 we do.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'd like to
8 recommend looking at ethnic media, for example. I
9 don't think government leverages them enough, the
10 hyper-local outlets, having a street team, going to
11 doors.

12 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I think Dr. de
13 Cerreno covered it. This outreach for this program
14 has gone above and beyond anything that the MTA has
15 ever conceived previously. The outreach here was not
16 our 12 counties that we serve. It was the 28 counties
17 that were looked at through the environmental
18 assessment. We had fliers in bus stops and throughway
19 stops in New Jersey. We'll continue down this path of
20 above and beyond outreach. We absolutely agree. To
21 get into communities that really need that attention,
22 there were groups convened, environmental justice
23 groups were consulted. We're going to continue down
24 that path.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Council Member
3 Brewer is here so I'm interested to know if her
4 District has received notification yet because I
5 think she's in the CBD as well in terms of the
6 outreach that has happened to date.

7 I want to move over to the future capital
8 plan. The current MTA capital plan 2020-2024 will
9 expire next year. Has the MTA begun formulating the
10 next capital plan?

11 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Yeah, that's a
12 very timely question. Following State law, October 1
13 of this year we're required to produce what's known
14 as our 20-year needs assessment. This is a more
15 future-looking document that serves as the preceding
16 document to our next capital program so this October
17 we'll release that 20-year needs assessment and then
18 by October of 2024 we're required to submit our next
19 2025-2029 MTA capital program to the Capital Program
20 Review Board, the CPRB, which the City has
21 representation on.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The current
23 Capital Plan anticipated 15 billion dollars in
24 revenue from congestion pricing. As the MTA prepares
25 for a new five-year capital plan, is it fair to

2 assume that the MTA will anticipate collecting 15
3 billion dollars from congestion pricing every five
4 years?

5 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: No. As the statute
6 dictates, it's a billion dollars in revenue annually
7 that we'll bond against for 15 billion. That is for
8 the 2024 program. If there are proceeds beyond that,
9 it can be spent on successor program, but that's a
10 different conversation that you're describing.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. Fare
12 increase. MTA's calendared 2024 preliminary plan
13 assumes a 4 percent fare and a 5.5 percent toll
14 increase. How will the MTA reassure New Yorkers
15 paying more in fares, tolls, and soon congestion
16 tolls that this additional revenue will be spent
17 effectively on infrastructure and service
18 improvements?

19 PRESIDENT DAVEY: On the fare increase,
20 taking a step back, I sort of saw a four-legged stool
21 to help balance our budget. Obviously, the State and
22 the City contributed to that, and there were two
23 other things as part of the State budget to show our
24 balanced budget over the next five years. One was, as
25 Jay Patel mentioned, our work to save 400 million

2 dollars, New York City Transit bears 300 million of
3 those dollars, in efficiencies and operating savings
4 without impacting service or our customers, and then
5 the other was to begin reinstating the modest fare
6 increase that occurs every couple of years so we
7 haven't had a fare increase at New York City Transit
8 at the base level in eight years, right, so the fare
9 has been 2.75 since 2015 so we're increasing the base
10 fare by 15 cents next week, but that was, again,
11 contemplated as the overall budget deal to balance
12 our budget.

13 In terms of assurances, I often say we're
14 looking for every nickel in our cushions all the time
15 and looking at ways, again, where we're not impacting
16 service so everything from predictive maintenance is
17 something that we're very focused on at New York City
18 Transit, before something breaks down, actually using
19 technology to not only predict that it will break
20 down but then using artificial intelligence on that
21 particular piece of equipment, a bus for example, to
22 predict where and how it will break down. We're the
23 largest consumer of electricity, or one of the
24 largest consumers of electricity in the state, we're
25 looking at ways to improve our facilities in that

2 regard so I can certainly assure the public that we
3 are working hard to be a more efficient organization,
4 and it's a constant improvement loop. I don't think
5 you can ever rest with an organization as large as
6 ours to find ways to improve how you're doing.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I forgot to
8 ask a question earlier on behalf of Deputy Speaker
9 Ayala who has some concerns about the impact the
10 congestion tolling plan will have on East Harlem and
11 the South Bronx. The asthma rates there are super
12 high and cannot absorb more cars. She sent a letter
13 asking what the plan to address this is and has not
14 heard back. Is there any update on that?

15 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Before I let Rich
16 answer the concern at large, I don't recall that
17 we've received that letter so I'd that Council Staff
18 follow up with that. That would be to my office,
19 please.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: okay.

21 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

23 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Just specific to that, a
24 couple of things. Obviously, 2nd Avenue subway is a
25 big part of our expansion, and I've talked a lot

2 about state of good repair and improving the system
3 that we have today, but 2nd Avenue subway will
4 certainly be a huge benefit to those communities
5 going up to 125th Street. As I mentioned too on the
6 air quality piece, we are moving quickly, or at least
7 moving, to make sure that our bus fleet will be zero
8 emission over the next 10, 15 years, and, again,
9 those communities bear, you have a number of bus
10 depots, right, with diesel engine fleets. We'll be
11 going to zero emissions as well so I think those are
12 two very tangible benefits in terms of the capital
13 investments that we're making.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: You mentioned
15 during the testimony a 35-million-dollar investment
16 in the Fiscal Year 2024 State budget in subway
17 service improvements. Could you go a little bit more
18 granular in terms of where these improvements have
19 taken place and where we can expect these
20 improvements to take place in the future?

21 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure. In the first being
22 in July, we added service on the G, J, and M lines so
23 speeding up service every eight to nine minutes as
24 opposed to what it was every 10 to 11 minutes so
25 we're shrinking the weekend headways there. This

2 August, so this month, we're adding additional
3 service on the C, N, and R lines, and, again, doing
4 both midday service enhancements that shrink wait
5 times from approximately every eight minutes from 10
6 minutes, and we've also added midday service on the 1
7 and the 6. We've got some more to come. I won't make
8 news today, but I will tell you that we are looking
9 at how we think about adding service. It's a few
10 different things. Certainly crews, right, so it takes
11 us about nine months to train a train operator, about
12 two months for a conductor so we're adding crews to
13 accommodate some of these service cars and, as
14 previously mentioned, making sure that our car
15 equipment team has enough fleet availability to get
16 cars out into the system and then balancing that with
17 the work we have to do so we targeted lines, in
18 particular the G, J, and M don't have, obviously we
19 have some work going on at the M at the end of the
20 month, but not major and long-term work so we want to
21 be able to run the service that we're advertising.

22 Of course, as you mentioned, more to come
23 on the bus side. While there was not a specific
24 commitment in the budget, we have typically added
25 service to our bus service once we put out our bus

2 redesigns as well so I wanted to be clear that we're
3 also thinking about our bus customers as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I didn't hear
5 the E or A lines so we hope we have some added
6 service coming to those, especially the Far Rockaway
7 A.

8 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Can I just address
9 that, having been part of the budget conversations up
10 in the State. What Rich listed off, and again there's
11 a little bit more to come, the State Legislature's
12 focus, and this was a result, I want to give credit
13 to the Governor and the Legislative Leaders, our
14 partners in advocacy, the Riders Alliance, PCAC, a
15 whole slew of folks that really made sure that it
16 wasn't just saving transit but investing. We wanted
17 realistic service increases that could be
18 implemented. As Rich mentioned, there's ongoing work.
19 Chair, you talked about the ongoing signaling
20 modernization projects. We wanted to make sure that
21 the service upgrades we were promising in the budget
22 that were going to be funded from it were deliverable
23 within a certain timeframe so I've had colleagues
24 that have overlapping territory with you on the State
25 level that asked some of those same questions. There

2 was rationale as to why, but it doesn't mean that you
3 might not see something in the future.

4 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Just to the A point
5 though, I want you to know we are giving love to the
6 A line in two ways. We have new cars coming, as you
7 know, so the newest fleet, our R-211s, are being
8 introduced on the A. We just introduced the fourth
9 train set this week and more to come. Those will be
10 three times more reliable than the fleet we have on
11 the A line now, which will be good news.

12 And then I'm happy to brief you offline.
13 We have targeted the A, B, C, and D lines which have
14 been historically our underperforming lines for a
15 number of reasons...

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And F too.

17 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yes, we decided to do
18 four, and then once we improve those we'll keep
19 moving. This is a continuous improvement process for
20 us, but those four in particular and we've seen
21 fruits with a number of both personnel and management
22 changes there but also some track improvements as
23 well so we have seen an improvement in service, but,
24 again, on those lines I will admit we have a long way
25 to go.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What's the
3 criteria that's being used to determine which lines
4 would receive service improvements?

5 PRESIDENT DAVEY: The criteria, again, is
6 do we have the capacity within the line itself. For
7 example, on the 7 line, we probably couldn't add any
8 more rush hour service because we're running two- to
9 three-minute headways as an example. The G, J, and M,
10 we did see nice ridership gains on the weekends which
11 is why we chose those. They don't interline as well,
12 right, so, as you know, the A and the C run on the
13 same line so if you are adding service on the A, it
14 would impact the C, for example. Lastly, as I
15 mentioned, for lines that weren't having major
16 construction work occurring, those are the places
17 that we focused because we could run the service that
18 we're advertising.

19 More to come. Obviously, we're going to
20 continue to watch ridership, we're going to continue
21 to train crews and see if there's service add
22 opportunities, but I would say in an era where every
23 other major system in America is cutting service,
24 fiscal cliff, not hiring folks, we're adding service,
25 which, again, is a testament to your advocacy and the

2 Legislature and the Governor's leadership to give us
3 more resources to do that.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
5 that. Can you provide additional details on the
6 timeline for improving the rolling stock, and is it a
7 goal to eventually put more R-211s across more lines?

8 PRESIDENT DAVEY: That would be the goal.
9 We have an order of cars coming in now as mentioned.
10 I'll get you a timeline of when those exactly will be
11 implemented. I think that contract ends somewhere in
12 early 2025, but we'll get the exact number.
13 Obviously, COVID and some other supply chain
14 challenges had those cars delayed, but we were very
15 successful with the testing we had with Kawasaki. The
16 product has been very good, and we've gotten very
17 good customer feedback so the intent now is to be
18 able to introduce new train sets, approximately one
19 every four to six weeks now, and, as I said, without
20 any fanfare or announcement we added our fourth train
21 this week.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: While we're on
23 service improvements, accessibility, we had a
24 resolution that was added last minute about the
25 QueensLink, and so I just wanted to ask one or two

2 questions about the QueensLink as well. When we look
3 in terms of investments and when you talk about
4 congestion pricing and wanting to invest in transit
5 infrastructure and options, what is the MTA's
6 position on QueensLink and doing a full study,
7 because I know there was like a mini-study done in
8 the past, because I know that's what you're going to
9 hit me with, Will, but I want to know in terms of a
10 comprehensive study what is the MTA's position on
11 that?

12 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: You just
13 acknowledged we've had these conversations
14 previously. A full-blown EIS at this point would not
15 be warranted so, as you alluded to and I talked about
16 it earlier, we are engaged right now in our 20-year
17 needs assessment process. As part of that, and to be
18 very clear, when we advance any capital program, 80
19 to 90 percent of it has to be focused on state of
20 good repair and normal replacement. State of good
21 repair is the meat and potatoes work that keeps
22 Rich's subway system running, keeps the buses
23 rolling, we have to overhaul that rolling stock on a
24 specific cycle as you just alluded to, so so much of
25 our capital program is focused to that to keep the

2 core function running, and it's, again, yielding
3 phenomenal results as the system is functioning at an
4 all-time high, but we know there's interest in more
5 and expanding the system and finding new ways to do
6 it, both leveraging existing assets that we have and
7 finding new places so you talk about old right of
8 ways like the Rockaway Beach branch or the
9 Interborough Express priority that the Governor has
10 identified using a right of way that's owned
11 predominantly by the Long Island Railroad, and so
12 we're looking globally at all of these. Part of the
13 consolidated planning function that MTA following our
14 State-mandated transformation has brought these long-
15 term regional planning functions under one group,
16 under Dr. Mike Shiffer at MTA Regional Planning and
17 Construction and Development. The QueensLink as you
18 refer to it or the Rockaway Beach branch reactivation
19 as we call it, two different versions of it, a New
20 York City Transit version or a Long Island Railroad
21 reactivation, were the subject of a feasibility
22 study, we released that back in about 2020, and is
23 part of this comparative evaluation that we're moving
24 forward with now. The results of the available
25 capital dollars will determine next steps, but we

2 have broken a pattern, or we're trying to break a
3 pattern of first studying CIG when we advance an EIS,
4 as we just announced that we're stepping into the
5 environmental process for the Interborough for
6 instance, that's because it didn't have the same
7 level of previous study that the Rockaway Beach
8 branch has had so we want to make sure that we're
9 advancing projects to get them as shovel-ready as
10 possible if they're going to move forward, again with
11 the limited capacity and expansion capital dollars
12 that we have in any plan.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'll just say
14 for the record I know that there's been a lot of
15 conversation about reactivating this line. I know
16 there's conversation about open space also on the
17 other end of it, which I support both if it's
18 feasible. I'm interested more in the feasibility
19 first, which is the first step of it as I've always
20 said publicly, but I challenge the MTA to think
21 innovatively and how we have greater transit equity
22 and also still be able to have the open space. I
23 think that there's a world where that could exist if
24 there is the political will for it, and so I just

2 challenge the MTA to be able to explore what those
3 two worlds coming together could look like.

4 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: We always
5 appreciate your challenges, Chair, first and
6 foremost, and it's a good point. The asset that
7 you're describing is owned by the City of New York.
8 It's another example of the renewed and strengthened
9 partnership between the Administration and the MTA
10 and the Governor's Office. The Council and the
11 Administration put capital dollars towards that
12 linear part that you're referring to in last year's
13 City budget. Before doing so, the MTA was consulted
14 about that to make sure that here wouldn't be any
15 fatal flaws to their design and if we chose to use it
16 for a transit purpose in the future. There will be
17 ongoing conversations as that park space gets further
18 developed. There are examples nationally and
19 internationally where you do have that kind of
20 interoperability of public space and an active right
21 of way, you have to make sure it's a safe space, but
22 we're at a point in our planning process where,
23 again, what your resolution is calling for
24 respectively would be a little bit premature, but we
25 are aware of your interests and the other elected

2 officials and members of the community that have
3 reached out to us in the past on this one.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So I hope that
5 the MTA is taking it seriously and, as you look
6 towards your next plan that you'll be working
7 towards, that it is in the thought process and on the
8 front of the conversation as well.

9 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: It is publicly
10 part of about two dozen capacity and expansion
11 projects that are part of our comparative evaluation.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
13 Next, I'm going to go to elevators and accessibility.
14 As you know, I'm a big ally of the disability
15 community and wanting to make sure that we,
16 everything okay, okay, in terms of the investments
17 there. The capital plan includes 5.2 billion dollars
18 for new elevators and ramps at up to 66 stations
19 which averages 78.8 million dollars per station. How
20 many remaining MTA subway stations are in need of
21 elevators?

22 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Bluntly, a lot. This is
23 a 120-year-old system, and these stations were not
24 designed sadly to be inclusive for customers who are
25 disabled or frankly for those customers who might

2 have large bags, strollers, etc., so our commitment,
3 and a commitment that I'm particularly proud that
4 we've made to make 95 percent of our subway system
5 accessible by 2055. We have a long way to go, but
6 we've completed three stations so far this year with
7 another nine left to be opened in 2023. As you
8 mentioned, Chair, one of the big pieces of the 2020-
9 2024 capital plan is making our subway system
10 accessible so we have a lot of work ahead of us for
11 sure, but it's a commitment that Chair Lieber
12 personally and the MTA have made, one that as I've
13 mentioned to you before in other hearings, while
14 Transit is not technically responsible for the
15 construction, that is my colleague Jamie Torres-
16 Springer and his team, we will be responsible for
17 oversight and maintenance which we also take very
18 seriously. We want to have an as inclusive system as
19 we possibly can in the subway network for sure, but,
20 again, as you mentioned, I know for some congestion
21 pricing and other ways to raise revenue are not
22 always popular, but this is exactly what it's
23 funding, an accessible subway system.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

25 What is the current average cost for the MTA to

2 install an elevator in a subway station? I understand
3 that the costs are often high and just wanting to
4 understand what contributes to that and how we
5 compare it to other transit systems.

6 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah. We can get you
7 some details. Having run a different transit system
8 10 years ago now in a similar city which was an older
9 city that had a built-in infrastructure, these
10 structures are not inexpensive to say the least and,
11 in particular, these are typically not just one
12 elevator, it's usually multiple elevators so for a
13 subway station underground, for example, you might
14 have to go to a mezzanine and then a second elevator
15 from a mezzanine down to the platform. There are
16 other stations where when we can we want redundancy,
17 right, so it might not be one elevator, it actually
18 might be four elevators, so happy to get you the
19 detail, but I do know that the construction and
20 development team have worked very hard at looking at
21 ways to reduce costs, which is why they've been doing
22 design/build packages, for example, and again getting
23 the work done but in as most efficient manner as
24 possible.

2 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I just want to
3 point out the Council played an important role in
4 helping us bring the cost of elevator construction
5 down. One of the more costly pieces of it is often
6 utility relocation when we're building on the subway
7 in particular so when we worked together on the
8 zoning for accessibility initiative that requires
9 developers who are going to do development within a
10 certain proximity to a subway or railroad station, at
11 this point they have to come and talk to the MTA and
12 say hey, do you need an easement, and if we're able
13 to tuck an elevator into their building proper, that
14 oftentimes saves us millions of dollars in utility
15 relocation so, again, a deep gratitude to the Council
16 for your leadership on that one and the assistance
17 and then, as President Davey mentioned, there's more
18 going into this. If you look at our capital program
19 and how we're issuing the RFPs for these elevator
20 projects and ADA projects, we're not doing them one
21 at a time anymore. The team at C and D under Jamie
22 Torres-Springer and Tim Mulligan are working on
23 bundling these projects, trying to realize
24 efficiencies, holding contractors accountable. We're
25 seeing great results through that design/build

2 process, and we'll follow up with more specifics
3 after the fact.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

5 Next, I'd like to recognize that we've been joined by
6 a couple other Members including Council Members
7 Marte and Paladino and Narcise and Council Member
8 Rivera is online.

9 Net, we'll go to questions from my
10 Colleagues, which we will start with Council Member
11 Ari Kagan.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: Thank you, Madam
13 Chair. Thank you for this opportunity.

14 I would like to state for the record that
15 an overwhelming majority of my constituents in
16 Southern Brooklyn strongly oppose this new congestion
17 pricing plan as a new burden on Southern Brooklyn
18 residents and businesses.

19 I also would like to say that this new
20 revenue streaming from higher taxes, fares, and
21 tolls, additional State and City subsidies, why do we
22 even need to squeeze New Yorkers even more?

23 Also, I would like to say you mentioned a
24 lot of improvements. I would say, again I represent
25 Southern Brooklyn, and even small things like last

2 year I talked about closed bathrooms at the subway
3 stations, Coney Island still don't have any, it's
4 still closed today. Yesterday, it was closed so it's
5 closed. It's not...

6 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: It
7 may have been closed for cleaning, but that station,
8 that's actually open.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: Huh?

10 PRESIDENT DAVEY: It may have been closed
11 for cleaning, Council Member, but I'm pretty sure
12 that that bathroom...

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: I will post again
14 picture tomorrow it's closed. People complain to me.
15 It's one of the busiest stations in New York City,
16 and, of course, it's a small thing but for people
17 it's a very big thing.

18 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, for sure.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: But like on a major
20 scale for Southern Brooklyn, we still don't have F
21 train express from Coney Island to Manhattan, bus x29
22 express doesn't exist again, and this so-called MTA
23 bus redesign plan basically it's more proposed cuts
24 of service for bus lines, and, of course, no elevator
25 or no escalator (INAUDIBLE) F train station, and you

2 mentioned 2055 in your speech so like I hope I will
3 survive until the day when I will see more accessible
4 subway stations in my area so that's why I don't
5 understand, we're giving more and more money to MTA
6 and less and less service. That's what I don't
7 understand.

8 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I just want to
9 state for the record the subway at Neptune Avenue is
10 in this current capital program. It's yet to be
11 awarded, but it is in this capital program.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: What year?

13 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: We'll get back to
14 you on that, but it's in this plan. It is committed
15 in this capital program.

16 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Stillwell Avenue
17 bathroom opened on April 17th, but I'll find out why
18 it was closed yesterday.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
20 Next, we'll hear from Council Member Carr.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you, Madam
22 Chair. President Davey, it was good to you and your
23 team. Earlier in your testimony at the start of the
24 hearing, Miss Patel talked about all the additional
25 revenues that are coming the MTA's way, the improved

2 state of fiscal health, and your own increased
3 efforts in terms of fare evasion which I know has
4 been a huge revenue-creating issue for the agency,
5 and I'm just wondering more than I usually do about
6 why we're even doing this congestion pricing plan
7 given that it's meant to get us out of the hole that
8 the MTA was in and yet now things seem to be
9 improving, even though we're not yet collecting those
10 charges, but really what I want to get into is a lot
11 of folks are already paying significant toll burdens,
12 even before congestion pricing comes into effect. My
13 constituents, if they take the Verrazano to the Hugh
14 Carey into the city and then back again have a daily
15 toll burden of about \$19.38 a day. That's inclusive
16 of the Staten Island Resident discount. For those
17 that take the Port Authority crossings and go through
18 New Jersey, it's about \$22.13 a day, again even with
19 resident discounts for the Port Authority crossing. I
20 recognize that revenue doesn't come to you. That's a
21 lot per day, and you're talking about adding 24
22 dollars on top of that, right, that's of concern to
23 me when it's not yet clear to me whether or not
24 there's going to be any accounting for deductions for
25 tolls already paid by other New Yorkers so I guess I

2 can understand you're talking a lot about the
3 committee that's meeting later today and that that's
4 going to be a responsibility that they have to kind
5 of suss out, but it's deeply concerning to me that
6 folks who already have a significant toll burden will
7 have to pay more, and we're talking a lot about oh,
8 what folks are going to get in terms of investments
9 in the existing system, maybe expansions of the
10 system even if we're talking about buses which
11 primarily serve the communities I represent. Most
12 folks don't see that as a sufficient trade-off. They
13 just don't want to pay more, and so I'd love for you
14 to kind of talk a little bit about that and what your
15 answer might be.

16 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Sure. I certainly
17 understand your points. A couple of things.
18 Certainly, as I said, let me take a step back.
19 Congestion pricing is going to help our capital plan,
20 right? The fare increase was a focus on our
21 operations as was the State's and the City's
22 contributions and our effort to eliminate 400 million
23 dollars or find efficiencies in our own budget that
24 don't impact service, right, so congestion pricing is
25 for the capital issues. We often here from, and

2 rightfully so, Members of this Council about the
3 investments we need to make in our capital program to
4 run better service, more service, so that's what it's
5 going to.

6 All I can say for Staten Island is that
7 we continue to look for ways to invest in public
8 transportation as well so we're trying to look at all
9 five boroughs for opportunities to make investments,
10 and we are there as well.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: I'll just close very
12 quickly. It's not transit investments they're
13 concerned about. It's they're going to be paying more
14 out of their pocket and they're already paying more,
15 which can't be said for everybody who drives into the
16 system, and, frankly, I don't want those folks to pay
17 more either, but that's going to have to be an
18 accommodation that's made moving forward with this is
19 that there has to be an acknowledgement that people
20 around this city are already paying tolls to enter
21 Manhattan, their own city, and it's unfair to ask
22 them to do more. Thank you, Chair.

23 UNIDENTIFIED FROM GALLERY: (INAUDIBLE)

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
25 Please. Next, we'll hear from Council Member Holden.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you, Chair.

3 To me, congestion pricing and to most of my
4 constituents is a giant tax scam. It is nothing more
5 than that, and here's why. You did an environmental
6 assessment study, not an environmental impact study.
7 An environmental impact study is very complete. An
8 assessment study is a rubber stamp, only when you
9 want to just go through the motions. How did you all
10 get here today? Did you take the subway? I don't
11 think so. Listen. Every time this happens, this is
12 going to have the middle class, the result of this
13 congestion pricing, the middle class will move out of
14 this city. We're not back from the pandemic.
15 Manhattan is not back. Most people who I know go to
16 work, they don't work five days a week anymore. My
17 wife, who's Asian American, will not take the subway
18 because of all the incidents, especially targeting
19 Asian Americans. She has to take the Express Bus,
20 and, guess what, you pay for the privilege, almost 7
21 dollars now, it's going to be 7 dollars, and it stops
22 running at her stop at 7 p.m. in Manhattan so if she
23 has to work late, which she does, she has to now
24 arrange other transportation, not the subway. Subway
25 is not safe. By the way, she could get a senior

2 discount, but they don't offer that on the Express
3 Bus. Isn't this wonderful. So we're in a rail desert,
4 transportation desert, we pay for limited service on
5 the buses. To get to Manhattan, she would have to
6 take two trains and a bus, all right, so she has to
7 take the Express Bus because she wants to feel safe.
8 She's a woman who sometimes the Asian Americans are
9 targeted. We know that in the subways. You know it.
10 By doing this right now, not coming out of the
11 pandemic, we're not even back yet, you're just going
12 to kill New York City, and this is what's going to
13 happen. This is exactly what's going to happen. You
14 also closed stations. You closed Elmhurst on the Long
15 Island Railroad, you closed Glendale that services my
16 District on the Long Island Railroad so if you came
17 up with a plan for the congestion pricing, at least
18 throw us a bone, at least give us better service.
19 You're not doing that. The QueensLink, the Queens
20 Rail, you haven't really, it's somewhere. Build that
21 first. If you want to do all that, you want to
22 improve the public transportation for the other
23 boroughs other than Manhattan, then do that first
24 before you put this ridiculous tax that's going to
25 kill New York City, definitely kill New York City.

2 Let me just get back to the question about the
3 assessment study versus the impact study. You know
4 that the impact study is more complete, right? It'll
5 get very, very accurate figures. Why not do that?

6 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: As to
7 the reason we did an environmental assessment, it was
8 Federal Highway Administration that determined that
9 that was the appropriate form of environmental
10 review. Our environmental assessment was more
11 detailed, larger, and more expansive than many, many,
12 many other, not just environmental assessments, but
13 it was akin to an EIS in terms of the depth and the
14 breadth of the document, and it was the document on
15 which Federal Highway did in fact find no significant
16 impact.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: If you cared about
19 the environment, because there's other neighborhoods
20 that are going to be impacted by this with the
21 pollution that's going to be created, because the
22 people don't travel by car into Manhattan because
23 they like to do that, it's because they have to do
24 that, and there's a number of reasons. I had to drive
25 my both aging parents to hospitals in Manhattan. If I

2 had to pay congestion pricing, that would drive me
3 away from Manhattan. That would drive me away from
4 hospitals in Manhattan. That would drive me out of
5 New York City, and that's what you're doing. This is
6 what's happening.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: All right,
8 thank you...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: This is going to
10 happen.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
12 Next, we're going to hear from Council Member Brewer.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
14 much. I have always voted for congestion pricing, but
15 there are so many challenges. I do want to pick up on
16 the fact that people don't trust the MTA as hard as
17 you're working, and so what's the lockbox, I have a
18 whole bunch of questions and then you can figure out
19 how you want to answer them, what is the lockbox
20 discussion for 1 billion, 2 billion, 3 billion so
21 people understand in a transparent fashion where that
22 money is going. That's number one.

23 Number two, originally we heard there
24 were not going to be hearings and then the Governor's
25 Office said there would be hearings so I want to

2 know, because we all testified last year, I
3 testified, but people, they didn't focus, now they're
4 focused, so I want to know when the hearings are
5 going to be scheduled and how many there will be.

6 I also want to say something as a
7 Manhattanite without a car, I take the subway, I take
8 taxis. Two things, you need rental cars that are
9 affordable and they shouldn't charge for an E-ZPass.
10 They charge 26 dollars sometimes just to have an E-
11 ZPass so you have to figure out if you're telling
12 people don't bring your car then you have to figure
13 out where to rent the cars, make it easier for rental
14 cars, it would be nice if they were less expensive,
15 and they should have an E-ZPass that doesn't cost the
16 renter. To me, that would make sense. Nobody's paying
17 any attention to that.

18 I also want to just talk about the
19 installation because I have, thank you, gotten
20 information about the installations and the
21 technology and I appreciate that. I think people are
22 so freaked out because they don't know what it means
23 so you have to describe if there are no health
24 effects, if there are health effects. It comes up so
25

2 I just need to know that that's something you feel is
3 or is not correct.

4 Sam Schwartz today in the Daily News had
5 an article, I don't know if it was him or the
6 editorial board, but basically he said taxis should
7 not be charged, yellow cabs. I am 100 percent
8 supportive of, you're telling people don't take their
9 own car, sometimes we have to take a cab, it's
10 already expensive, I know exactly how much it costs,
11 taxis should not even once be charged. Those are the
12 beginnings of my questions. I have more, if you could
13 answer those.

14 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Always happy to
15 take further questions offline. The capital lockbox,
16 again, is defined in State law.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: You have to go
18 further than State law.

19 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I'm not sure how
20 we go further than State law, but, pursuant to the
21 State law that created the congestion pricing law,
22 this is the MTA implementing a law of the State of
23 New York. We did not unilaterally create this. The
24 congestion pricing revenues, the internet sales tax
25 revenues, and a mansion tax, real estate transaction

2 taxes, these were created back in 2019 as part of
3 this whole package go into a capital lockbox that
4 cannot be spent on random things. It goes into our
5 2024 capital program. All told, they create about 25
6 billion dollars' worth of our 51.5-billion-dollar
7 CPRB-approved capital plan. I note CPRB-approved
8 because there is a larger number you might here which
9 includes our bridges and tunnels capital work which
10 is self-sustaining.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I understand that,
12 but just to give you an example. To the credit of
13 NYPD, every single day I get, I don't know, if
14 somebody stubs their toe and the cops are involved, I
15 get an email so it would be good for the MTA to tell
16 more people what's in the lockbox, not just to have
17 some place in obscure locations where people could
18 get that information.

19 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Council Member, I
20 think one of the things that I take pride in working
21 for this agency, as far as government agencies go we
22 produce some of the most transparent information in
23 government, especially in Open Data format which has
24 been a big initiative moving forward. You're welcome
25 to peruse our website, come to our monthly board and

2 committee meetings where we do report, quarterly we
3 report on this lockbox, where the money is.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, all right,
5 we can talk offline.

6 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Sure.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: That's just not
8 how you communicate with the general public if I may
9 say so.

10 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I would suggest
11 that is an artful thing, getting complicated
12 information to our everyday rider. I don't disagree.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

15 Next, we'll hear from Council Member..

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: They have
17 answered..

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm sorry, I'm
19 sorry.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I got a whole
21 bunch of questions that haven't been answered.

22 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: We have a
23 checklist. There will be, as Dr. de Cerreno pointed
24 out, there will be a state administrative procedure
25 compliant public comment period with multiple public

2 hearings some time after the TMRB has made its
3 recommendations and they've gone to the MTA Board. I
4 don't have that timeline certain yet because the TMRB
5 has not concluded their work. We will, of course,
6 notify the Council and the public when those hearings
7 will take place.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, and then
9 also about the rental cars?

10 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: That is the not
11 the jurisdiction of the MTA. We don't have oversight
12 over the rental car industry.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But you don't have
14 any input or suggestions so that it isn't an issue.

15 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: We suggest making
16 access to E-ZPass as easy as humanly possible because
17 it solves a lot of headaches that we deal with with a
18 number of Members of this Council.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, and then who
20 would, just one more question, 60th Street is in my
21 District. I have a building, 30 West 60th Street. The
22 garage is on 61st so they're going to have to pay
23 whatever to get their car. Is that something that the
24 Mobile Task Force is dealing with or you? Whose going
25 to deal with walking 60th Street east to west to

2 figure out what are some of the challenges?

3 Literally, you step across it to pick up your car.

4 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Allison, you want
5 to take that?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Somebody has to
7 walk the whole 60th Street, I don't know who that
8 would be, and figure out what the challenges are.

9 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: The
10 project team actually early on did walk the 60th...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And they told all
12 the communities about that walk?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: What
14 we did was we made sure that all of the communities,
15 as I mentioned as part of the outreach, five blocks
16 north, five blocks south, and across 60th Street
17 received...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I didn't get any
19 information on that.

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: We
21 can check on that offline. We sent postcards to the
22 residents...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I did not get
24 invited to the walk.

2 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: No, no. Not to
3 this walk but to the outreach process.

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: No,
5 not to the walk, to the outreach process.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I need to be
7 invited to a walk to go with you because when you
8 don't live there you may not see the same things.

9 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: We would be happy
10 to go for a walk with you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. Thank
12 you, Madam Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I
14 was curious about you, Gale, with your area and
15 outreach. Council Member Marte.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Thank you for being
17 here. I have to jump on Council Member Brewer's point
18 where some of the outreach I believe was inadequate.
19 My whole Council District is in the CBD zone and so I
20 haven't received anything in the mail. I can talk to
21 constituents, I know a lot of them are here, and I'm
22 sure a lot of them didn't receive anything in the
23 mail as well. I don't own a car so maybe that was one
24 reason why you didn't target me, but that's a huge
25 concern when you don't even do outreach to the

2 Council Member of the District that's going to be the
3 most impacted.

4 I want to touch on a few points. I'm
5 going to just ask my questions straight through and
6 I'll allow you guys to answer it. I want to make
7 sure, and I think this is accurate, that folks living
8 in Battery Park City will not pay any toll for
9 leaving Battery Park City to go to other areas in the
10 financial district or even to, let's say, Madison
11 Square Garden, because they're within the Central
12 Business District. I know that was a lot of concerns,
13 but I think they won't have to pay, but I want a
14 confirmation on the record from you.

15 In addition, when it comes to
16 disabilities, as you mentioned, you're going to allow
17 people with license plates that have a logo for
18 people with disabilities to have some sort of
19 discount or exemption. However, what we've seen in
20 our office is that to get that license plate it takes
21 six months, and so you're going to have people who
22 are going to need to go to the hospital, and I know
23 my District has some of the best hospitals, but some
24 of our seniors and people with disability actually go
25 outside of the borough or go outside of the Central

2 Business District, especially with cancer-related
3 issues. They go to Sloan Kettering (INAUDIBLE) and
4 what's going to happen about expediting these permits
5 to make sure that people who need to get the care
6 they need won't have to pay an additional tax?

7 My last question is we know that there's
8 models of congestion pricing that work around the
9 world, in London, Singapore, Stockholm, and that do
10 have exemptions that are widely popular. For example,
11 in Stockholm, I think it's overwhelmingly popular
12 that there is no controversy or no issues. Why
13 weren't some of those exemptions taken into account
14 or implemented in the first approval and not kicked
15 down the road to have this fight at the bitter
16 end. Thank you.

17 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I'm going to
18 answer that last question first. An assertion that
19 you made, again, we did reach out to your office when
20 we had the outreach. I can provide receipts for that.
21 There was signage in the system. We have not mailed
22 things to residents' homes yet. Again, as Dr. de
23 Cerreno pointed out, there is a public education
24 campaign required per the State law that we will be
25 launching. We have not gotten there yet, but as far

2 as the outreach went, it was exhaustive, multi-
3 language newspaper ads, radio ads, signage in the
4 system, signage on rolling stock on the bus system,
5 in other states and counties outside of the five
6 boroughs, happy to talk to you offline about what
7 that looked like.

8 To your question about why it was not
9 considered to include exemptions. Again, the MTA did
10 not draft this legislation. It was drafted by the
11 State Legislature. It was passed into law, signed by
12 a governor. We're implementing State law so I
13 understand that we're here to answer your questions
14 today, but these are questions for some of your
15 colleagues in the State Legislature. What they
16 provided to us is the framework. We are administering
17 that program.

18 Allison, you want to take the other
19 questions?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Yeah,
21 I think there was only the one last question
22 regarding the disabilities and the time to get a
23 plate. That, unfortunately, is not part of our
24 jurisdiction. That comes from the Department of Motor
25 Vehicles, but it is certainly something we'll take

2 back to the group in terms of as we're planning, I
3 mentioned earlier that we don't have all the standard
4 operating procedures and processes yet, we're
5 developing them, and that is something certainly I'll
6 take back to the team as think about the timing for
7 everything.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Just wanted to add
9 one last point, building off Council Member Brewer's,
10 is that not everyone in my District has a credit
11 card, not everyone has access to E-ZPass so you're
12 really creating a barrier for people, depending where
13 they live and their income levels and their
14 accessibility to have access to these equipment so it
15 would be great if there are other methods so people
16 can actually travel without being penalized. Thank
17 you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I echo that
19 sentiment as well.

20 Next, we'll hear from Council Member
21 Narcisse.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Good morning.
23 Thank you for being here and thank you, Chair.

24

25

2 MTA is not going my way right now in our
3 46th District so I hope MTA will go our way
4 sometimes, and I hope it's very soon.

5 Talking about congestion prices, with
6 electric vehicles beginning to dominate the car
7 market, are there any provisions within the plan to
8 scale back pricing once the vast majority of New
9 Yorkers are driving zero-emission cars? That's one.

10 What's the proposed timeline for
11 evaluating the effects and potential adjustment to
12 the congestion price system after it's
13 implementation?

14 Three, we are projected environmental
15 benefits of congestion price in terms of emissions
16 reduction and air quality, which I don't think that's
17 the reason the prices increase. I'm with my
18 Colleagues, Council Member Holden. How do we ensure
19 that congestion pricing does not disproportionately
20 affect lower-income drivers or communities. I think
21 some of the questions, we're going to get exemptions
22 and all, but I've never seen exemption (INAUDIBLE) in
23 our community fast enough because of the information
24 and how fast they're receiving that information.

2 The next concern I have is with Access-A-
3 Ride. Access-A-Ride, we have received numerous calls
4 in our office all the time, complaints about Access-
5 A-Ride reliability. We cannot provide the data right
6 now, but you should know by know that a lot of folks
7 are not satisfied with Access-A-Ride even before the
8 pandemic. Are there plans to increase the fleet size
9 or incorporate newer technologies to improve the
10 efficiency and reliability of this Access-A-Ride
11 business. What are the main challenges that the MTA
12 is facing making Access-A-Ride a real Access-A-Ride
13 for those that need it most. Like this morning, I
14 have someone that is disabled but trying to make it
15 to work. She had scheduled for 9:30, and she got to
16 work about 11:59 so that's risking for her to lose
17 her job, and she's disabled, she cannot move around
18 so I want to know what we can do because I hate
19 asking what you can do but what we can do together as
20 service providers, as an agency, and we as Council
21 Members can do to improve that. Thank you.

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Thank
23 you, Council Member. In terms of the electric vehicle
24 discounts, it is one of the exemptions that has been
25 requested that is in our list that has been shared

2 with the Traffic Mobility Review Board, and they are
3 aware of that request.

4 With respect to the timeline for
5 evaluating effects, in a sense, in some ways it's
6 already begun. What we need to do is we're already
7 geared up to get the initial baseline and have some
8 of that information already in terms of various
9 effects, whether it's air quality, traffic, transit,
10 pedestrians, etc. When we go live, we will be
11 collecting rigorously all the way through, and,
12 indeed, we have commitments, we have requirements in
13 legislation for reporting, and we have extended our
14 reporting requirements with additional commitments in
15 the final EA to have that information not just when
16 the legislation required it which was one year after
17 go-live and then every other year subsequent. We've
18 committed to having that information on our project
19 website and, as my colleague Will Schwartz pointed
20 out earlier, we're committed to an Open Data format
21 to the greatest extent possible to ensure that people
22 have active and regular access to the information
23 that we're gathering regarding the effects.

24 On ensuring that there would be no driver
25 effects on the environmental justice communities or

2 drivers, importantly, when we were awarded the
3 finding of no significant impact by the Federal
4 Highway Administration, that finding is based on the
5 in-depth analysis that we provided and the mitigation
6 commitments and the comments that we put together and
7 responses that we put together, and so the way that
8 we're going to do that, and it's been found that
9 there won't be a significant impact, is in part
10 because we have that low-income discount that will be
11 offered.

12 Regarding the concern of ensuring that
13 people are aware of that discount, as we've spoken,
14 we will be having extensive outreach, making sure to
15 get into the communities, helping people to sign up,
16 helping people to get those E-ZPass tags, helping
17 people to understand that they don't need a credit
18 card to back them and how that works and what that
19 means and help them to understand how they'd be able
20 to fund it when they need to if they don't want to
21 pre-fund it.

22 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Council Member, good to
23 see you again by the way.

24 On Access-A-Ride, we'll get to the
25 information particular that you referenced offline

2 just to keep that person's anonymity confidential,
3 but just taking a step back. Two years ago, Access-A-
4 Ride customer satisfaction was 43, 44 percent, not
5 great. Today, it's in the mid-70s so we've made a lot
6 of strides to improve our Access-A-Ride experience,
7 but, as I have said over and over again, I cannot
8 discount the life experience that a customer may have
9 that's disappointing. We don't get it right every
10 day. That's for sure.

11 On the technology point, we have been
12 making some improvements for Access-A-Ride technology
13 so, for example, our customers can now book online or
14 using our app as opposed to needing to call in to our
15 service, and we are actually shrinking the window,
16 right now we consider a pickup of within 30 minutes
17 to be on time, we're actually shrinking that window
18 by the end of this year to 20 minutes, which is
19 better than the industry average because we have been
20 pushing both our blue and whites, you know the
21 Access-A-Ride vehicles that we own and contract to,
22 and then frankly some of our colleagues here who
23 operate for-hire vehicles and taxis who also carry
24 our customers as well. That has been also I think an
25 improvement for our customers, and we do appreciate

2 those in this room who help us in that regard, but we
3 still have room to improve when it comes to Access-A-
4 Ride, but, so far, I've been proud of the progress
5 we've made, but, again, for that particular instance,
6 happy to get those specific pieces of information and
7 we'll reach out to that customer and find out what
8 happened.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: The question
10 that I want to know is the car market. As we're
11 getting to be electric cars, are there any provisions
12 for the plan to scale back because it's a burden, but
13 if we're doing it for environmental issues, I think
14 we can scale back by 2030 because, like Council
15 Member Holden said, the middle class, so we have to
16 look at not pushing too hard. We want people to stay
17 in New York City.

18 Don't forget us as we can collaborate
19 with you, 51 Council Members. When you have
20 information, we can actually help in disseminating
21 the information that we need to in our community.
22 Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
24 Next, we'll hear from Council Member Rivera. Council
25 Member Rivera. You're on mute.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Can you hear me?

3 Well, I will be very quick because I'm having a
4 little bit of some technical difficulties here.

5 Manhattan below 59th Street is not merely
6 a commercial business district, and I know some of my
7 Colleagues have asked questions about this. It is
8 home to thousands of families approximately which I'd
9 say 20 percent of whom own cars. This is a small
10 portion of vehicle users, yet they stand to bear an
11 unequal burden as they cannot avoid the Central
12 Business District. It's where they live. How have you
13 evaluated the impact of congestion pricing on
14 Manhattan drivers? Manhattan drivers don't follow the
15 typical congestion and traffic pattern so in your
16 evaluation, did you notice anything about the way CBD
17 residents use their cars? And I'll also add two-
18 wheeled vehicles because we have a large motorcycle
19 user community, and I want to make sure that they
20 also feel represented in terms of exceptions and
21 discounts that are discussed.

22 Then my last question, because I know I
23 don't have a lot of time and hopefully you can answer
24 them very concisely and quickly, is in the
25 environmental assessment, some scenarios led to

2 increased air pollution in the Lower East Side due to
3 increased traffic on the FDR Drive. Is this increase
4 present in the accepted scenarios or are you looking
5 at including portions of the FDR Drive in tolling
6 scenarios for the future?

7 My last question is many of my
8 constituents who rely on cars for work are in the
9 film and television industry. Has the MTA engaged
10 with film and television industry members, studios,
11 and production companies so that the workers don't
12 bear additional costs that are required for their
13 jobs?

14 Those are my questions. Madam Chair, I
15 thank you for calling on me. Thank you, everybody,
16 for your patience, and I look forward to your
17 answers.

18 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Thank
19 you. Sorry, I have my notes this way so I'm going to
20 flip around the questions so I can read them.

21 Let me actually start with the air
22 pollution issue on the Lower East Side. Importantly,
23 the finding of the final EA was actually in terms of
24 air quality there would be a regional air quality
25 benefit and that none of the scenarios exceeded the

2 National Ambient Air Quality Standards or NAAQS as
3 they are called, and, importantly, as we know, the
4 air is actually shared across the region. With that
5 said, we looked very closely, particularly at
6 environmental justice communities, and saw that in
7 some cases there would be traffic benefit and in some
8 cases there are potential increases in that traffic,
9 one of which is that Lower East Side on the FDR
10 Drive. That was actually raised in our working groups
11 as well. Importantly, we do have a mitigation in the
12 environmental assessment specifically for that issue.
13 What we've found in our modeling as you asked like
14 did we look at specific type of modeling and how
15 people move around. What we found was that the issue
16 with the FDR Drive in particular involved some of the
17 traffic that was going northbound on the FDR Drive to
18 then turn around and come back down, and that by
19 ensuring that there would be a toll location there to
20 capture those people who are trying to do that, they
21 actually do cross briefly into the Central Business
22 District, that in fact that that mitigation would
23 help that traffic increase so we did look to that
24 degree there.

2 In terms of the film industry members
3 specific, again as part of our overall outreach, we
4 had people from all walks of life and from all
5 different industries, and, again, this is one of the
6 issues as the Traffic Mobility Review Board looks at
7 the large number of types of requests for exemptions,
8 discounts, and credits, this is another area that
9 they would be made aware of, if not already.

10 And then motorcycles. Yes, we heard quite
11 a bit from the motorcycle community during the
12 hearings and the early outreach and through our
13 environmental justice groups, and, again, that is one
14 of the items that is on that list of 122 requested
15 types of exemptions or discounts.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
17 Next, we'll hear from Council Member Ariola.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you, Chair.
19 I just want to talk about our Resolution that's
20 before the Council and the panelists today. How can
21 the MTA with the kind of money they've already taken
22 in, which is 11.28 billion dollars total, and a new
23 annual revenue of 2.226 billion dollars total, not
24 counting what you would get from the proposed
25 congestion pricing, how could you continue to say

2 that there's no way we can now finally look at a true
3 EIS for the QueensLink and for better transportation
4 to Southern Queens. It doesn't make sense. You
5 continue to kick the can down the road, and it really
6 does have to stop. You're raising fares, you're
7 raising bridge and tunnels, you're getting money from
8 casinos, you're getting money from the State, and you
9 want to now have money from congestion pricing. There
10 is money for this study. People in Southern Queens,
11 they deserve good transportation methods and options
12 so my question regarding congestion pricing, and bear
13 in mind that by and large my constituents are middle
14 class, if an individual working or living in Tribeca
15 or the West Village wants to grab a cab or take their
16 own car to Broadway to see a show, will they pay a
17 congestion fee?

18 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: If
19 somebody starts within the Central Business District
20 and does not leave the Central Business District, at
21 this time, they would not pay a congestion toll.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Basically then,
23 when my constituents ask me that question, I would
24 have to say that if you can afford to live in a
25 congestion zone in Manhattan, which is the point of

2 focus of taking away congestion and decongesting that
3 area, you, as a borough-based resident and a middle
4 class resident, are being made to pay this exorbitant
5 tax when if you lived in Manhattan and could afford
6 to live in Manhattan you would not have to, you would
7 be exempt from that obligation. Does that seem fair?

8 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: It's
9 really not appropriate for me to comment on that
10 piece of it. We are abiding what the legislation
11 describes and what we have determined in terms of
12 being able to build the infrastructure through the
13 (INAUDIBLE)

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: What the
15 Legislature has prescribed really does not benefit
16 any type of resident of the outer boroughs. It will
17 not allow people from the outer boroughs to go into
18 Manhattan, and I agree with my Colleagues who have
19 said this before me. It will only negatively impact
20 not just the boroughs and the extra parking and the
21 extra congestion in the boroughs but Manhattan, for
22 people who are coming in. An earlier part of your
23 testimony was that you did not find that there would
24 be an impact for people who go into Manhattan for
25 their medical services. I cannot imagine that that's

2 true. I don't know how you did that study because the
3 majority of people in the five boroughs and the four
4 outer boroughs of Manhattan receive some type of
5 medical treatment in Manhattan, and that would be
6 hindered. Some places, like the Rockaway Peninsula
7 that the Chair and I share, is a hospital and medical
8 care, healthcare desert so I don't understand how you
9 could possibly say that on the record, but certainly
10 I hope that people are listening and they can
11 understand that this is going to be a tax burden but
12 also a healthcare burden and a substantial tax income
13 burden for this city because no one will be coming
14 into Manhattan to the places like Broadway and to
15 restaurants. Thank you so much, Chair, for your
16 consideration.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

18 Next, we will hear from Council Member Louis followed
19 by Council Member Farias.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Chair,
21 and thank you all for being here today.

22 I have three quick questions. Before I
23 ask my questions, based off of a statement that you
24 all made earlier, are you saying that the MTA did not
25

2 lobby the New York State Legislature for the CBDTP
3 program?

4 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I think the
5 comment I made was about who wrote the law and passed
6 it and signed it into law. That was the Governor at
7 the time and the State Legislature. Of course, the
8 MTA's part of finding funding for the current capital
9 program was involved, and we shamelessly support
10 congestion pricing..

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: So you did lobby
12 for that?

13 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Of course, but
14 some of the questions and assertions that have been
15 made indicate that we create tax policy, which we do
16 not.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: At least we have
18 that for the record.

19 All right, I wanted to know if you can
20 restate for the record the algorithm system for
21 tolling that was mentioned earlier and if you can
22 discuss briefly what the process is for reimbursement
23 for those that are charged double according to that
24 algorithm system that was mentioned earlier. Thank
25 you.

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO:

3 Certainly. I'm not sure what you're alluding to in
4 terms of saying those who are charged double.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: So you mentioned
6 earlier an algorithm system, and you said there's a
7 possibility that folks can be charged twice depending
8 on the tracking..

9 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: No...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: (INAUDIBLE) restate
11 for the record (INAUDIBLE)

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: In
13 essence, the way the algorithm would work is we have
14 detection points along the highway segments of the
15 FDR Drive and the West Side Highway. The first time
16 the vehicle is seen, it would be identified. If it
17 stays on the excluded roadway, what we do is we would
18 track it so each time it's seen, in essence the
19 system in lay terms in essence says ah, I saw that
20 vehicle before, based on traffic it should take
21 roughly 10 minutes to get to the next spot. At that
22 next spot, it looks and it says okay, it's about 10
23 minutes and I see that vehicle again, and it keeps
24 doing that and tracks the vehicle all the way down.
25 If the vehicle stays entirely on that excluded

2 roadway, let's say for example it started at 60th and
3 it comes all the way down and goes out through the
4 Hugh Carey Tunnel, it would not receive a charge. It
5 would not receive a toll. If, however, it gets to
6 that first spot and it should be 10 minutes and it's
7 12, 15, something minutes and we haven't seen that
8 vehicle, and then it goes to the next place and we
9 still don't see that vehicle, at that point, there
10 would be a toll because the assumption by the
11 algorithm would be they must have gone in because we
12 do not see them anywhere else.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you for that
14 description. So hypothetically, if I'm a senior,
15 happen to live in Central Brooklyn, and I decide to
16 take the excluded road you spoke about and I happen
17 to get lost going to my appointment to go for
18 oncology services and the algorithm cannot track me
19 and I got lost, I'm going to be charged twice?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: First
21 of all, we never charge you twice. In fact, by
22 legislation, passenger vehicles can only be tolled
23 once daily so that's very important. That's built
24 into our business rules. It's built into the whole
25 way the system is being developed.

2 As to the case you described, we call
3 these edge cases. That means that the very vast
4 majority, well over 95, 98, however it is, percent of
5 people, the system works without an issue. On
6 occasion, something happens. We find that today. We
7 have people who go over our facilities today,
8 something happened, they got confused, they went back
9 over the facility that they didn't mean to go back
10 over. Typically, what happens is they call customer
11 service, and we work these out on case-by-case basis
12 depending upon what's going on. We have a very
13 robust, and I know there was some discussion before,
14 but we do have a very, very robust customer service
15 center. We often, just like with anything, people
16 focus on sort of the big news items that are out
17 there by something that happened, but really we have
18 fewer than 1 percent of our customers every day that
19 are coming through, that's over an annual basis I
20 should say, fewer than 1 percent actually have any
21 trouble where they have to approach the customer
22 service center for this.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: While you all feel
24 that it's robust, we have constituents that complain
25 often about being charged, getting lost, and not

2 getting the services that are needed so you may want
3 to factor that into your process.

4 The next question I have is in regard to
5 outreach efforts. I know that you all have hosted
6 events around the city in the last couple of months,
7 but I wanted to know what you all are doing regarding
8 language access because what's happening for the
9 folks in Central Brooklyn, particularly taxi drivers,
10 Uber drivers, or just constituents, they don't get
11 the information about the workshops unless it's
12 coming to us. We don't get it in an ample amount of
13 time in order to disseminate to folks so I wanted to
14 know, and I know you don't have the system ready
15 right now, what are you doing about language access
16 and how many languages are you all thinking about
17 when you do produce information to share with the
18 community?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: What
20 we did during the early outreach and the formal
21 public comment period, as I mentioned, we had nine
22 languages. It was eight different languages plus
23 English. We also ensured that we had American Sign
24 Language, and we also ensured CART captioning. The
25 documents themselves also importantly are created in

2 what they call 508 compliance now for visually
3 impaired so we anticipate, we will work with Will's
4 group, but we anticipate ensuring that we have as
5 much access beyond what most people would anticipate
6 would be possible.

7 In terms of determining those languages,
8 we actually went to look through the different
9 counties to determine what were the languages with
10 the highest proportions so that it wasn't even the
11 typical where we would just look at our area or we
12 would look and say oh, we only need this many or that
13 many. We went beyond what would typically be expected
14 or required.

15 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I'll just add to
16 that too, Council Member, you can be helpful to us.
17 We seek to go above and beyond. We use the
18 demographic data that we have when we go out, for
19 instance when we're doing the Brooklyn bus network
20 redesign, if we go in a community we know that
21 English is not the only language spoken, we seek to
22 bring interpretation with us. If you're not seeing
23 what you need, let us go. We're always open to
24 further guidance and suggestion on that front. It's
25 something that we've really been trying to push the

2 conversation around accessibility at the MTA. It
3 doesn't just mean elevators anymore. Language access
4 is important for us so we're really happy to work
5 with you on that and would welcome your guidance on
6 that.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: The Brooklyn bus
8 redesign is the perfect example. I had to translate
9 for myself in Creole and find constituents to
10 translate in Urdu so that our constituents are fully
11 aware of what was happening with the bus redesign,
12 but I have one more question because my time is up or
13 almost up.

14 120 million was given to the
15 environmental justice for the Bronx for this program,
16 but I wanted to know what's being done for Brooklyn
17 because we have transportation deserts in Brooklyn,
18 mainly in Council Member Narcisse's District, parts
19 of my District, and some of my other Colleagues so I
20 wanted to know what was being done in Brooklyn, is
21 there funding being put towards the IBX program that
22 the Governor has proposed, and what else is being
23 done for that Avenue L train station? Thank you.

24 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I'm going to take
25 the IBX question, and I'll kick it over to Dr. de

2 Cerreno. We just announced recently that we've
3 awarded the environmental consultant for the inner
4 borough which is the next step in that process. As I
5 mentioned, compared to other projects in our
6 comparative evaluation, that was a little bit further
7 behind as far as the amount of study that had been
8 done on it to date so that's underway, that's moving
9 forward. We're happy to follow up with you offline
10 and connect on that one.

11 Allison, you want to talk about other
12 mitigations in congestion pricing?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: In
14 terms of the mitigation commitments, we have two
15 types of mitigation commitments beyond the things
16 like the low-income discount, the mitigation I
17 mentioned earlier on the FDR Drive, the overnight, we
18 haven't talked about that earlier but we also have a
19 commitment for reduced toll on the overnight. The
20 mitigation that we have related specifically to
21 environmental justice communities where there could
22 be increased traffic, we have in the final EA the
23 various communities that are identified that could be
24 part of this. After we have that final toll
25 structure, we're going to be doing an assessment to

2 see where we anticipate traffic reductions and, if
3 there continue to be any increases, we would then go
4 into those communities to identify the specific
5 census tracts and then interact with those
6 communities to determine where the place-based
7 mitigation would be potentially situated.

8 In terms of the two types, we have
9 regional mitigation. That's most notably, and that
10 will be beneficial for much of the region, is an
11 expansion of New York City's Clean Trucks Program. In
12 terms of the place-based mitigation, there are a
13 number of items that these communities are eligible
14 for. They would be roadside vegetation, parks and
15 green space, and air quality filters for schools near
16 some of the highways. In terms of the specific areas,
17 as I mentioned in the final EA and you can also find
18 this in the Executive Summary which is online but we
19 can also provide that if that would be helpful. We do
20 have the communities identified for that place-based
21 mitigation, would be South Williamsburg and Downtown
22 Brooklyn, Fort Greene area are actually formally
23 identified to be monitored as we come up with that
24 final toll structure.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: So that doesn't
3 include neighborhoods in Central Brooklyn as I stated
4 earlier that would cover or encompass Council Member
5 Narcisse's District, my District, and some others so
6 you may want to include that in your assessment.
7 Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Thanks, Chair
9 Brooks-Powers. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Council
10 Member Amanda Farias.

11 It is no secret that outer borough
12 communities like mine, especially those in the Bronx,
13 will be most negatively impacted by congestion
14 pricing. Most of our city's essential workers live in
15 the outer boroughs, and most of our outer boroughs
16 are not only transit deserts but accessibility
17 deserts as many of my Colleagues have already
18 mentioned.

19 The propose congestion pricing rules are
20 an issue of environmental and economic justice for my
21 neighbors. We will not only have even more traffic
22 coming through our neighborhoods, but we will
23 potentially be paying large sums just to drive within
24 our own city, a city that created the very inequities
25 Bronxites are burdened with every day. My district is

2 home to the Cross Bronx and other major highways and,
3 because of that, we're also home to the highest
4 asthma rates in the nation. Over the years, many of
5 us in government and in our communities through
6 advocacy have spent decades combatting the Robert
7 Moses era infrastructure that has created high asthma
8 rates, increased traffic and congestion, lack of
9 access to economic opportunity, and dependency on
10 cars in transit-inaccessible communities where
11 Bronxites have had to find ways just to make ends
12 meet. Our communities took on jobs in healthcare, as
13 drivers, etc., full of essential workers, and all had
14 to commute outside of their communities for work,
15 groceries, and just to cross across the Bronx. I
16 really hope we can continue to make attempts to
17 foresee future potential damaging regulations on our
18 communities and not have us look back in 10, 20 years
19 like we currently do with Robert Moses era
20 infrastructure.

21 While many of my concerns about some of
22 the negative impacts will continue to be raised until
23 the finality of this implementation, I will continue
24 to look forward to learning about the plans as you
25

2 guys have given us questions through testimony today
3 until they're rolled out.

4 Council Member Louis' questions were a
5 perfect transition into mine. The MTA has committed
6 120 million for environmental justice in the Bronx to
7 mitigate any impacts of congestion pricing. Can you
8 please update the Committee on this funding and how
9 will the funding be spent specifically for the Bronx?
10 For example, we have a lot of efforts around capping
11 the Cross Bronx right now. Are there mitigants for
12 air and asthma rates, for truck re-routing, or
13 there's been ideas I've seen thrown around for an
14 asthma center, which I haven't seen any formal
15 completion on? Does the MTA have data to show that
16 the measures it has proposed will adequately address
17 any potential increase in emissions in these
18 communities? I'd like to hear about the Bronx EA if
19 possible. Does MTA plan on implementing similar
20 programs in other boroughs? If so, when can they
21 expect to see that funding? And I'm happy to repeat
22 any questions.

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Thank
24 you. Let me sort of just put it in the context again.
25 When the final EA was developed and, for those of you

2 who may not have seen it, there was a technical
3 memorandum added for the final EA in Chapter 17, it's
4 17-D if I recall, is a very thorough assessment of
5 the potential localized effects as a result of either
6 decreased or increased traffic.

7 The way the NEPA process works, we look
8 for both beneficial and/or adverse effects, and then
9 there is sort of an additional look at environmental
10 justice communities in particular to see where those
11 effects are happening. When we did that work and
12 identified the communities that I mentioned that are
13 in the final EA as areas where in many cases we
14 actually saw decreases in traffic, but then in a
15 census tract a few over you would see an increase in
16 the traffic, right, as everybody starts to move
17 around. Those areas are the ones that are
18 specifically identified that would be eligible for
19 this place-based mitigation.

20 The regional mitigation would help the
21 overall area. In terms of the questions you had, for
22 example, for those who may not be as familiar,
23 obviously you are, Council Member, there is a
24 commitment for replacement of the TRUs or the
25 transport refrigeration units at Hunts Point with

2 cleaner technology. We worked very closely with our
3 colleagues in the City on this to provide the data
4 and the background. We also worked with the
5 environmental justice technology advisory group to
6 hear their input on things and mitigation that they
7 felt would be warranted and would be helpful and
8 desirable. That included in some cases we actually
9 took a tour of some of the South Bronx area with
10 several participants but from the same entity to
11 really show us and walk us through what they were
12 experiencing and what was happening.

13 In terms of the timing on it, as you may
14 imagine, we just got the federal approval not too
15 long ago so this is now something where all three
16 project sponsors are coordinating, New York State
17 Department of Transportation, New York City
18 Department of Transportation, and MTA, to coordinate
19 on how do we now go forward, get whatever MOUs we
20 need in place for example, get all of the
21 documentation together, ensure that we've got
22 everything ready to go so that when we have that toll
23 structure recommended and then adopted and we do that
24 final analysis to understand where are the places
25 that in actuality we will expect to see something,

2 that's when we envision going out to talk to the
3 communities more specifically to then have a process
4 in place to set these things up and to actually
5 implement. In terms of the actual timelines, that's
6 something that we would have to get back to you.
7 They're being developed still, and each of the
8 different mitigation items would have different
9 timelines depending upon what it is.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Just a quick
11 followup. I vaguely remember this and I'm happy to be
12 corrected or to give some more information on it. In
13 terms of when, I think it was in the EA, looking at
14 what impacts the Cross Bronx Expressway is going to
15 have, there is a DOT flag or like recommendation that
16 the East Bronx and like South East Bronx, which I
17 represent, was going to see a lot of flow of traffic
18 away from the Cross Bronx Expressway into our local
19 streets and that was the anticipated impact of that.
20 Is there more information on that? Have we looked at
21 what local routes look like, local truck routes, both
22 major, minor, or if we're expecting some of the
23 mitigations to be seen more outside of the South
24 Bronx specific but more in the East Bronx to kind of

2 balance out some of the air impacts that we're going
3 to see or traffic impacts that we're going to see?

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: I
5 think that will again be dependent, we can follow up
6 with you separately. We did find that that would be
7 as much of an issue. What we found was mostly that
8 the diversions that we would see would be along the
9 major routes. With that said, as part of the EJ
10 outreach and discussions we had, there were concerns
11 raised and we're aware of them. When that comes to
12 the point again as we have that final toll structure
13 recommendation and adoption, we would do that
14 assessment to better understand what we anticipate
15 seeing, and I anticipate that as part of the outreach
16 we will be again having communication and back and
17 forth with the various constituents about it.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: I'd love for us to
19 maybe kind of get ahead of some of the conversations
20 that maybe are planned to happen a little later. My
21 District specifically sees the 295, the 95, the
22 Hutchinson River, the Bronx River, and it's just a
23 major flow of Robert Moses era infrastructure, and we
24 already know that people will find or try to find the
25 ways to avoid paying any additional fees and, like I

2 said, my District is car-dependent. We're multi-
3 generational households, working families that don't
4 have, you have one train line, few major busways that
5 go across the Bronx, like people are dependent on
6 going to their appointments and going across the
7 Bronx, going to work including myself on their cars,
8 and so I'd like to just figure out, at least start
9 conversations early to figure out ways that we can,
10 either I can make more advocacy at the State level
11 for my constituents or we can find ways to mitigate
12 on the way down towards the city. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

14 Next, we will hear from Council Member Paladino
15 followed by Holden and then Brewer.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Good afternoon,
17 everybody. We sat here for the last two hours
18 listening to a whole bunch of mumbo jumbo. I don't
19 know how many of you actually understood what was
20 said here in these last two hours, but I'll make it
21 really simple for everybody. It's robbing the middle
22 class once again so that we can completely and
23 utterly throw money down the black hole known as the
24 MTA. MTA projects are chronically over-budget and
25 behind schedule to the tune of billions of dollars

2 already. A recent audit by the State Comptroller
3 showed systemic issues at every step in the MTA
4 project pipeline, ranging from sloppy management to
5 contractors that are being paid for work that simply
6 has never been done. In fact, the fiscal
7 mismanagement of the MTA is so bad that Albany's 2023
8 budget included a 1.3-billion-dollar bailout for this
9 agency, an agency that already has a 20-billion-
10 dollar budget. This city is in dire straits. This can
11 no longer sit simply in Manhattan. This is coming to
12 the outer boroughs. These are simple blue-collar
13 workers, and yet you choose to strangle them because
14 that's exactly what's going on. This is a pure attack
15 on the middle class. We cannot sustain this in
16 addition to everything else this city is going
17 through. I'm telling you right now as far as my
18 constituents go, this is a day where we're talking
19 about robbing New Yorkers with a predatory pricing
20 scheme supposedly so that we can hand more money over
21 to the MTA. That's all this is. This is an attack on
22 the middle class. Congestion pricing does not work
23 period, end of sentence, and that's it. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay, so now
25 we have round two which is Council Member Holden,

2 Brewer, and we're ending with Farias, and I know the
3 MTA has to leave.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you, Chair,
5 for round two. I just want to go back to the
6 environmental impact study because what Council
7 Member Farias just said about her District and many
8 Districts outside of the zone will be impacted and
9 they'll get more congestion, more pollution, but
10 we're willing to just write that off without doing an
11 environmental impact. You're cheating New Yorkers,
12 you're cheating the environment, and you're
13 jeopardizing the health of other people. You're just
14 displacing the health hazards in New York City.
15 That's why an impact study was essential, and the
16 fact that you didn't shows the commitment that you
17 really have to this because you don't have to do it.
18 We were told we didn't have to do it. Well, that's
19 ridiculous.

20 But let me just go, according to the
21 Blue-Ribbon Panel Report on Fare and Toll Evasion,
22 the MTA lost an estimated 690 million in unpaid fares
23 and tolls in 2022, 690 million. Now, we know that if
24 we enforced or we developed a system, I know you're
25 working on a system for entry, but we lost so much,

2 so much money and we do it every day, you're losing
3 money every day, that where there's a will there's a
4 way, first of all, on these toll collectors so I
5 anticipate, and I think many of you, I don't know if
6 you have the technology to track down people who are
7 evading the tolls with their doctored license plates
8 because they put a leaf, they're very creative, they
9 put a leaf over it, a piece of tape, and they get
10 around that, and those people will do it. Also,
11 they'll go down streets the wrong way so what
12 technology do you have set up in this program that
13 will catch those guys?

14 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I'm going to take
15 that as I handle our legislative portfolio in Albany
16 as well. I'm glad we found some common ground. That's
17 something that we've been asking the State
18 Legislature for further authority on. It's not an MTA
19 problem alone. The Port Authority, New York State
20 Thruway Authority, DOT are losing tens of millions of
21 dollars a year in uncollectable toll revenues because
22 of fake license plates, obstructed license plates so
23 we'd welcome a partnership with you on pushing for
24 greater enforcement technology. We've proposed making
25 that a Class A misdemeanor that if you willfully

2 violate a toll that you be held accountable because
3 you're stealing from the public.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: This is something
5 that the Governor could do actually.

6 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: And has proposed.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: She proposed,
8 yeah, it's been going on for how long. Since we had
9 obviously these photo toll collectors that read your
10 license plate, that's been going on that long, and
11 you can go down any block in New York City and see
12 people that are doing this. Yet, the MTA, you have to
13 push the Governor, obviously it's in your best
14 interest to push the Governor, but the Governor
15 hasn't really used state troopers as much as she
16 could have. They're sitting there in their cars by
17 tunnels and bridges, and these guys are going by. I
18 mean I sat in front of one today.

19 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Allison, bring
20 your bridges and tunnels out. You want to talk about
21 recent efforts that we've been stepping up our
22 enforcement with the tools that we have?

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Yeah,
24 certainly. First, I want to just start off by saying
25 the vast majority...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Just an answer to
3 my question about the technology.

4 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Allison is much
5 better...

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay, but, again,
7 because I asked the NYPD this, and they didn't have
8 anything to find out if somebody has something
9 covering their plate that they could track them down
10 with technology.

11 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: A
12 couple of things. First, I do want to be clear, the
13 vast majority of the people who use our facilities
14 and we anticipate that will be the same for Central
15 Business District tolling, the vast majority of the
16 people do the right thing. They pay the toll that's
17 due, they pay it on time, and the few people who
18 don't are the ones that we have a robust program to
19 address.

20 That program starts, and I also want to
21 be very clear because I've also heard today about
22 people who have problems, right, who accidentally
23 fall into this group, so we give our customers,
24 whether they're E-ZPass or tolls by mail customers as
25 many opportunities to pay as possible before we then

2 start to escalate. When somebody goes through and we
3 don't see an E-ZPass, we capture an image of their
4 license plate. There are different types of
5 technologies that help us with identifying those
6 plates, pieces of plates, etc., and some of that
7 technology continues to improve and we keep an eye on
8 that technology in terms of how this might help us
9 going forward.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: What's that
11 called? What's the technology called?

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: It's
13 license plate recognition and optical recognition
14 technology.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Because why are so
16 many people doing it if they're getting caught?

17 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: I
18 can't speak to that part.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Obviously, I'd
20 like to see the numbers on this because if it's
21 working, if that technology works, because the Police
22 Department, I've asked the Chief of Patrol, he
23 doesn't know any technology.

24 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Our
25 TBTA people, if you wouldn't mind, Council Member,

2 because I'll walk you sort of just the whole process.
3 It doesn't take that long. What we do is we first
4 when we have a vehicle and they haven't paid, we go
5 and we send out the first notice. They still have
6 time to pay. They have another 30 days. They get 30
7 days, they get the first notice, they have another 30
8 days to pay. If they haven't paid at that point, then
9 eventually it becomes a violation notice and says you
10 need to pay. If they still don't pay at that point,
11 then we have different opportunities for escalating
12 so it's a lot of process.

13 One of the things that we do, and this we
14 were fortunate to have implemented legally some years
15 ago, is the ability to suspend registrations for non-
16 payment of toll collection once we have what we call
17 a persistent toll violator. That's somebody who's
18 done this repeatedly. Those persistent toll
19 violators, we do have the tools that we need and we
20 do go after them. We have in essence a list of those
21 who have had their vehicle suspended, and that list
22 is actually uploaded on a regular basis and our
23 Bridge and Tunnel officers regularly go out looking
24 for these people.

2 We also have targeted enforcement, and
3 I'm sure you've seen it in the news because we do it
4 very regularly where we go out at certain times and
5 we do the analytics on the side to see when are
6 people coming, where are they coming from, where we
7 would expect them to be, and all of that information
8 technology-wise is actually uploaded so we have the
9 license plate recognition that is in essence looking
10 for those plates as they come through, we know that
11 those are the plates that haven't paid, and then our
12 officers pull them over and deal with them
13 accordingly.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I'm
15 sorry, Council Member. We just want to make sure we
16 get to Council Member Brewer and Farias before the
17 MTA has to leave.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. Very
19 quickly. When I was Borough President, I had a
20 hearing on residential parking based on congestion
21 pricing so I don't know if it's a good idea or not, I
22 want to get your opinion. I can tell you that the
23 people around 60th Street are concerned that people
24 are going to circle and then not be able to get their
25 own parking spaces because they live there.

2 Number two, I'm an OMNY user, but I have
3 to say on the buses, a quarter of the time it doesn't
4 work so I'm just letting you know. I don't know if
5 that's an issue. I know you brought up all the great
6 things you're doing, and I believe it, but that's my
7 experience.

8 Finally, I just want to say, I know
9 rental cars are not your issue, but if you don't own
10 a car, you can't get an E-ZPass. You should be able
11 to get an E-ZPass so that you could use it at the
12 rental car. Those are my three questions.

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: On
14 the last one, let me start with that one. You can get
15 an E-ZPass. You can have an E-ZPass because you can
16 also move it from vehicle to vehicle.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I don't have a
18 vehicle. You have to have a license plate to get it.
19 I do not have a vehicle, and I'd like to be able to
20 take my E-ZPass to my rental car and use it.

21 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Let's
22 talk offline because we can help you take care of
23 that.

2 Just on the parking, and I'll let my
3 colleague, Will Schwartz, answer the second part of
4 that.

5 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I want to take the
6 parking.

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Oh,
8 you want to take the parking and that? Okay.

9 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Yeah, this was a
10 topic of discussion, and the State Senate included a
11 proposal in their One-House Budget Resolution back in
12 March. It's a matter for policymakers in Albany. I
13 think the City would need State authorization to do
14 something like that, and, if that is, we assured you
15 we'd be able to answer all the DOT questions today,
16 Madam Chair, but that is a question for City DOT, the
17 Administration, and the State Legislature.

18 On the OMNY bus, we've talked about that
19 before. Rich.

20 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, OMNY bus, I'd be
21 surprised if it was a quarter of our buses.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Maybe half.

23 PRESIDENT DAVEY: That would mean 2,200
24 buses, and we collect a lot of money every day so are
25 there some that aren't working? I'm sure that's true.

2 I was on a bus in Manhattan two days ago where one
3 wasn't at the front. Remember, the back, we still
4 have not turned..

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I only go in the
6 front.

7 PRESIDENT DAVEY: Yeah, because we have
8 not turned them on in the back yet, but a bus should
9 not pull out if a reader isn't working so if en route
10 for some reason the reader isn't working the bus
11 operator reboots it, but I can't guarantee 100
12 percent for sure. I would be shocked if it were a
13 quarter of our buses.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: I will be quick
16 with two questions. Just to piggyback a little bit
17 off of Council Member Holden's questions around E-
18 ZPass, what came to mind when we initially were
19 discussing it, one of my Assembly Members, Assembly
20 Member Burgos, has been avidly discussing at the
21 State level about the many issues that folks that
22 have E-ZPass are having with notices, with the
23 notices around arrear payments or the penalties on
24 top of their payments, what's happening with that,
25 how are we rectifying that, and how are we going to

2 ensure people are not impacted by this or licenses
3 revoked?

4 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I've had a number
5 of conversations with your Assemblyman about his
6 legislation, with Senator Comrie, known as the Toll
7 Payer Protection Act so that typically is not
8 referring to an E-ZPass customer. It's usually not
9 the E-ZPass customer that finds themselves in that
10 kind of problems because, like I said earlier, if you
11 have a maintained and up-to-date E-ZPass account, you
12 have no problems in life. It's one of the greatest
13 tools that we have to offer. Again, I will
14 shamelessly plug our award-winning tollsNY app.
15 People should use it. It's great for account
16 maintenance. It's a nice new way of technology
17 helping customers to maintain their accounts so a
18 well-maintained E-ZPass you stay out of trouble.

19 Where we do see customers finding
20 themselves with issues might be through our tolls by
21 mail program. That's what Assembly Member Burgos'
22 bill really focuses on and talks about some of the
23 notification provisions there.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Sure, and so will
25 the tolls by mail program essentially, would people

2 be included in receiving like tolls by mail through
3 congestion pricing?

4 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Allison, do you
5 want to talk about what tolls by mail is for the
6 group?

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Yeah.
8 The tolls by mail is for customers who for whatever
9 reason prefer not to have an E-ZPass. That's when you
10 get the image taken of the license plate and we bill
11 through the mail, and, yes, the Central Business
12 District tolling will have E-ZPass and will have
13 tolls by mail.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Okay, and so what
15 are conversations like in rectification of the tolls
16 by mail program and the penalties and notifications?

17 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Again, oftentimes
18 when our customers find themselves in trouble, we
19 rely on information that we pull from New York State
20 DMV, that's where we get the registered vehicle
21 address. If you move around the city, some folks for
22 whatever reasons may register their vehicle somewhere
23 they don't live for certain reasons, legitimate and
24 otherwise, so the operator has a responsibility to
25 keep their information current. We send certified

2 mail. We can track mail down to the post office it
3 goes to. We have good ways of tracking that customers
4 are getting it, but there are people that don't open
5 it, they don't see it. The first time that they get a
6 past due notice, there's a 5-dollar late fee. Some
7 people just don't pay it. They may not think they
8 incurred it. We have customers that call and they say
9 I was driving over the Verrazano for three months and
10 I didn't know I was supposed to be paying it. That's
11 where we work with them and do that customer
12 education and, as Allison has mentioned, we have a
13 huge team with a customer contact center that is
14 shared by the Port Authority of New York and Thruway
15 Authority as well. We are always happy to work with
16 constituent. It has become one of my missions in this
17 role to work with elected officials to help be brand
18 ambassadors so we don't have to do that constituent
19 casework together. Everybody can, you know.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Okay, so on
21 record, you have to pay for the Verrazano, no, I'm
22 just kidding.

23 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: That's a larger
24 conversation.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Just kidding. The
3 last quick thing and I think you folks kind of
4 touched on it when Council Member Narcisse was asking
5 her questions around electric vehicles. Considering
6 New York State's goal to phase out the sale of all
7 gas-powered vehicles by 2035, how will congestion
8 pricing aid New York drivers to be able to purchase
9 and transition to electric vehicles if so, and will
10 any of the proceeds from congestion pricing go to
11 fund electric charging infrastructure if we have any
12 thoughts on that?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DE CERRENO: Yeah,
14 so importantly, for context, the goals of the Central
15 Business District program are first and foremost to
16 reduce congestion and then second to raise the
17 funding sufficient to fund the 15 billion dollars in
18 the capital program. The environmental benefit of
19 improved air quality as a result of the two primary
20 goals.

21 In terms of electric vehicles, as I
22 mentioned earlier, this is one of the items that's on
23 that list of 122 potential exemptions, discounts, and
24 credits that the Traffic Mobility Review Board is
25

2 sifting through and determining what they're going to
3 make recommendations on.

4 As to the funding, it is required by law
5 that we use the funding specifically, the net
6 proceeds specifically after paying for the cost of
7 the program, to fund New York City Transit, Metro
8 North, and Long Island Railroad capital investments.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: Okay.

10 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: I just want to add
11 to that too. Your question about electric charging
12 infrastructure. The answer is yes. I mentioned the
13 New Jamaica bus depot. That will be the first
14 entirely zero-emission-ready depot in our fleet. We
15 have a significant number of zero-emission battery
16 electric buses, we have a bid out right now, an RFP,
17 the largest in our history, I think the largest in
18 the country. We received a significant federal grant
19 for that as well so, yeah, it's one of the main focal
20 points and beneficiaries from congestion pricing
21 revenues in this capital plan.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: I appreciate that
23 response. I do just want to note that when I am
24 asking questions around charging infrastructure, I'm
25 mostly focused on what's the public use and

2 availability and if we're expecting drivers, like
3 for-hire vehicles to be able to transition their
4 fleet and stay in business for themselves, like we
5 need public infrastructure and right now we don't
6 have that so, if down the line, MTA is planning to
7 make some of their infrastructure open for public
8 use, I'm interested in that conversation, but I
9 appreciate the response.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so
11 much to the MTA, and we appreciate you coming out.

12 In terms of what the MTA is going to be
13 looking to use that money for, I understand that a
14 list of some sort was given to the State in terms of
15 what some of those projects would be so it would be
16 great if it could be shared with the Committee as
17 well.

18 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: Are you referring
19 specifically to congestion pricing dollars or from,
20 can you clarify that?

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yes, because I
22 asked earlier about how that money is going to be
23 spent, what it's going to be going to, so if I could
24 get a list.

2 DEPUTY CHIEF SCHWARTZ: The answer is
3 pretty simple. It's our MTA 2020-2024 capital program
4 which is available online. The revenues from
5 congestion pricing account for about 30 percent of
6 that capital program so you can review that capital
7 plan, that's where you'll find that information.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. Thank
9 you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BREIDBART: Thank you.
11 We'll now turn to public testimony.

12 We'll now turn to public testimony. Each
13 panelist will be given two minutes to speak.

14 For panelists testifying in person,
15 please come to the dais as your name is called and
16 wait for your turn to speak.

17 For panelists who are testifying
18 remotely, once your name is called, a Member of our
19 Staff will unmute you and the Sergeant-at-Arms will
20 give you the go-ahead to begin. Please wait for the
21 Sergeant to announce that you may begin before
22 delivering your testimony.

23 Our first panel will be Erica Burson and
24 Evelyn David.

25 Thank you. You may begin when ready.

2 ERICA BURSON (PHONETIC): I need just a
3 couple of minutes owing to a disability that I have,
4 but I'll make it as quick as I can.

5 Chairperson Brooks-Powers and other
6 Committee Members, thank you for your time and
7 attention. My name is Erica Burson. I am 54 years old
8 and born and raised in Manhattan, and, while I've
9 lived in other places including overseas,
10 experiencing some of the best transit systems in the
11 world, New York City is in my DNA. I live on 71st and
12 2nd, operate a single-person LLC. I'm losing a day of
13 income to be here because it's so important to me. I
14 come from a long line of New York City Democratic
15 activists and I also live with multiple sclerosis.

16 For those of you not aware, severity of
17 symptoms of MS can vary from person to person. My
18 issues are with fatigue and extreme heat intolerance.
19 I know that you can't see my MS, but I assure you as
20 I appear here today in the dog days of summer and the
21 planet's climate crisis which I firmly believe in, my
22 body is in turmoil. While I don't own a car,
23 congestion pricing is going to negatively impact my
24 and thousands of others' mobility and ability to
25 participate in society. I believe in the possibility

2 of our transit system, but I am unable to take it
3 regularly because on any given day I have to plan out
4 the amount of energy I can use. I rely on taxis and
5 other for-hire vehicles to get around and, currently
6 before the meter even starts, the congestion fees can
7 be 4 dollars, 6.50, etc. I also live in a
8 neighborhood that has more hospitals and physician
9 offices than anywhere in the country bar none. Think
10 about the millions of people who come to the East
11 Side every year for their healthcare needs, people
12 who can't take public transit even if it exists where
13 they live. I'm angry, not because I have MS but that
14 I have to come to your Committee to beg you to care
15 about me and others like me, beg you to care about
16 not forcing me to limit my life to the blocks around
17 my apartment because I can't afford the extra money
18 that it'll cost to get below 60th Street and back as
19 needed. I pay 735 dollars per month for commercial
20 insurance through the exchange before even seeing a
21 doctor, and one medicine for my MS is 88,000 dollars
22 per year. Living in Manhattan, we face taxes upon
23 fees upon taxes like no other place. Most people that
24 live in Manhattan are not wealthy. It's shocking to
25 see the line items where the MTA gets money from well

2 beyond anything related to transportation. My elected
3 officials that I voted for including Nadler,
4 Seawright, Krueger, Levine, Lander, and Menin will
5 not listen to those of us who oppose congestion
6 pricing. There are two change.org petitions that I'm
7 aware of with over 5,500 signatures and almost 300
8 comments opposing congestion pricing. In 2022, more
9 than 1,100 MTA employees doubled or even tripled
10 their salaries, costing taxpayers 1.3 billion in
11 overtime which was an increase of approximately 20
12 percent over 2021. I find it perplexing why other
13 countries can create reliable transit systems on time
14 and for a fraction of the cost of the MTA also while
15 using union workers. There is no way the MTA will
16 make the money needed through congestion pricing
17 because the research is based on pre-pandemic data
18 and doesn't match up to the current working or
19 driving conditions. As they say, the math ain't
20 mathing.

21 Nowhere in the MTA's project purpose,
22 need, and objectives is the climate crisis and
23 environment even mentioned. The purpose states to
24 reduce traffic congestion in the Manhattan Central
25 Business District in a manner that will generate

2 revenue for future transportation improvements
3 pursuant to acceptance into FHWA's Value Pricing
4 Pilot Program. If you reduce the amount of cars
5 coming into the Central Business District, how does
6 the MTA make the 15 billion dollars it needs? Again,
7 the math ain't mathing. This is nothing more than a
8 money-grab by a disorganized agency that has no idea
9 how to manage projects and politicians that can't or
10 won't hold them accountable. The American with
11 Disabilities Act at 33 years old says that just by
12 having a diagnosis of MS, I qualify as disabled, but
13 based on the MTA's requirements, I do not, and,
14 shockingly, 33 years after the ADA became the law,
15 the system is only hovering around 25 percent
16 accessible and on any given day with elevators and
17 escalators out of service, much less. Why should I be
18 forced to share my private health information with an
19 incompetent city agency asking me and my doctor to do
20 senseless paperwork when this can be solved a dozen
21 different ways off the top of my head alone that
22 won't hurt all of us.

23 If I had the money that other special
24 interest groups have backing them, you would be
25 hearing from me via a lawsuit rather than sitting in

2 front of you asking for you to protect us. We all
3 know that each passing year the CBD line will creep
4 uptown along with the fare amounts, but I keep
5 hearing we promise that there will be public comment
6 periods scheduled and so far nothing. Yet, no time
7 was wasted putting up the tolling infrastructure over
8 60th Street on the East and West Sides in the last
9 few weeks. To me, that says we don't have to listen
10 and we don't care anyway.

11 In closing, I urge, no, beg you, to go
12 back to your Colleagues and look at a different way
13 forward that won't negatively impact our city
14 including working-class people, small business,
15 people with disabilities, and those who will wake up
16 tomorrow with one, and the elderly. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BREIDBART: You can hit
19 the mic button. Thank you.

20 EVELYN DAVID: Thank you. Good afternoon.
21 Thank you very much for letting me speak. My name is
22 Evelyn David. I live in CB8 which is actually I live
23 just above the 60th Street line. The stanchions over
24 Park Avenue look like something out of Terminator.
25 You really need to go look. Park Avenue is

2 landmarked, and when I saw these things, I was like
3 no, you gotta be kidding me, right. I thought it was
4 going to be attached to light poles. No, there's a
5 huge metallic thing over Park Avenue. CB8 is not in
6 session right now. Wait until they come back. I'm
7 just warning.

8 Okay, so I'm going to start this with
9 this is not an air quality issue at all. It is a
10 money issue. The plan will force more and more
11 commuters to work from home, and the MTA will not
12 reach its billion-dollar goal. We already know that.
13 Those most affected will be the small business owners
14 who have to enter the zone and then pass the cost
15 onto consumers. Inflation goes up. What is the point?

16 Okay, the MTA Board overseeing congestion
17 plan, and I listened to it all, okay, did not allow
18 one person onto the Board from Manhattan to represent
19 the residents in the tolling district so they do not
20 know or care about the unintended consequences of
21 their decisions or whoever did this legislation.
22 However, they are giving a vast amount of money, and
23 I've heard 20 million dollars, to Congressman Ritchie
24 Torres' District in the Bronx, to the Bronx Council
25 Woman, not to her, but to pay for medical

2 consequences the rerouted traffic will cause due to
3 disastrous pollution problems that will be created so
4 they do know they are just pushing the congestion
5 north and not solving the problems. If you have a
6 problem, try to solve the problem. Community
7 Districts 8 and 9 will be severely impacted by
8 unbelievable traffic, pollution, and parking issues
9 that already exist that will be created so they don't
10 know they're just pushing congestion north, please
11 let me finish, to avoid the conges... Solution to the
12 MTA's financial and pollution problems created by the
13 150,000 Ubers and Lyfts and bike lanes that have
14 narrowed streets and created traffic flow problems is
15 simple. Build municipal parking lots in the outer
16 boroughs near the subway hubs and in Manhattan
17 anywhere and everywhere there's a vacant lot. I found
18 dozens just tooling around. Commuters and drivers
19 will immediately drive, be able to pay with E-ZPass,
20 jump on the subways and buses. This will create huge
21 increases in ridership on subways and buses and huge
22 revenues from the parking for the City/MTA, and air
23 pollution will dramatically go down. That's actually
24 a solution to this huge problem, the entirety of it.
25 Up in the Bronx, there are a lot of open spaces near

2 the subway hubs. People coming over the bridge could
3 park their cars and jump on the subways. Believe me,
4 they would be so happy to do it. Nobody really wants
5 to drive into Manhattan. Do you know what I mean?
6 It's like, okay, please consider this your chance to
7 affect change and help solve the problems in a
8 rational, practical, and realistic way. Thank you
9 very much for your attention.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BREIDBART: Thank you.

12 We'll next hear from Assemblyman Lester Chang.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BREIDBART: You may
14 begin when ready.

15 ASSEMBLYMAN LESTER CHANG: Thank you very
16 much. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for hosting
17 this Committee. I know how it feels. I've been there
18 myself too.

19 Had I been in office earlier, I would
20 have voted negative on congestion pricing.
21 Unfortunately, I became a Legislator only this year,
22 but I would've voted negatively had I had the
23 opportunity.

24 I represent South Brooklyn. That's
25 including Dyker Heights, Sunset Park, Borough Park,

2 and Bensonhurst. As a native-born Chinatown here, and
3 New York has morphed into three Chinatowns, Flushing,
4 Sunset Park, and New York Chinatown.

5 I fear congestion pricing will inherently
6 will kill, I mean literally kill, destroy New York
7 City Chinatown, and will definitely have unintended
8 effects, will affect my constituents because we have
9 businesses that intertwine between three Chinatowns.
10 For example, we have private buses that go between
11 New York Chinatown, Sunset Park, and Flushing, all
12 three, and that inherently will affect that. We have
13 business people that have multiple businesses in
14 three Chinatowns, and we haven't even considered that
15 too.

16 Now, as a retired military, military
17 intelligence, and I worked in the field of
18 transportation, got my Master Degree at SUNY Maritime
19 College in transportation, and I look at this to
20 (INAUDIBLE) as a simple solution for this. We should
21 have every bridge and tunnel pay a toll. No free
22 lunches. No free tolls. That equalizes the
23 transportation mode.

24 Second is pay one low price, perhaps
25 doubled the subway tokens, maybe add a little

2 premium, and then during the rush hour put a little
3 peak and off-peak times on that so maybe 8 dollars
4 for incoming or 5 dollars or whatever, 7 dollars,
5 whatever is two subway tokens. I know they go up in
6 prices tomorrow, and you double it as a peak and off-
7 peak so that would change the dynamics and the people
8 coming into the city itself.

9 Unfortunately, the genie is out of the
10 bottle. Congestion pricing is going along, and the
11 Governor is enthusiastically pushing this plan. I
12 fear that our three Chinatowns will be adversely
13 impacted and neighborhoods surrounding, in particular
14 the CBD area, will be severely impacted by congestion
15 pricing.

16 I hope we have a chance to reverse this
17 congestion pricing. I know MTA, my personal feeling
18 is an inept, inefficient, convoluted agency, and it's
19 not very efficient. I would prefer MTA to be a public
20 utilities like Con-Ed or National Grid to run
21 privately in a more efficient way than it is right
22 now. That's my personal feeling, and how have they
23 have solved so far the uncollected tolls, hundreds of
24 millions of dollars. I don't even know the exact
25 money, and I don't know if they know exactly how much

2 they're losing on fare beating, on license plate that
3 are being altered, and fake paper license plates. How
4 do we collect it? You're right, Council Member
5 Holden, because I've seen those MTA cops sitting out
6 there on those entrances looking and not doing
7 anything, no enforcement, and, unfortunately, even
8 our NYPD or the traffic enforcement not writing
9 tickets on those altered plates. They have the
10 authority to do it, but I don't see it done. That
11 money we save can go towards the MTA, but I fear that
12 this is a looming monster that will disrupt and
13 destroy our neighborhoods who depend on free travel
14 (INAUDIBLE) There has to be a better way to do
15 congestion pricing, but not this way. Yes, I visit
16 Singapore, London, on their congestion pricing
17 because I'm in transportation, I travel there all the
18 time, and they don't have neighborhoods like we do
19 have. Interdependent neighborhoods with businesses
20 and we do have central business but it has altered.
21 COVID has altered the business environment already.

22 Anyway, so that's my speech, and just pay
23 attention. Once it really comes out, I fear that our
24 business will be leaving, especially in the CBD area.

2 Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank
3 you for your time, and I know that this is a long
4 process. Thank you very much.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you so
6 much and thank you for participating today.

7 ASSEMBLYMAN LESTER CHANG: Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BREIDBART: Thank you.
9 Our next panel will be Julian Wong (phonetic), Brit
10 Byrd, Nader Henry (phonetic), and Wayne Chen
11 (phonetic).

12 You may begin when ready.

13 BRIT BYRD: Hi. Good afternoon. My name is
14 Brit Byrd. I'm a planner in the office of Brooklyn
15 Borough President Antonio Reynoso. I'm submitting
16 this testimony on his behalf.

17 Good afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and
18 Members of the Committee, and thank you for holding
19 this hearing today on this extremely important issue.

20 Congestion pricing has been a long time
21 coming, nearly 15 years, and I'm very happy to see it
22 finally moving forward. If we do it together and do
23 it right, congestion pricing is set to be a
24 win/win/win for our economy, environment, and people,
25 and will boost our public transit, clean up our air,

2 and make our streets safer, and we need it now.

3 Soaring rates of car ownership and the dire fiscal

4 needs of the MTA require urgency, but we cannot let

5 urgency and spurious lawsuits get in the way of doing

6 this right. We need a fair approach which means a fee

7 structure that provides as few exemptions as

8 possible. In other words, a broad base coupled with a

9 toll rate that does not disproportionately burden

10 non-exempt drivers. We need to take seriously our

11 responsibility to improving public health and

12 addressing climate change by removing as many cars

13 from our streets as possible. The vast majority of

14 New Yorkers stand to benefit from essential

15 investments to our transit system, such as improved

16 signaling to make trains faster and more reliable and

17 installing new elevators to make more stations ADA

18 accessible. New York is a transit, walking, and

19 cycling city. Of our over 8 million residents, only

20 5,200 New Yorkers live both more than a half mile

21 away from transit and commute into the congestion

22 zone by car. The revenue from congestion pricing will

23 help improve transit in the outer boroughs and move

24 us closer to a future where all New Yorkers live

25 close to reliable transit. We need to eliminate the

2 potential for toll shopping by equalizing fare
3 structures across all crossings. Crossing the East
4 River should not be the cheapest way for polluting
5 and dangerous trucks and cars without a local
6 destination to travel across our region. The
7 Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Williamsburg Bridges should
8 be priced on par with the Verrazano and Tri-Borough
9 Bridges so that through traffic no longer burdens
10 environmental justice communities in Brooklyn and
11 Lower Manhattan.

12 And, of course, we need to talk about our
13 neighbors in the South Bronx. One of the most
14 important outcomes of congestion pricing is reducing
15 air pollution across our city, and we need to
16 recognize that the environmental assessment
17 identifies potential risks of truck emission
18 increases for the South Bronx. This is an area that
19 already battles poor air quality, high asthma rates,
20 and other environmental injustices. It is vital that
21 the MTA follows through on a substantial mitigation
22 package that includes investments in open space, air
23 filtration, truck electrification, and expanding
24 DOT's off-hours truck delivery program.

2 In summary, for our city to continue to
3 function, we must get people out of their cars and
4 back onto reliable public transportation. Congestion
5 pricing is set to be mutually beneficial for the city
6 and region's economy, transit system, traffic
7 reduction efforts, and overall safety and quality of
8 life for Brooklynites and all New Yorkers.

9 Thank you, again, for holding this
10 hearing today. I look forward to continuing to
11 partner with the City Council, Albany, and the MTA to
12 make our streets healthier and deliver world-class
13 public transportation in Brooklyn.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BREIDBART: Thank you.
15 Do you have copies of your testimony or you can
16 submit it online?

17 BRIT BYRD: I submitted online and
18 provided a copy to the Sergeant-at-Arms.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BREIDBART: Okay, thank
20 you.

21 Please go ahead when ready.

22 JULIAN WONG: Hi. Thank you, Council
23 Members, for speaking today. I'm here speaking about
24 390 today, about QueensLink. I am a student studying
25 transportation engineering in university at the

2 moment, but, more fundamentally, I'm a New Yorker
3 whose family has never owned a car and who has never
4 had experience or the opportunity to drive ever and
5 has relied on public transportation ever since and,
6 maybe even more fundamentally, I'm a human being who
7 desires freedom of mobility. I live in the Bay Ridge
8 Dyker Heights area, and I have many, many reasons to
9 go out to Richmond Hill, Regal Park. I have
10 volunteering opportunities in Richmond Hill pretty
11 frequently. I have friends, family in eastern and
12 central Queens, and it is a massive pain to get there
13 at the moment. The J train is not nearly adequate
14 enough to be serving that area for the demand for
15 transportation to that area. Assuming all of these
16 roles, a student in transportation engineering, a New
17 Yorker, and just a person who just has a reason to be
18 in those areas, QueensLink is just a goldmine. We're
19 just sitting on a goldmine here. We need to realize
20 that we have such a valuable piece of transportation
21 infrastructure just readily available for us to
22 convert to a usable rail corridor. A common myth is
23 that parks and rail corridors cannot co-exist
24 simultaneously along the same corridors. Seeing and
25 participating in the work that QueensLink does, I

2 know firsthand that it is extremely possible for the
3 Long Island Railroad corridor, the disused Long
4 Island Railroad corridor there to house both an
5 active rail corridor and a (INAUDIBLE) park. I
6 encourage everyone in the Council to act upon this.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

9 NADER HENRY: Hi, Madam Chair and all the
10 City Council. I'm a yellow cab driver, and I'm a
11 member of NYTWA, and this is very hard for us, for
12 the yellow cab, if we have to pay that congestion
13 price. Coming from 60th Street to downtown, we
14 already pay \$2.50 plus 50 cents twice, that's 3
15 dollars for MTA. We collect every fare we pick up. A
16 lot of time we have a hard time because sometimes the
17 passenger don't like the prices because MTA, if we
18 have go with this, this is the end of the yellow,
19 (INAUDIBLE) the end, but it's likely going to be end
20 for the yellow cab because we cannot afford. I'm
21 telling you right now I have a big bill. The City
22 tries to have the yellow cab with the bill, but some
23 lender accept the deal and now they don't accept the
24 deal. (INAUDIBLE) this happen, few yellow cab very
25 happy, you know the yellow cab is not happy because

2 they didn't work for them. That's why right now I
3 think more money to us, that makes more bills for us.
4 Madam Chair, I ask you to see that, see what you can
5 do to prevent us paying this congesting price.

6 Also, I will ask you if you can talk to
7 (INAUDIBLE) if they can see why some lender accept
8 the deal and some don't accept the deal because some
9 yellow cab get help, some don't. That means it's not
10 fair. I would like, because when I was in the meeting
11 at City Hall, the Mayor (INAUDIBLE) they said they're
12 going to help all the yellow cab who has problem with
13 the bill, 30,000-dollar City guarantee, but that
14 never happened. That happened for a few drivers, but
15 there are 570 drivers who don't have that deal. It's
16 very hard, and that's why I ask all of you to think
17 about it or to find why that happened.

18 I thank you very much for your help.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
20 that. I do have followup questions if I can, just
21 wanting to understand the impact more also because I
22 do have concerns about the yellow taxi cabs in
23 particular having a double tax on them.

24 In terms of what was shared earlier from
25 the MTA about the yellow taxi cabs and the FHV's

2 having the tax one time per day versus each time in
3 and out, what do you feel is the direct impact for
4 you from first experience and what that means? Does
5 that mean that you would avoid taking trips into the
6 CBD and look elsewhere to pick up trips or what would
7 happen?

8 NADER HENRY: That's where the business is
9 for yellow cab. If we avoid to come down, that's the
10 end of the yellow cab. That's the end of it. They
11 have to find a way to exempt the yellow cab. We can
12 bring people because their business is down here.
13 That's where we pick up uptown, 96th, come downtown,
14 airport. That's what we do. We are public
15 transportation. You have a problem, you come to the
16 yellow cab, and yellow cab is the culture of New
17 York, is the culture. I don't know what to say. It's
18 the culture. If there's no yellow cab, how does the
19 City look like? Come on. They're trying to destroy
20 yellow cab. It makes no sense.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
22 that, and I agree, like the yellow cab is an iconic
23 feature of New York City, and we recognize the
24 troubles that have been happening, and I hope we have
25

2 you in the fall when we have another hearing that's
3 going to be specific to the TLC...

4 NADER HENRY: I'd be pleased to be here.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: To really talk
6 about the program that's in place right now because I
7 hear you saying like not everyone took advantage of
8 it and that there are reasons so in the fall there
9 will be an opportunity to really delve into that so I
10 appreciate your testimony.

11 NADER HENRY: Okay, I'd be pleased to be
12 here, Madam Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

14 WAYNE CHEN: Hi. Good afternoon, Council.
15 Thank you for letting me speak. My name is Wayne
16 Chen. I'm also a member of New York Taxi Workers
17 Alliance. I've been driving yellow for over 20 years.
18 We've been paying MTA 50 cents from 2009, and the MTA
19 added another tax, congestion surcharge, in 2019, so
20 we're (INAUDIBLE) paying 3 dollars each ride into
21 Manhattan so the total account, like average total is
22 like 15,000 a year (INAUDIBLE) paying MTA, and if
23 they add another fee or tax on the yellow, it will
24 very impair our income because the customer base is
25 not back to normal to the pre-pandemic level yet. We

2 still have less persons than before, and that would
3 impair our income very much. Most of the medallion
4 owners, they have a loan. As you all know, 2021, we
5 demonstrated outside of City Hall for six days to
6 have the (INAUDIBLE). Mayor de Blasio agreed to
7 (INAUDIBLE) the loan. The Mayor then last year, he
8 started restructure the loan, but we still have
9 170,000 loan, most medallion, but some of the
10 medallion owners, like myself, they don't have a loan
11 restructure yet. We're still waiting for the
12 restructure. If they add another tax on that, I don't
13 think we can survive because we're already paying our
14 share to the MTA already. We don't need additional
15 fee or tax either on the driver or the passenger so
16 we ask for your help to get the exemption. No new fee
17 on the driver or the passenger. We're already paying
18 our share, 3 dollars a fare, on the MTA, 15,000 a
19 year on average paying them, so let us survive, let
20 us live, let us provide our kids, our family. Also,
21 we're an essential part of New York City. We provide
22 door-to-door service to the elderly people, disabled
23 people. We are working 24 hours a day, most of the
24 cab drivers, they're working day and night shift,
25 rain or shine. MTA, the train not running; we're

2 running. During storms, we are working so please help
3 us exempt for the new fee and taxes. Thank you so
4 much.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
6 your testimony as well.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BREIDBART: Thank you.
8 We'll now call our next panel. Andrew Schloss,
9 Tiffany-Ann Taylor, Elizabeth Adams, and Dan
10 Rodriguez.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: As the next
12 panel is coming up, I just want to reiterate that the
13 City Council does not have the authority in terms of
14 exemptions as it was stated in the hearing earlier so
15 I just want to make sure that we're being clear in
16 the separation of roles.

17 You may proceed.

18 ANDREW SCHLOSS: Thank you, Madam Chair
19 and esteemed Members of the Council. My name is
20 Andrew Schloss. I'm a New York City based transit-
21 riding urban planner, and I work for Flix North
22 America which operates two intercity bus brands in
23 New York City, Flix Bus and Greyhound Lines. Thank
24 you so much for the opportunity for us to speak on
25 this policy. I'm here to represent Flix and Greyhound

2 and express our sincere belief that intercity buses
3 as a vital part of the solution to congestion and
4 climate change should be exempt from the Central
5 Business District tolling program.

6 We are proud to call New York our home
7 and to provide vital connections from Manhattan to
8 hundreds of destinations throughout the country along
9 with our partners in the industry. Flix is proud to
10 support this policy as it advances our shared
11 commitment to ensure a green and smart transportation
12 future for all New Yorkers. We believe that exempting
13 intercity buses from the program is key to making it
14 a success.

15 Firstly, a robust intercity bus service
16 is one of the best ways to fight congestion. Each
17 intercity bus can take at least 50 single-occupant
18 vehicles out of the CBD's roadways.

19 Second, numerous studies have shown that
20 intercity buses are the most energy-efficient and
21 environmentally beneficial mode of motorized
22 passenger transportation. These studies demonstrate
23 that intercity buses use the least amount of energy
24 and produce the lowest carbon dioxide emissions per
25 passenger mile of any motorized transportation mode.

2 The studies include Getting There Greener by the
3 Union of Concerned Scientist and Updated Comparison
4 of Energy Use and Emissions from Different
5 Transportation Modes by MJB&A in June of 2019.

6 Additionally, we believe that exempting
7 intercity buses would allow the policy to best
8 advance environmental justice. Persons in minority
9 populations and low-income persons rely on intercity
10 bus service for much of their transportation.

11 Additionally, Greyhound's passenger profile
12 illustrates this point. Greyhound is a majority
13 minority bus service provider. In a survey conducted
14 in 2019 prior to the pandemic, Greyhound found that
15 56 percent of its passengers were members of ethnic
16 minorities, and 57 percent of its ridership is low-
17 income.

18 Finally, federal law requires that
19 privately operated, over-the-road buses be treated
20 the same way as public transportation buses in FHWA-
21 sponsored projects like the CBDTP, and that
22 requirement should mean that all buses, both transit
23 and intercity, should be exempt from CBDTP tolls.

24

25

2 Thank you so much for the opportunity to
3 comment on this policy, and, yeah, looking forward to
4 hear more.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BREIDBART: You may go
7 ahead.

8 TIFFANY-ANN TAYLOR: Hello and thank you
9 to the Chair and Committee for holding this hearing
10 today. My name is Tiffany-Ann Taylor, and I am Vice
11 President for Transportation at the Regional Plan
12 Association. I am also representing the Congestion
13 Pricing Now Coalition, which includes dozens of
14 civic, community, transit, and environmental groups
15 that support congestion pricing. We support improving
16 the bus and bike networks of the city as this program
17 advances and look to your support to ensure the
18 Street Master Plan is implemented.

19 We would also like to support on five
20 recommendations we have shared with the Traffic
21 Mobility Review Board. First, use bridge and tunnel
22 toll credits to reduce excess travel, especially
23 through environmental justice communities. By
24 equalizing tolls across all entry points, we can
25 reduce toll-shopping by incentivizing drivers to take

2 the most direct route. This will require the program
3 to consider other MTA and Port Authority toll
4 credits.

5 Second, with for-hire vehicles, we think
6 the program should assess a per ride surcharge paid
7 by the passenger rather than once-per-day toll paid
8 by the driver. A per ride surcharge paid by
9 passengers will reduce financial burdens for drivers
10 while creating a new revenue stream. We do not
11 believe this per trip surcharge should apply to taxis
12 given their existing financial burdens.

13 Third, both public and private commuter
14 buses should be exempt from tolls. We should be
15 encouraging the use of public and private bus fleets
16 that connect riders to intermodal transportation hubs
17 within the zone.

18 Fourth, no additional exemptions should
19 be granted beyond commuter buses and the
20 legislatively mandated exemptions. Any exemptions
21 beyond these recommendations and commitments made by
22 the MTA earlier this year will raise the base toll
23 paid by drivers and deteriorate the effectiveness of
24 the program.

2 Fifth, trucks and large vehicles should
3 pay a per axle toll. These vehicles have a greater
4 impact on our infrastructure and health and should
5 pay more based on their size and weight.

6 Thank you for your time.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
8 your testimony. Just a followup question. When you
9 talk about transferring the cost from the driver to
10 the passenger, are you talking about the full tax to
11 the passenger?

12 TIFFANY-ANN TAYLOR: Yes, the additional
13 charge, yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So
15 hypothetically if the tax was to be 23 dollars, you
16 would want a passenger to pay 23 dollars on top of
17 the trip?

18 TIFFANY-ANN TAYLOR: Yes. If I can
19 respectfully remind Council that the 23, again, this
20 is a hypothetical situation. Under the environmental
21 assessment, the range proposed was 9 to 23 dollars.
22 Also, in the environmental assessment, for-hire
23 vehicle drivers and taxi drivers were recognized as
24 members of environmental justice communities as well
25 so we want to make sure that we're not suggesting

2 something that would be an additional tax on that
3 community, and that's why we're suggesting a per trip
4 surcharge of which the customer would pay.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And then just
6 staying in line there with the hypotheticals, for
7 like seniors, so right now we know that there's going
8 to be a low-income carveout and a disability
9 carveout, however they decide to let that play out.
10 For example, like seniors or folks who need medical
11 treatment, right, because like in my District we are
12 not only a transit desert but also a healthcare
13 desert as well where we don't have a trauma hospital
14 in my District. When I was pregnant, I had to take a
15 cab into the city to get to my hospital, and so I
16 just am wondering like how do you think through for
17 those respective groups as well because when you
18 think about the communities such as I mentioned
19 earlier today, Canarsie or Southeast Queens, where
20 the transportation infrastructure has not been
21 expanded in decades, how do you envision for those
22 commuters to get there?

23 TIFFANY-ANN TAYLOR: I think it's
24 important to recognize that there have been
25 improvements that have been made in the transit

2 system system-wide, and congestion pricing is another
3 way to make sure that there is dedicated funding for
4 capital projects to expand other parts of the system.
5 You heard earlier MTA testimony on things like the
6 Interborough Express, 2nd Avenue subway, other
7 station upgrades, and then also making sure that
8 there are continued investments in the current bus
9 system. There is a distinction between perhaps a rail
10 desert and a true transit desert. Some of the
11 communities that you're talking about fall into
12 different categories as well.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: We actually
14 fall into both but go ahead.

15 TIFFANY-ANN TAYLOR: Agreed, and I would
16 also say that there should be an additional push that
17 perhaps expands beyond this particular hearing and
18 also beyond the policy of congestion pricing itself
19 on what can we do to make sure that there are
20 additional discounted programs that folks can
21 participate in as it relates to using public
22 transportation systems so folks are perhaps members
23 of the disability community or senior citizens who
24 may also qualify under other programs that maybe
25 they're not able to take advantage of or may be

2 unaware of that there is still opportunity to make
3 sure that folks are fully enrolled so a great example
4 of that is something like a Fair Fares program which
5 I know although the has graciously added additional
6 funding for still has not met maximum capture rate
7 for riders so making sure that there are still
8 continued investments in other programs to support
9 that system as well.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I think that
11 your response just now is in line with what I was
12 stating all along which is we have to look at other
13 potential exemptions to make sure that marginalized
14 groups are not further left behind. In terms of like
15 the investments that the MTA shared earlier today,
16 while they have made a lot of great strides, there
17 has been no expansion of any system in terms of rail
18 in parts of the city that most need it, and they
19 still need more bus frequency, for example, so
20 there's a lot of work to be done. The MTA is in the
21 right direction for sure, but I think it's important
22 when we have these conversations to think about the
23 reality of today. We know what we're looking to move
24 towards, but we can't move towards it while leaving a

2 whole community behind. That's what Robert Moses did,
3 and that's what we cannot afford to do.

4 TIFFANY-ANN TAYLOR: Agreed. Thank you for
5 your comments and the time this afternoon.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, and
7 it's nice seeing you in person.

8 TIFFANY-ANN TAYLOR: Same here.

9 DAN RODRIGUEZ: My name is Dan Rodriguez,
10 and I am before you as a representative of Coach USA,
11 it's subsidiaries, and of the Bus Association of New
12 Jersey, of which I am President of. I would like to
13 thank the Chair and the Members of the Committee for
14 this opportunity to address you today.

15 Coach USA is one of the largest
16 transportation operators in North America. We operate
17 more than 2,500 buses and coaches, employ thousands
18 of transportation professionals across the United
19 States and Canada. We provide critical local and
20 intercity transport services for communities
21 throughout the New York metropolitan area. Our
22 services are particularly crucial for a diverse range
23 of economically vulnerable families who rely on
24 affordable transportation to access work
25 opportunities in Manhattan who, on average, pay

2 \$10.50 for travel into the congestion district,
3 making it the most affordable and, in some cases, the
4 only mode of transportation available to them. In
5 total, Coach USA operates more than 25 bus carriers
6 that operate scheduled bus routes, motorcoach tours,
7 airport shuttles, and charters. The bus routes
8 operated by Coach USA subsidiaries include private
9 passenger service as well as federally funded public
10 transit service including our service throughout New
11 York. Thus, while a private carrier, we are
12 fundamentally intertwined with public transit bus
13 service in the New York region.

14 Among our subsidiaries, Megabus, a
15 noteworthy intercity motorcoach service launched in
16 April 2006, Megabus focuses on the northeast and
17 provides daily express service with fares as low as 1
18 dollar. With 196 daily routes and four Manhattan
19 stops, Megabus facilitates travel to various
20 destinations in New York and beyond. The relationship
21 between Megabus and Manhattan is crucial as it
22 benefits our passengers who depend on affordable and
23 efficient transportation to the New York metropolitan
24 area. Congestion toll pricing is what economists call
25 demand-side solution. Raise the price of something

2 and demand will fall, resulting in less congested
3 streets and improved air quality. However, this
4 approach while also trying to maximize revenue makes
5 it tricky, especially when it's to lower the current
6 43-billion-dollar deficit the MTA is currently
7 grappling with.

8 I want to emphasize and make clear that
9 we are committed to addressing New York's traffic
10 congestion concerns. Through our public
11 transportation services, we transport 24,000
12 passengers daily and over 8 million annually. Thus,
13 removing an equivalent of 8 million cars from
14 Manhattan streets every year.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I'm sorry. I'm
16 just going to ask if you could give us an abbreviated
17 version. We do have it for the record though.

18 DAN RODRIGUEZ: Sure. As most of our
19 riders are essential members of New York City's daily
20 life, including first responders, healthcare workers,
21 and union workers, additionally 83 percent of New
22 York voters say that public transportation provides
23 easy access to the things they rely on in their daily
24 lives, which they may not have access to otherwise
25 according to the New York Public Transit Association.

2 In recognition of these invaluable public
3 benefits served by our bus services and to prevent
4 operational disruptions (INAUDIBLE) congestion tolls,
5 we urge the MTA, the Board, and the Traffic Mobility
6 Review Board to exempt buses from the program's tolls
7 such as in London, Stockholm, and Singapore, which
8 already adopt this approach. No bus in these cities
9 is required to pay a toll. This promotes bus
10 ridership, which in turn reduces passenger cars and
11 the resulting environmental impacts while also
12 boosting economic activity. There is a reason that
13 these cities concluded that buses are to be exempt
14 from tolling, and a contradictory conclusion should
15 not be reached here today. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. For
18 our next panel, please come up Susan Lee, Alia Soomro
19 (phonetic), Zach Miller, and Gregor Winkel
20 (phonetic).

21 Please begin when you're ready.

22 SUSAN LEE: Good afternoon. Thank you,
23 Chairwoman, for having this hearing. My name is Susan
24 Lee. I am the Founding President of the Alliance for
25 Community Preservation and Betterment. I'm a resident

2 of Lower Manhattan and a constituent of Council
3 Member Christopher Marte. I'm here to testify against
4 congestion pricing.

5 We've heard from various Council Members
6 and speakers that this congestion pricing tax is a
7 regressive tax, a tax on the working-class and those
8 who can least afford it. Instead, I will use my time
9 to speak about the lack of real community engagement
10 from the MTA Traffic Mobility Board.

11 In the press release issued by the MTA on
12 August 21, 2022, titled Reminder: Public Hearings on
13 the Proposed Congestion Pricing Program Begins this
14 Thursday, August 25th. This was a press release
15 issued in 2022. All the dates listed were in August
16 for public comment period. Hosting public comment
17 periods in the summer is unproductive and robs our
18 residents the opportunity to provide meaningful
19 feedback. I was one of those who was on vacation
20 during this time last year, and I remember I was in
21 Denver airport frantically texting members of my
22 WhatsApp group about the hearing and that members who
23 are in the city and are available should dial in and
24 comment. I called into one of those sessions on
25 August 25th and listened while I sat at the waiting

2 area to board my airplane. Unfortunately, like all
3 hearings, like this one today, that lasted several
4 hours, I didn't have the opportunity to provide my
5 public comment because I had to board my airplane.
6 When agency conducts half-baked hearings under the
7 guise of community engagement, when the community are
8 not available to participate, it is merely just
9 checking off the box that they engaged with the
10 community and the work is done.

11 Lastly, for the record, MTA did not reach
12 out to the Chinese ethnic media about these public
13 hearings. For the record, I called Sing Tao
14 newspaper, one of the largest Chinese papers in New
15 York City along the eastern corridor, and their ad
16 manager told me that MTA did not place an ad about
17 any of the public hearings. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
19 sharing that.

20 GREGOR WINKEL: Good morning. Thank you
21 for the opportunity to express my opinion here.
22 Actually, I changed my (INAUDIBLE) what I wrote out
23 here a little bit according to what I heard. First of
24 all, my impression is everything is a little backward
25 here. There are so many open questions actually, and

2 I'm actually hopeful to see that some of the Council
3 Members are not supporting congestion pricing.

4 Actually, I'm surprised about it, but, hopefully, it
5 gets somewhere.

6 In that sense, I think the process is
7 backward because there are so many open questions
8 that actually need to be and would have needed to be
9 clarified before a decision is made to implement
10 congestion pricing. Okay, it's gone already very far.

11 Second, actually, I feel as someone who
12 relies on a car a little bit like a raw piece of meat
13 that is thrown in front of an angry wolf, and the
14 angry wolf is actually the MTA, and I'm the driver,
15 the piece of meat.

16 Let me go to what I think about this
17 congestion pricing. I mean you see that I'm
18 testifying against it already. First of all, the idea
19 is absurd if you think about it. At the same time,
20 you want as less drivers as possible in the
21 congestion zone. On the other side, you want, at the
22 same time actually, you want to maximize the number,
23 but it has been said already to increase, to have the
24 revenue maxed out.

2 Just as an aside, I want to especially
3 focus on that this congestion pricing is extremely
4 socially unjust, and I'm surprised the Democrats have
5 pushed it actually forward, but, anyhow, it is
6 socially unjust in so far that it hits actually
7 people from the lower-income and borderline middle-
8 income group. These are people that have reasons that
9 they have to come to drive into the city, and it's
10 just put on their shoulders to finance the MTA. How
11 did that idea come up actually? (INAUDIBLE) For that
12 reason, I think actually the whole thing needs to be
13 stopped. Unfortunately, it's pretty much in motion
14 already, but the only thing that can be done because
15 the whole thing is completely not thought well
16 through. It's not a viable solution to solve the
17 transportation problem. It needs to be canceled. I
18 hear a lot about people, that they want to be exempt.
19 The problem is the exemption I see is first you have
20 to pay the tax. First you have to pay the toll and
21 then you hope that according to your income you might
22 get your tax returned, but if you do some overtime
23 then suddenly you might go a little over the
24 threshold and then you're not guaranteed your money
25 back.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Sir, I'm
3 sorry.

4 GREGOR WINKEL: I just want to mention as
5 well that it's 5,000 to 6,000 dollars. That's a lot
6 of money for people that are poor or that are middle-
7 income, and that has certainly not been considered.
8 This is pretty much what I want to say.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

10 GREGOR WINKEL: Yeah, thank you. I hope
11 the Council Members, maybe they consider to stop this
12 congestion pricing. It's really unfair to the lower-
13 class..

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. We
15 need to go to the next person. Thank you.

16 ZACH MILLER: Good afternoon, Chair
17 Brooks-Powers and Members of the Transportation and
18 Infrastructure Committee. My name is Zach Miller, and
19 I am the Director of Metro Region Operations for the
20 Trucking Association of New York. I thank you for
21 convening this critical oversight hearing.

22 I'd like to focus my testimony both on
23 refuting some of the claims made by the MTA and the
24 environmental assessment as well as offering some
25 suggestions that this Body has sway over too.

2 First and foremost, the claim that cost
3 of new toll would not result in changes in the cost
4 of most consumer goods is absurd. In making this
5 claim, the EA states that trucking companies would
6 pass along the cost of the new toll to multiple
7 customers since trucks make multiple deliveries,
8 therefore minimizing the cost to any individual
9 business. The EA fails to recognize that businesses
10 frequently receive multiple deliveries a day.
11 Restaurants, for example, may receive one delivery
12 with produce, one delivery with beverages, one
13 delivery with meats, and another delivery with linens
14 and supplies all on the same day. Each of these
15 deliveries will be more expensive because of the CBD
16 toll and an aggregate will create significant
17 increased costs on everything businesses rely on to
18 operate. Mind you, trucking companies already pay a
19 congestion tax to operate in New York City that
20 passenger vehicles do not in the form of the
21 commercial vehicle tax or CMVT. This 400-dollar tax
22 per truck equates to tens of thousands of dollars per
23 company annually in addition to being an
24 administrative burden. Eliminating this tax will help

2 mitigate congestion pricing costs from being passed
3 on.

4 In addition to the CMVT, commercial
5 vehicles are also subject to highway use tax which
6 imposes a tax on every mile a vehicle operates in New
7 York including New York City. Passenger vehicles are
8 not subject to this tax.

9 As it pertains to the 50 percent discount
10 on off-peak tolls, TANY does not believe this will
11 have a significant impact on shifting truck traffic
12 to off-peak periods. Trucking companies do not
13 determine the time of day that they travel. The
14 businesses they service do. According to NYC DOT, 80
15 percent of all commercial activity is between the
16 hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. with the peak between 8
17 a.m. and 9 a.m. This is when businesses are open and
18 receive their deliveries. If professional drivers do
19 not have deliveries to make during off-peak hours or
20 have a safe place to park to stage for delivery next
21 day, there is no incentive for them to travel off-
22 peak hours.

23 Well, that went by pretty quickly, didn't
24 it?

2 I think just one other thing to raise is
3 in Manhattan there still is Clear Lanes, Clear Curbs.
4 This was originally put in in Manhattan, in Queens,
5 and in Brooklyn as an alternative to congestion
6 pricing. It is no longer in place in Queens or in
7 Brooklyn, but it is still in Manhattan. We feel with
8 congestion pricing coming in as well as Broadway
9 Vision, some of these other street changes that Clear
10 Lanes, Clear Curbs is obsolete, and it would really
11 make deliveries flow more efficiently when congestion
12 pricing comes in.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

14 ALIA SOOMRO: Good afternoon. My name is
15 Alia Soomro, and I'm the Deputy Director for New York
16 City Policy at the New York League of Conservation
17 Voters. Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers and Members of
18 the Committee on Transportation for the opportunity
19 to testify today. I have submitted longer written
20 comments.

21 Congestion in New York City's Central
22 Business District contributes to delays for emergency
23 vehicles, buses, delivery vehicles, and drivers.
24 Compounding this, decades of disinvestment in our
25 public transit system has led to an unreliable and

2 inaccessible system. NYLCC is a longstanding advocate
3 of congestion pricing and is a member of the
4 Congestion Pricing Now Coalition.

5 New York's congestion pricing program is
6 required to generate at least 1 billion annually for
7 the MTA's capital program, bringing in historic
8 investments to modernize and update our public
9 transportation system, including our subway's aging
10 signal system, 100 percent electric buses,
11 improvements to Metro North and Long Island Railroads
12 as well as long-needed accessibility improvements
13 such as elevators and ramps. Congestion pricing will
14 also help New York meet its statutory obligations
15 under the CLCPA, a state law which calls for cutting
16 greenhouse gas emissions. This program is a win for
17 the region because it will fund public transit,
18 reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and
19 public health, and help our State meet our greenhouse
20 gas reduction goals.

21 With that said, as we near the
22 implementation of this program, NYLCC has outlined
23 several transportation policy recommendations for the
24 City to prioritize in order to make this program most
25 effective for New Yorkers. Here are a few.

2 First, we need to timely implement the
3 New York City Streets plan that would improve and
4 expand public transportation options including
5 busways and bike lanes throughout the city.

6 Second, we need to prioritize improving
7 bus service. This includes but is not limited to
8 expediting routes in communities with the longest and
9 slowest bus commutes.

10 Third, we need to prioritize projects
11 that will improve accessibility in the short term.
12 DOT should immediately start planning a citywide
13 accessibility network for safe routes for schools and
14 safe routes for seniors.

15 Lastly, we encourage the City Council to
16 pass Intro. 417 of 2022, a bill that would streamline
17 notification process for street safety and traffic
18 improvement measures.

19 To ensure that this program, the first in
20 the nation, is most effective for New Yorkers, we
21 urge the City to adopt the policy recommendations
22 I've outlined in my written comments. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I
24 believe Council Member Holden, you have a questions?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yes, I just want
3 to ask you a question. By the way, is the MTA,
4 anybody from the MTA still here?

5 You see how they're listening.

6 I just want to ask you a question, your
7 organization, since you're higher up in Conservation
8 Voters. When I brought up the fact that there's no
9 environmental impact study, which you know the
10 difference between the assessment and the impact, the
11 assessment takes all of 30 days maybe to complete, if
12 that. I've never seen a negative one be issued, first
13 of all, the assessment. You're almost paying for that
14 organization to say yes. If you look at the success
15 rate of an environmental assessment study, it's like
16 99.9 percent they're going to say it's great. Your
17 organization has a chance here to say we need an
18 impact study to protect the neighborhoods that are
19 going to be impacted because you're just going to
20 shift traffic, and those neighborhoods have a problem
21 now with health so what is your organization say, why
22 wouldn't you push for in your recommendations an
23 impact study?

24 ALIA SOOMRO: I can't speak to the EIS
25 versus EA, but I can say that we support the

2 mitigation measures that the MTA, City, and State
3 have committed recently, especially the ones in the
4 South Bronx, but we still encourage the City to have
5 those types of environmental justice mitigation
6 measures throughout the city. That includes having a
7 clean truck program and electrifying vehicles at
8 Hunts Point and planting more trees and vegetation
9 around highways. We definitely are in favor of
10 throughout the city.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I understand that,
12 but if you get a lot more congestion in those
13 neighborhoods, like gridlock, that's not helping
14 anyone, so if you did an impact study, you'd find
15 that out. You would really get that information
16 because they would really do over maybe a year or a
17 year and a half study to go over this so I would
18 think, and I expected to be in your testimony, that
19 you should want and push for an environmental impact
20 study because that's what you're about. You should
21 want an exhaustive study so I would bring that back
22 to your organization, and, on the truckers by the
23 way, everyone knows prices are going to go up and
24 we're going to realize higher costs for everything
25 that trucks bring in. Everyone knows that except the

2 MTA so I wanted somebody to say, I'm glad you said
3 it, because it is an issue, and every business knows
4 this, and I'm surprised the MTA doesn't know this.

5 ZACH MILLER: That was the line that I
6 highlighted here that we read that in the FONSI, and
7 we were just like how can they actually say there's
8 no impact when they talk about from the trucking end,
9 well, they make multiple deliveries. It's like, yeah,
10 and receivers get multiple deliveries. That's how it
11 works so, yeah, we're on the same...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: That's basic
13 capitalism 101, that you're going to pass the costs
14 of any, your costs are going, you're not going to
15 bear the brunt. You're going to pass it over to
16 consumers, and, again, why the MTA is not advertising
17 anywhere, especially the neighborhoods that will be
18 impacted is because they're demonstrating today they
19 don't care. They're not here. They don't want to
20 listen to you. Thank you.

21 GALLERY: [APPLAUSE]

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Please no
23 clapping or you'll be asked to leave. Thank you.

24

25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. Our
3 next panel, Valerie Mason, Irving Lee (phonetic),
4 Patrick Condren, and Briana Carbajal.

5 You can begin when ready.

6 VALERIE MASON: Thank you very much. Thank
7 you, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to meet you in
8 person. You and I have spoken on the phone about the
9 Longfellow Tower and other matters.

10 My name is Valerie Mason, and I'm the
11 President of the East 72nd Neighborhoods Association
12 as well as a co-founder of the Coalition in
13 Opposition to Congestion Pricing. Unfortunately, I
14 understand that the City Council can't do anything
15 about this congestion pricing plan and they have no
16 leverage or no authority to talk about exemptions and
17 other parts. I found the testimony this morning of
18 the representatives of the MTA to continue to be less
19 than transparent and very, let's say, disingenuous.
20 They talk about now that the reason for congestion
21 pricing is to stop or mitigate congestion. I don't
22 see anywhere in the charter of the MTA that it is
23 their prerogative to administer and oversee
24 congestion on the streets of New York City. This
25 congestion pricing is a cash-grab. That is all it is.

2 It has nothing to do with reducing pollution. It has
3 nothing to do with reducing congestion. For the
4 program to be effective, congestion has to happen.
5 What I'm asking is because this law was passed in
6 2019, here we are less than 300 days from
7 implementation and what we heard today is everything
8 is in progress. What I'm asking the City Council to
9 do is to pass a resolution asking the State
10 Government to put a pause on where this program is so
11 that there can be a complete environmental
12 assessment, a complete look at what the detrimental
13 effects of this program are going to be on New York
14 City. I would like our electeds to see that the
15 emperor is naked. The people see it. We want our
16 electeds to see that.

17 I just want to end by saying that I got
18 down here in an Uber from the Upper East Side. It
19 took 17 minutes, okay. I talked to the driver in the
20 car. I told him where I was going. He said, you know,
21 I'm getting out of this business. I've been in it for
22 over 20 years. 70 percent of all my fares go to the
23 government or the MTA. I can't make ends meet. We
24 need our working-class New Yorkers to make New York
25 City continue to be the city that it is, and I

2 applaud the Chair for her questions of the MTA, I
3 grew up in Queens, I know it's a transportation
4 desert. This island of Manhattan has to be accessible
5 to all residents of the City of New York and
6 metropolitan areas. The effect of congestion pricing
7 will make Manhattan an island for the wealthy and
8 healthy, and that is everything that this city has
9 been against since I was born here many years ago.
10 Thank you very much.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

12 IRVING LEE: My name is Irving Lee. I'm
13 currently exception to the rule. I just want to tell
14 you for the record I was a member of TWA Local 100,
15 I'm an ex-transit worker, I was a subway motorman and
16 conductor for 32 years so I've worked the system,
17 I've seen the structures, I've walked the structures
18 in my career. I retired in 2016, and I'm currently
19 for building mass transit. I'm for capital projects,
20 but I don't think congestion pricing, and I know
21 congestion pricing is not the solution because the
22 amount of revenue necessary to rebuild our structure
23 and to expand our mass transportation is going to far
24 exceed the incomes that are needed to be provided. It
25 really takes federal intervention just like we have

2 federal intervention for wars, to pay for wars, we
3 really need federal intervention to pay for the
4 expansion. It really cannot come from the working
5 public because there's not going to be enough and
6 then what's going to happen is that you're going to
7 reduce businesses, that's how you're going to
8 congestion down is that you're going to reduce
9 businesses, put businesses out of business, and
10 that's going to reduce congestion. I mean that's
11 (INAUDIBLE) reduce congestion so that's really what
12 the problem is. It's a contradictory business model.
13 Now, living in Chinatown, I'm also, besides being an
14 ex-union member, I was an elected representative for
15 Local 100, I'm also a small business owner, small
16 property owner in Chinatown, and I can see the long-
17 term consequences if this congestion pricing takes
18 place. A lot of businesses in Chinatown will be
19 greatly affected. Doctors' offices will be affected
20 because many of their patients rely on cars to get
21 into the city, and they will lose many of the
22 businesses as a consequence so this would have
23 negative long-term consequences.

24 I believe that a lot of the studies that
25 were made for congestion pricing were fundamentally

2 dishonest including the original Planning Association
3 which just testified. They never take into account
4 the one-way tolls that were in place at the time of
5 the Verrazano Narrows Bridge that created additional
6 congestion through Manhattan. That was never taken
7 into account nor the expansion of Lyft and Uber. Not
8 that I'm saying we're against it, but there was never
9 taken into account, there was never an honest
10 assessment and also the negative consequences of
11 congestion pricing.

12 I think the rules that are in place that
13 are being proposed are fundamentally racist because
14 at no point MTA went to the community, went to my
15 community especially, and asked what do you think
16 about this, what do you think about the consequences
17 of your business, and they never came to us so I
18 think at the end of the day, I think it takes federal
19 intervention and not taxation because taxation means
20 a decline in business and that's a contradictory
21 business model for us, and it will have a negative
22 effect for New York City. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

24 PATRICK CONDREN: Good afternoon, Chair
25 Brooks-Powers and Committee. Thank you for having us.

2 My name is Patrick Condren. I am lifelong in the
3 motorcoach and bus business here in New York City, a
4 resident of Community Board 8 in the Upper East Side,
5 born and raised in Brooklyn, and formerly one of the
6 franchise bus company operators for many years here
7 in New York City. I represent Academy Bus, Hampton
8 Jitney, and Big Bus, but I'm here today as the
9 Administrator of the BUS4NYC Coalition, which is a
10 group of operators in the metropolitan New York area
11 in local transit, commuter, charter, tour, sight-
12 seeing, airports, etc.

13 I'd like to make the following comments
14 quickly. The private and publicly owned buses carry
15 the same riding public period. There's no difference
16 of who gets on a bus. A bus is defined as over 15
17 passengers in New York City in Traffic Rules of New
18 York City Section 32. The MTA's Central Business
19 District tolling plan, environmental assessment
20 program, I was involved in several of the working
21 group committees. It clearly identifies scenarios
22 that include tolling scenarios that include buses
23 being exempt. We support congestion pricing as
24 congestion mitigation, not pricing. We support the
25 fact that anything over 15, like Stockholm, London,

2 and Oslo and other places exempt buses because
3 there's no replication for replacing 50 people on a
4 bus and 50 cars. Run 10 buses and that's 50 cars and
5 500 cars at a 1,000. So fast forward, a bus is
6 environmentally clean, it's the best for all clean
7 air, emissions, etc. Private and public operating
8 agencies carry the same riding public. We look
9 forward to working as we are the backup system for
10 the MTA because when the MTA was going to shut down
11 the subway system, I'm the one that got the call from
12 (INAUDIBLE). How many buses could the private
13 industry come up with if they shut down the subway
14 system. When the Long Island Railroad and other
15 operations in the New York metropolitan area shut
16 down the airports, you hear it on 1010 WINS, don't
17 worry, they'll be buses available for you. We're the
18 ones who come up with.

19 Having said that, we're not in any garage
20 revving our engines waiting to be called. We're here
21 to serve. We're here to be in business. We're here to
22 be efficient. I thank you for the time.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

24 BRIANA CARBAJAL: Good afternoon,
25 Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and

2 members of the public. My name is Briana Carbajal,
3 State Legislative Manager at WE ACT for Environmental
4 Justice. We are a community-based organization in
5 Harlem fighting racial discrimination in
6 environmental policymaking for over 35 years, and I
7 am here today to say that we need congestion pricing.

8 82 percent of minority workers commute to
9 the Manhattan CBD by transit, and 77 percent of
10 people in Manhattan do not have access to a car. Low-
11 income New Yorkers are heavily dependent on a
12 reliable transit system, but our trains and buses
13 used by the majority of commuters are in urgent need
14 of upgrades. Congestion pricing offers so many
15 benefits to our community's needs and wants. It
16 offers the potential to fund improvements to
17 infrastructure for pedestrian with disabilities, more
18 covered bus stops, subway station accessibility in
19 disadvantaged communities, the expansion of safe
20 infrastructure for biking options and the reclamation
21 of car space, an increase in green infrastructure for
22 reduced pollution and extreme heat, more electric
23 buses on the road, hyperlocal community air
24 monitoring among so many more community-based

2 solutions. The solutions I just listed were a list
3 created by our membership in Harlem.

4 Ultimately, we view congestion pricing as
5 an exceptional and important opportunity to address
6 transit issues have burdened our communities for
7 decades. We are looking for the tolling program not
8 only to reduce traffic, improve air quality, and
9 raise funds for public transportation, but we want to
10 see the implementation of many projects in
11 environmental justice communities that reduces the
12 current environmental burden that exists. WE ACT will
13 be submitting written testimony after the hearing.
14 Thank you for your time.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. Our
17 next panel will be Felicia Park-Rogers, Phil Wong,
18 Richard Chow, and Norman Winaventura (phonetic).

19 You can begin.

20 RICHARD CHOW: Hi. Good afternoon, Chair
21 and Committee. My name is Richard Chow. I am proud to
22 be a New York Taxi Worker Alliance member. I'm
23 driving taxi for 17 years. I am an owner/driver.
24 Since 2009, taxis pay to the MTA 50 cents. Second
25 time, 2019, \$2.50 cents. Total 3 dollars each to give

2 it to the MTA. Average driver paid 15,000 every year
3 to the MTA. We already paid our share. Now another
4 time to pay to 3 dollars a day costs us 8,000 dollars
5 a year. We cannot survive. It is not affordable.
6 Already, taxis paid more than 1 billion dollars to
7 the MTA, close to 2 billion dollars. Taxi driver,
8 both passenger should be exempt from the congestion
9 price. Past few years, we taxi drivers have a
10 financial hardship. Nine drivers committed suicide.
11 Thousands have filed bankruptcy. We just barely
12 survive. Thanks to my union President, Bhairavi
13 Desai, and our nation's most powerful senator, Chuck
14 Schumer, helped us who fought the debt forgiven and
15 (INAUDIBLE) from the Council which structured my
16 loan, 170,000 dollars, we're still struggling with
17 high debt. We taxi drivers are working-class people,
18 paycheck-to-paycheck. We are part of the
19 transportation of New York City, and we are essential
20 workers serving in New York City 24/7, blackouts,
21 (INAUDIBLE) Sandy Strong, pandemic, we take the
22 patients to the hospital, from the hospital to go
23 back to their homes and food delivery door-to-door
24 service. During the pandemic time, we did our best
25 (INAUDIBLE) we never forget. We learn a lot from the

2 U.K., London, good things, London streets less than
3 30 percent traffic moving well. London taxis are
4 exempt to congestion pricing. New York City also both
5 driver and passenger should be exempt to congestion
6 pricing. Thank you so much.

7 NORMAN WINAVENTURE: Good afternoon, Madam
8 Chair and respected panels. My name is Norman
9 Winaventure, and I've been driving a yellow cab for
10 like 12 years. Prior to that, back in the '90s, I did
11 the black car industry so I kind of know how the
12 industry works. With that said, we are asking for an
13 exemption for this congestion pricing just for a
14 couple of reasons I should say.

15 Number one is like we are barely making
16 it as it is because now the industry is not the same.
17 We are practically scraping the bottom of the pot
18 just to get past, and, as it is, I don't mind showing
19 you, this is my bank account right now, and as it
20 says here, I have like \$1,231.25, and I have yet to
21 make another 3,000 dollars for this month just so I
22 can pay my mortgage, my medallion mortgage, my
23 utility bills. With this, the other day I made like
24 89 dollars. That's what came into my account. With
25 that 89 dollars, the MTA already took, I'd say about

2 30, 40 dollars, so with this, there's no way we can
3 survive, and it's kind of like hard to accept the
4 fact that we are working hard, if not harder, just to
5 provide for our family and this is what we're getting
6 in return, and this is just so unfair in so many
7 ways. For me personally, I grew up in Brooklyn, and I
8 wanted to send my kids to college so at least they
9 can have a decent whatever it is that you can call
10 decent way of living with the things that are
11 happening now, but MTA just wants to take, take, and
12 take, but meanwhile they don't want to give. On my
13 part, after my shift when I'm all said and done and I
14 see someone hailing on the street, I would stop in
15 front of them and I would tell them listen, my shift
16 is already finished but if you're going my way I
17 don't mind giving you a free ride. Never once I've
18 heard the MTA gave us a free ride, but, meanwhile,
19 now they want to tax us again on top of what we're
20 paying for. On myself alone since I started driving
21 the yellow cab, I must have paid or contributed to
22 the MTA like around 100,000 to 150,000. That
23 should've been in my pocket. That should've been my
24 kids' college fund, but yet they're taking that away
25 from us. Now with this congestion pricing, they're

2 basically telling us and for my kids, it's okay, you
3 don't need breakfast, it's okay, you don't need
4 lunch, it's okay, you don't need dinner. That is so
5 fair. My kids don't deserve that, and we are asking
6 for this, not for ourselves but for our kids, please.
7 Thank you.

8 GALLERY: [Applause]

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
10 Please, no clapping. Last warning.

11 FELICIA PARK-ROGERS: Good afternoon and
12 thank you for providing this opportunity to discuss
13 the merits of congestion pricing. My name is Felicia
14 Park-Rogers, and I am the Director of Regional
15 Infrastructure Projects at Tri-State Transportation
16 Campaign. For 30 years, TSTC has been working to
17 bring better transit, transportation, and streets
18 because better regional transportation is key to
19 improving the environment and equity.

20 Everybody here wants the same thing, a
21 city that is vibrant, livable, economically thriving,
22 and that serves as a potent metropolis that fosters
23 and nurtures the people who live, work, and visit.
24 Key to achieving those goals is making it safe, easy,
25 and economical for people to get from point A to

2 point B. Congestion pricing is a method to achieve
3 these goals. It's basic premise is simple, discourage
4 unnecessary car trips and make travel by transit,
5 bicycle, and foot better and more convenient.

6 Reducing car congestion improves public health, slows
7 climate change, and makes for more efficient use of
8 highly limited street space in a city where every
9 inch of ground is a highly valuable commodity.

10 The funds raised by congestion pricing
11 are mandated by State law to total 1 billion dollars
12 a year. These funds are mandated to be used for the
13 MTA capital budget which includes important transit
14 improvements such as more elevators, faster subways,
15 electric bus conversion, and extending the 2nd Avenue
16 subway. The 2024 capital plan is ambitious and
17 detailed and will vastly improve mass transit for
18 millions of New Yorkers and people who come to work
19 and play here. It is the job of the MTA to implement
20 those improvements as quickly and efficiently as
21 possible, but that is only the beginning of the story
22 of what congestion pricing can bring. It is the job
23 of the City to make streets work better for us. The
24 City Council, the Mayor, and the New York City
25 Department of Transportation have an incredible

2 opportunity before you. If cars are taking up less
3 space on our crowded streets, what will fill that
4 space? What is your plan to improve the street use?

5 Last year, the City Council and Mayor
6 passed its ambitious Master Streets Plan. This plan
7 creates an exciting vision of streets that are safe,
8 accessible, enjoyable for use by majority of users,
9 pedestrians, cyclists, transit users. Today, I urge
10 you to walk through the door that congestion pricing
11 is opening and begin the worthwhile and hard work of
12 transforming our city streets by implementing your
13 Streets Plan. The reward will be felt instantly by
14 your constituents and will last for generations to
15 come. Today is the day to take back our streets and
16 return them to the children, seniors, commuters, and
17 travelers who need them most.

18 Council Member, I did have a point of
19 clarification on a question you asked Tiffany
20 earlier.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yes.

22 FELICIA PARK-ROGERS: Tri-State is also a
23 member of the Congestion Pricing Now Coalition and,
24 if I understood correctly, you were asking if the
25 recommendation that we have about a surcharge for

2 for-hire vehicles and taxi drivers be the same as the
3 toll.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No, no, no.
5 She made a mention in her remarks that it would be
6 applied to the passenger.

7 FELICIA PARK-ROGERS: Yes, our
8 recommendation as the Coalition is that the surcharge
9 be applied to the passenger rather than to the
10 drivers, but that the charge be less than the toll.
11 For example, 2 dollars per ride, and we also
12 recommend that it not be for taxi users but only for
13 for-hire vehicles, which represent a larger amount of
14 street traffic.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Understood.
16 Thank you. Just to be clear on my end, I also think
17 the yellow taxi cabs should be exempted, but I also
18 think that we need to look at how we make sure we're
19 not dividing New York City where people are being
20 locked out because they can't afford to go there, and
21 I think as essential as the conversation is about
22 reducing the congestion of motor vehicles, we have to
23 still take into account that we're not going to get
24 rid of all cars ever, and how do we ensure that we
25 are sharing the space, and I think that that's a lens

2 that we have to look through in terms of whether
3 you're a cyclist, a pedestrian, like I met people who
4 don't do cars, public transit, anything. They'd
5 rather walk. There are New Yorkers that just want to
6 walk everywhere too, so how are we sharing that
7 space, how are we making sure that you can go into
8 any community and get to the economic centers, the
9 cultural centers of New York City because I think
10 that that often gets left out, and, unfortunately,
11 the conversation over the years has become so
12 polarized that we can't just have natural discourse
13 and converse about different ideas. I always feel
14 like iron sharpens iron. I want to learn new things,
15 but I want to also share the learned and lived
16 experiences of myself and my community as well.

17 FELICIA PARK-ROGERS: Agreed. Thank you.

18 PHIL WONG: Good afternoon, Madam Chair
19 Brooks-Powers and Members of the Committee on
20 Transportation and Infrastructure. My name is Phil
21 Wong, the President of Chinese American Citizens
22 Alliance Greater New York. Thank you for giving me
23 the opportunity to speak today.

24 Before I continue my script, I just want
25 to share my experience this morning when I walked

2 down Broadway from Canal Street all the way down to
3 City Hall, and I counted the number of vacant stores.
4 There are over 3,000 stores that are vacant, and they
5 remain vacant since the COVID recovery, since we
6 walked out of the COVID lockdown, and that is
7 reflective of what's really happening in South
8 Manhattan and many parts of New York City as the
9 tenants are still battling over the rent that is due
10 to the landlord. They cannot open, they cannot reopen
11 unless whatever they owe is cleared up, and this City
12 Council very recently spoke about many measures about
13 stimulating New York's economy, bring back tourism,
14 bring back businesses, and now we're talking about
15 congestion pricing, and that's something that is
16 incompatible with the COVID recovery, and I actually
17 request that Members of this Committee walk down
18 Broadway themselves and see for themselves how many
19 stores are still closed. This is what we're dealing
20 with, and now we're talking about congestion pricing.

21 I'm here today, I speak on behalf of my
22 organization to oppose the congestion pricing plan
23 which would halt Manhattan Chinatown's economic
24 recovery from COVID as well as the recoveries of the
25 tightly coupled small businesses, economies of

2 Brooklyn Sunset Park Chinatown and Queens Chinatown
3 around Main Street.

4 I guess my time is through, but I
5 respectfully request the City Council to pass a
6 resolution to exempt commercial traffic in and out of
7 Manhattan's Chinatown and exempt weekend and late-
8 night traffic for deliveries into downtown Manhattan.
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. Our
12 next panel will be Raul Rivera (phonetic) and
13 Christopher Johnson.

14 CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON: My name is
15 Christopher Leon Johnson. Thank you, Chair, for
16 holding this Committee hearing.

17 I'm against congestion pricing, and I'm
18 going to say why. Because we have a problem in the
19 City Council, including you, is that you guys are
20 acting like y'all are caring about the poor, but you
21 guys are not. How can you say that congestion pricing
22 is going to benefit the inner districts where if this
23 happens with congestion pricing, it's going to affect
24 them because there's going to be more cost to the
25 stations then, if you put this in with congestion

2 pricing, this is going to really increase the fees
3 for a lot of things, especially when it comes to food
4 because to go over the bridges, the trucking
5 companies are going to start expecting a lot of money
6 so what do you think's going to happen? It's going to
7 be more money for the people that pay out of pocket,
8 especially in Far Rockaway that you serve, and you're
9 not telling people that at all where, if this
10 happens, they're going to have to be paying more
11 money because of the shipping fees and most costs to
12 the stations and they're going to be forced to pay.

13 Now, another thing I want to bring up is
14 that I think that a number of you Council Members are
15 captive to Transalt, and the reason that you guys are
16 supporting this congestion pricing is because you
17 guys are scared of Transalt, y'all scared of the
18 Executive Director, y'all scared of Tri-State, New
19 York League of Conservation Voters, Workers Justice
20 Project, (INAUDIBLE) you guys are scared of Open
21 Plans. You guys are not serving the people when y'all
22 are pushing this bill in our faces. This is not going
23 to benefit us at all. All it's going to do is help
24 the pockets of the MTA and help the pockets of
25 Transalt and Open Plans and all these other corrupt

2 so-called advocacy organizations that are supposedly
3 fighting for the little guy, especially the Riders
4 Alliance.

5 I'm going to tell you this right now I
6 don't care what y'all think, 2025, all you guys are
7 going to be voted out if you support this bill so
8 that's all I have to say and thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Point of
10 clarification. For the record, there is no bill under
11 consideration. Raul, you can go.

12 RAUL RIVERA: Good afternoon. My name is
13 Raul Rivera. I'm a New York native. I'm a TLC driver
14 advocate, and our testimony here that we're giving
15 today is probably going to cause our bill to be
16 forfeited. We're trying to pass bills in your
17 Committee, and we'll forfeit those bills. We cannot
18 bend over backwards just to advocate for some bills.
19 We have Council Members in this Committee that are
20 being silent, that keep saying it's a State issue,
21 that it's a State issue, but you Council Members that
22 are against congestion pricing can be out there
23 speaking, all right. We have Council Members, we have
24 51, you can hold a press conference and stand out
25 there and say you're for it or you're against it. I

2 approach Council Members, and they don't even want to
3 give me an answer. This is beyond congestion pricing.
4 This is the legacy of this City, the legacy of this
5 Committee and all the Committees. If you're a Council
6 Members, you have to say that you're for it or
7 against it. If you're for it, you cannot advocate for
8 people of color. You say that you advocate for people
9 of color, transportation deserts, and the poor, but
10 you're being silent when it comes to congestion
11 pricing. You can unite, you can be out there, and
12 fight for the New Yorker. You don't have a voice for
13 the New Yorker. You're not speaking for us. We have
14 to come here and speak. We have to testify. We have
15 to do it in two minutes. You are not standing with
16 the New Yorker. Your legacy is going to be that you
17 failed the New Yorker. When you look back to
18 reminisce on your time in the Council, you're going
19 to realize that you failed the New Yorker and the
20 people of color that you say you represent. Don't
21 forget that. We're upset, we're very upset. We're
22 upset that you're not being vocal. You could be more
23 vocal, and you're not doing it. Thank you, Mr.
24 Holden, for being vocal for the New Yorker. What
25 about Joe Borelli's resolution? Gives a voice to the

2 people. What's wrong with that? Put it on the ballot.
3 If you put it on the ballot, people have a choice.
4 They'll say yes or no, but they don't want to put it
5 on the ballot because New Yorkers are going to say no
6 to congestion pricing. They're going to say no, and
7 most New Yorkers don't own a vehicle, and it's a
8 farce because New York City is not going to save the
9 planet. It's not going to save the planet. It's a
10 money-grab. It's a crime. It's crime. It's being
11 robbed without a gun. I'll leave it there.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
13 We'll now turn to those who are online virtually.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We're
15 going to begin our remote portion. Our first speaker
16 will be Miriam Benzman (phonetic) followed by Rick
17 Horan.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Miriam, can
19 you hear us?

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: We'll move on to
21 Rick Horan.

22 RICK HORAN: Can you hear me?

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: We hear you.

24 RICK HORAN: Terrific. Thank you, Madam
25 Chair. I'm Rick Horan, Executive Director of

2 QueensLink. My written and verbal testimony today is
3 in support of Resolution 390 that asks for an EIS for
4 QueensLink, a new subway connection that will improve
5 access to education, jobs, healthcare, and recreation
6 for 47,000 daily riders according to the MTA. The
7 stated justification for congestion pricing is that
8 it will fund new public transit capital projects that
9 will reduce New Yorkers' reliance on the automobile.
10 Sadly, that's not the way things are shaping up. Take
11 for instance the QueensLink Rails and Trails proposal
12 which would reuse the only north/south rail corridor
13 in Queens, whose 2.3 million residents suffer the
14 longest commutes in the nation. For reasons unknown,
15 reactivation of this rail line has not been promoted
16 by the MTA. First, their feasibility study was
17 sandbagged for over a year, and then they inflated
18 the cost of the project by billions of dollars.
19 Similarly, without any community input, the Mayor
20 decided that the City-owned land should not be used
21 to relieve decades of transit inequities but instead
22 used for a new skinny park. Meanwhile, New York
23 taxpayers are spending 1 billion dollars to widen the
24 Van Wyck Expressway. This will likely lead to just
25 more congestion.

2 Buses are not the answer either. Even SBS
3 buses on dedicated bus lanes such as on Woodhaven
4 Boulevard struggle to reach 12 miles an hour average
5 speed. Ironically, QueensLink is located right in the
6 middle of these two ever-congested north/south
7 corridors.

8 Sometimes the answer is right in front of
9 us. We call on the Mayor and the City Council...

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Time
11 expired.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: You can finish
13 your statement.

14 RICK HORAN: Do I have a couple of more
15 seconds?

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: A couple more
17 seconds.

18 RICK HORAN: Okay. We call on the Mayor
19 and the City Council to put the brakes on the
20 Queensway Park project until we have time, we as a
21 City have time to study the use of this right of way
22 for transit, and we call upon the MTA to conduct an
23 objective 20-year needs assessment that we can use to
24 objectively determine whether QueensLink is the best
25 of use of this property. Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We'll
3 next hear from Bhairavi Desai followed by Brandon
4 Buchannan.

5 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Hi. Good afternoon. Can
6 you hear me?

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Loud and clear.

8 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Okay, thank you. Hi. Good
9 afternoon. My name is Bhairavi Desai. I'm the
10 Executive Director of the New York Taxi Workers
11 Alliance. Thank you so much, Madam Chair, for this
12 public hearing and for your words of solidarity with
13 the drivers of our city.

14 The Taxi Workers Alliance has over 27,000
15 members, and our members drive across this city.
16 (INAUDIBLE) our yellow cab members and our Uber and
17 Lyft members, livery green cab drivers are all
18 looking to be held harmless against congestion
19 pricing.

20 Let's start with the yellow cab industry.
21 There is no sector that more desperately needs this
22 exemption. Since COVID, we can talk about the history
23 that preceded COVID, but since COVID alone 40 percent
24 of the medallions are on a shelf. They don't even
25 have a vehicle attached to them. Yellow cabs right

2 now are only 1 percent of the total traffic in the
3 Central Business District. Even though 33 percent of
4 the cabs are not active since COVID, like they might
5 be out of storage but they're not even active on the
6 streets, so there's 33 percent less cabs that are
7 working today than before COVID. Yet, each individual
8 driver that's working has 25 percent less fares today
9 than they did even before COVID. Overall, the yellow
10 cab industry has lost 50 percent of its ridership.

11 This is a workforce, this is an industry that is
12 desperate to survive and to bounce back. A third
13 surcharge would not only be deeply unfair when this
14 is the sector that's been paying a surcharge since
15 2009 and on every single trip long before anybody
16 else was subsidizing the MTA, the yellow cab industry
17 stepped up and played that role. Back then, liveries
18 were exempt with the wish from the State Legislature...

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.

20 BHAIRAVI DESAI: That they would be given
21 time to grow. Well, today, the yellow cab industry is
22 asking for simple survival. We know Uber and Lyft
23 already support a (INAUDIBLE). We're pleased to see
24 that as a way to make sure that our Uber and Lyft
25

2 drivers are also held harmless from this. Thank you
3 and thank you for the extra time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you.

5 Brandon Buchannan followed by Eric McClure.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has begun.

7 BRANDON BUCHANNAN: Good afternoon. My
8 name is Brandon Buchannan. I'm with the American Bus
9 Association, and for more than nearly 100 years, we
10 represented the private motorcoach industry as well
11 as the destinations that motorcoaches go to as well
12 as the manufacturers and those who plan trips as part
13 of the tourism programs.

14 First of all, we definitely want to say
15 that we are not against congestion pricing, but we do
16 see that motorcoaches, as has been stated before by
17 other people giving testimony, that motorcoaches are
18 a congestion solution, and so there is precedent in
19 federal law for motorcoaches to at least be treated
20 the same as transit when it comes to tolling
21 solutions. There are a number of locations, not just
22 in the City of New York, and New Jersey including the
23 Garden State Parkway, the New York State Thruway, I-
24 495, I-66, etc. where motorcoaches are treated the
25 same as transits. In many cases, we act in concert

2 with transit in many service applications, not only
3 bringing commuters downtown from outlying suburbs
4 including some of the suburbs in Pennsylvania,
5 Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and in some cases
6 Connecticut as well as the Hudson Valley that were
7 not treated as stakeholders during the environmental
8 assessment process, but motorcoaches also provide
9 emergency services, not just for transit vehicles but
10 also for Amtrak when they break down or are impacted
11 by severe weather, and we stand in their stead as
12 part of the Amtrak Thruway program. In fact, recently
13 you've seen it in the papers. Motorcoaches are even
14 making plane-to-plane connections. Although this
15 pilot program is intended to provide congestion
16 relief, by not exempting motorcoaches or at least
17 providing equal treatment to transit, this program is
18 not really seen to seriously congestion. (INAUDIBLE)
19 hope that there be more initiatives in support of
20 congestion mitigation issues such as increased bus
21 parking similar to what we have seen in other cities.

22 Again, thank you so much for this
23 opportunity. Thank you for having so many different
24 commentors provide you comments today. It's

2 unfortunate the Traffic Mobility Review Board is also
3 not...

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

6 BRANDON BUCHANNAN: Opportunity. Thank
7 you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We'll
9 hear next from Eric McClure followed by Yiatin Chu.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has begun.

11 ERIC MCCLURE: Thank you. Good afternoon,
12 Chair Brooks-Powers. My name is Eric McClure. I'm the
13 Executive Director of StreetsPAC, and I have to note
14 that we're a little disappointed that we were not one
15 of the organizations that the City Council is afraid
16 of apparently.

17 With New York City's congestion pricing
18 having received final approval from the Federal
19 Highway Administration in June, the MTA could begin
20 tolling as early as next spring. The program is
21 essential to reducing traffic congestion in the
22 Manhattan Central Business District, which by some
23 estimates cost the City's economy 15 billion dollars
24 a year and to providing revenue critical to the MTA's
25 capital budget. The TMRB is in the process of making

2 final determinations on the tolling schedule, and the
3 MTA is beginning to install tolling infrastructure.
4 Congestion pricing, which we have supported for many
5 years, is happening.

6 However, New York City has been mostly
7 AWOL in preparing for congestion pricing. In other
8 cities that have implemented congestion charges,
9 notably Stockholm and London, significant
10 improvements to transit service and cycling
11 infrastructure were put in place to help encourage
12 and ease the transition from private vehicles to more
13 sustainable modes. It's especially important to make
14 meaningful investments in transit in parts of the
15 city that are poorly served by the existing system.
16 The City Council can help by pushing the Adams'
17 Administration to accelerate upgrades to bus service,
18 especially the rollout of new protected bus lane
19 mileage mandated by the Streets Plan. London added
20 four new high-capacity bus routes into its congestion
21 zone before activating its tolling program, leading
22 to a large increase in bus ridership. Stockholm acted
23 similarly. The Council should be demanding similar
24 plans from City Hall.

2 Expanding and improving the City's bike
3 network should also be a priority as the launch of
4 congestion pricing nears. On the streets of the City
5 of London, bikes now outnumber cars during peak
6 times, a result of a significant investment in and
7 commitment to cycling infrastructure. Here in New
8 York, many of the bike lanes within the Central
9 Business District are already heavily used and taking
10 advantage of reduced car and truck transit to widen
11 bike lanes on 1st, 2nd, 6th, and 8th Avenues and
12 improving cross-town bike routes as Bike New York
13 suggests would be a smart step. The Council should
14 also advocate for significant enhancements to the
15 bike network in neighborhoods that are adjacent to or
16 near the tolling...

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.

18 Thank you.

19 ERIC MCCLURE: Western Queens, the Upper
20 East Side, and Upper West Side, and Harlem, which
21 will help promote safe and seamless bike commutes.

22 I have some additional comments which I
23 will include in the written testimony that we will
24 submit. Thank you very much.

25 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We'll
3 hear next from Yiatin Chu followed by Lucy Koteen.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time has begun.

5 YIATIN CHU: Good afternoon. Thank you for
6 the opportunity to speak. My name is Yiatin Chu,
7 President of Asian Wave Alliance, and I'm testifying
8 today on behalf of AWA to oppose congestion pricing.

9 The proposed plan would adversely impact
10 New York City's Asian neighborhoods and communities,
11 particularly in Manhattan's Chinatown, Sunset Park,
12 and Bay Ridge. Besides being a mobility tax on New
13 Yorkers to get around their city, there are many
14 reasons we share with other opponents of City
15 Planning. Many Asians live in transit deserts which
16 necessitates driving, MTA's incompetence in fare
17 collection with amounts to 700 million dollars a
18 year, increased congestion outside of Manhattan, and
19 subways and buses have gotten more dangerous in the
20 past few years, especially for Asian New Yorkers.

21 For the Chinese community living in
22 Manhattan's Chinatown, this plan will destroy the way
23 of life and have a disparate impact for the low-
24 income residents and small businesses. Congestion
25 pricing is a daily tax. It will increase operational

2 costs for all businesses, groceries, and restaurants
3 who depend on daily food deliveries from distributors
4 in Brooklyn and from South Bronx. Cost of living will
5 skyrocket for local residents because of this
6 increased cost of additional daily tolls.

7 The Asian elderly who depend on family
8 members to drive them to medical appointments and
9 assisting their shopping will also face unique
10 challenges due to language barriers and lack of
11 technological sophistication. Many elderly are not
12 able to hop on a Citi Bike or use rideshare apps.

13 Congestion pricing also discourages
14 visitors from outer boroughs and neighboring states
15 who drive here because access to public
16 transportation is challenging. They come to support
17 local businesses, restaurants, Buddhist temples,
18 churches, Chinese schools, and the cultural way of
19 life that is unique to Chinatown.

20 Congestion pricing will create an
21 existential problem for Chinatown. Longtime residents
22 will be forced out because they will not longer be
23 able to afford the cost of living. This is how
24 gentrification begins. While congestion pricing might
25 sound appealing for cleaner air, the reality is that

2 congestion pricing is only good for Lower Manhattan
3 and will be worse for surrounding neighborhoods such
4 as Bay Ridge and Sunset Park.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.
6 Thank you.

7 YIATIN CHU: Could I just finish with a
8 few points in terms of what we would like you to
9 consider? One...

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Sorry. If you
11 could just wrap up and then you can submit it in
12 writing so if you could lose.

13 YIATIN CHU: Thank you. Let me just end
14 and conclude my testimony with just three asks that
15 we'd like the Council to consider.

16 One, exempt weekend and late-night
17 traffic.

18 Two, exempt commercial traffic to and
19 from Chinatown.

20 Three, exempt passenger vans that shuttle
21 people from the three Chinatowns in Flushing, Sunset
22 Park, and Manhattan.

23 Thank you for the additional time.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I
25 just want to also once again remind those

2 participating in today's hearing the City Council is
3 not the one that will be determining the exemptions
4 so I just want to make sure the public is clear that
5 this is going to come out of the Mobility Review
6 Board and the MTA. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We'll
8 hear next from Lucy Koteen followed by Penelope
9 Katsaras.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Starting time.

11 LUCY KOTEEN: Hi. Good afternoon and thank
12 you, Chair. Last August, the MTA held public hearings
13 for several days. The people who testified spoke
14 three to one against congestion pricing and with good
15 reasons, because they will be hurt. Did any of the
16 MTA listen to the people? I did and I took extensive
17 notes. I will send them to you. All will be hurt when
18 all prices for all goods will increase due to the tax
19 on trucks which will (INAUDIBLE) the law. There's no
20 doubt about that. There are over 100,000 (INAUDIBLE)
21 circulating the city. DOT has removed streets from
22 circulation. Thousands of parking places have been
23 taken away throughout the city, creating more cars
24 circling the streets. All areas outside of the zone
25 will see an increase in cars. Many people have called

2 for a forensic audit of the MTA to see where they can
3 cut costs and increase efficiency including looking
4 at the fact that many executives' salaries are well
5 over 300,000 dollars. A few points. The people who
6 will be hurt the most are the working-class people
7 who have no choice but to take a car into the area.
8 Many are the workers who have to carry tools and
9 equipment to do their jobs and essential workers
10 including city workers who work at odd hours. It
11 creates the idea that one part of the city is more
12 precious than other parts of the city and that we
13 have to pay extra to enter there with a car but not
14 in other areas. Manhattan becomes the shiny city on
15 the hill that we have to pay to enter. If you live in
16 the pricing area and use a car, you have to pay an
17 extra tax just to return to your home, even if you
18 live half a block from the FDR and have a parking
19 lot. You can't leave your home without paying to get
20 back in.

21 There are equitable ways to raise money
22 such as by taxing the wealthy, such as an increase of
23 money on capital gains made on the stock market which
24 is not earned money and dedicate it to the MTA.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.

3 Thank you.

4 LUCY KOTEEN: I will submit the rest.

5 Sorry. I have much more to say.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We'll
7 hear next from Penelope Katsaras followed by Peter
8 Petino.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

10 PENELOP KATSARAS: Hi. Can you hear me?

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Loud and clear.

12 PENELOP KATSARAS: Hello. I live in East
13 Elmhurst which is a transportation desert, and one
14 reason that I don't trust the MTA to fix the problems
15 is because they just put a bus lane two blocks from
16 my house on Northern Boulevard. I have been
17 advocating for years to get a bus from East Elmhurst
18 to Manhattan. Guess who they forgot? There's not one
19 stop for us, for our community, and we are a
20 transportation desert. Now, that is not the main
21 reason I've been on this call for hours. The reason
22 I'm on this call for hours is for my mother who lives
23 in New Jersey, who lives in rural New Jersey, that I
24 cannot get to on public transportation. Okay, I wrote
25 something. My mother lives in rural New Jersey. She

2 is 80 years old on a fixed income. She isn't wealthy.
3 I live in East Elmhurst Queens, and I drive a 16-
4 year-old car. There are three ways to get to New
5 Jersey from Queens. One is the Holland Tunnel, two is
6 the Lincoln Tunnel, and three is the George
7 Washington Bridge. If the City puts the first two out
8 of commission due to price, that's exactly what
9 you're doing by the way, everyone will take the
10 George Washington Bridge. This will increase traffic
11 and gridlock in the Bronx and Fort Lee. My mother
12 said she will drive to the Tappan Zee to avoid the
13 traffic, but that's an extra hour in the car for her
14 and she's 80 years old. Congestion pricing will hurt
15 families who want to visit each other. My choice will
16 also be to either sit in heavy George Washington
17 Bridge traffic or drive up an hour out of my way to
18 the Tappan Zee. When my cousin in New Jersey had
19 cancer, I drove her to chemotherapy. I drove her to
20 the doctor. I drove her to church. My E-ZPass bill
21 high. There was no way to get a person with a brain
22 tumor around on a city bus in New Jersey. There was
23 no way for me to get to her without a car.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.

25 Thank you.

2 PENELOP KATSARAS: She didn't live near a
3 bus stop. Think about the hardships congestion
4 pricing is causing families. I know several people
5 who live in Queens and travel to New Jersey for work.
6 I know a small business owner who travels to Union
7 City from Queens. The direct way from Queens is to
8 take the Lincoln Tunnel to Union City. Why does he
9 now have to travel an extra hour at least? Why must
10 we be forced to travel way out of our way? My friend
11 can't take public transportation due to the nature of
12 the business. Thank you.

13 Thank you, and please submit your
14 testimony in writing when you have a moment.

15 PENELOP KATSARAS: Okay, I will.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We'll
17 hear next from Peter Petino followed by Jean Hahn.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

19 PETER PETINO: Hello.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: We can hear you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: We hear you.

22 PETER PETINO: Okay, can you hear me? Yes?

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yes.

24 PETER PETINO: Hello. My name is Peter

25 Petino. I am a member of Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

2 and NYSMCA. However, I am reporting because I have
3 been involved in every one of the posed congestion
4 pricing since the inception of it. I am calling this
5 the smell test. Number one, motor cars here have,
6 says that there's autos and motorcycles which are 39
7 percent. Years ago, it was nearly 80 percent cabs.
8 Cabs are getting charged now, and how come the
9 congestion is not less? Smell test number one.

10 Smell test number two. They're being
11 collected for the cabs. What's happening? No loss in
12 traffic. That's smell test number two.

13 Smell test number three. Pollution. It
14 has to be done the right way. You're not going to
15 stop pollution so fast. If you test it, fine. If you
16 don't test it, by the way, asthma, most of it is made
17 by genes. Smell test number three.

18 How many workers are going to be
19 discriminated against? Let's test that out. That's
20 smell test number four.

21 Smell test number five. Excuse me.
22 Technology. It is not there to make all these
23 exemptions. I know it, you know it. Smell it and find
24 out. I'm representing the old school, older people,
25 people that cannot take the bicycles to work. People

2 that, you're forgetting about all these people. Come
3 on.

4 Number three smell test. It's
5 discriminatory and I feel that you need to review
6 this again and that's the story. What about the
7 Council? What about the voters? What about people and
8 why aren't we doing this smell, smell...

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired. Thank
10 you.

11 PETER PETINO: People overseas. Check it
12 out. When everybody gets used to the pricing, the
13 damned traffic comes back. It doesn't stay away.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

15 PETER PETINO: You're welcome.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We'll
17 hear next from Jean Hahn followed by Dorothy Lacont
18 (phonetic).

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

20 JEAN HAHN: Hi. My name is Jean Hahn, and
21 I live in Queens. Thank you, Chair Brooks-Power and
22 the Committee, for this opportunity to speak. I'm
23 here today to testify on behalf of my family and many
24 others like mine who will be adversely impacted by
25 congestion pricing.

2 My husband is an essential worker at
3 Bellevue Hospital as an equipment technician. Almost
4 every night throughout the first two years of COVID,
5 he worked without a single break or taking a day off,
6 many times doing long shifts, working on his days
7 off, and working off-hour shifts because the City's
8 largest hospital is perpetually short-staffed. He
9 takes his job seriously. He made these sacrifices
10 because he knows lives depended on his role, even
11 though our daughter constantly wondered why he wasn't
12 coming home at bedtime to tuck her in, and the main
13 reason he was able to extend his duties is because he
14 was able to drive to and from work since Bellevue
15 Hospital isn't easily accessible by subway. He still
16 doesn't get home until midnight. He is not alone. He,
17 like many of his colleagues, works off-hour shifts
18 which are a necessity to keep the hospital open 24/7.
19 It is not safe for him to walk 15 minutes to the
20 nearest subway at midnight or at 5 a.m. and then wait
21 for a train during unreliable off-peak subway
22 schedule. Taking public transportation this late at
23 night would double his commute time home. If
24 congestion pricing goes through without any
25 exemptions for Manhattan hospital workers as planned,

2 the City will lose them. Asking essential workers who
3 already sacrificed so much during COVID and who are
4 still making sacrifices to pay a (INAUDIBLE) tax
5 which would amount to approximately 6,000 to 7,000
6 dollars a year just to work at an already thankless
7 job will be the nail on the coffin for this city.
8 This sacrifice goes too far and just doesn't make
9 sense. I request Council Members to give this serious
10 consideration in your advocacy of the constituents.
11 Is the City prepared to lose thousands of essential
12 workers like the ones at Bellevue? Isn't healthcare
13 for the millions that serve annually in Manhattan
14 hospitals where lives are saved worth preserving over
15 a plan that was contrived because the MTA can't get
16 its act together and...

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.
18 Thank you.

19 JEAN HAHN: Create additional health
20 disparities outside the ivory towers of Lower
21 Manhattan? I am also requesting that exemptions be
22 done in such a way where busy low-income and working
23 families don't have the time and don't have the
24 exorbitant hours to spend doing bookkeeping and
25 filing their taxes just to get a reduced fare.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

3 JEAN HAHN: Thank you so much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We'll
5 hear next from Dorothy Lacont followed by Michelle
6 Birnbaum.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: We'll hear now
9 from Michelle Birnbaum and then followed by Jeff
10 Rose.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Michelle, you're
13 unmuted.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Okay, we'll move
15 on to Jeff Rose followed by Jane Lok.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

17 JEFF ROSE: Am I up?

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Loud and clear.

19 JEFF ROSE: Thank you. Thank you, Madam
20 Chair, for the opportunity to speak. My name is Jeff
21 Rose. I am the owner of Attitude New York Chauffer
22 Transportation and the President of the Limo
23 Association of New York, representing operators in
24 the NYC TLC luxury limousine category. Thank you very
25 much for the opportunity to be heard.

2 There's been much discussion regarding
3 how impending congestion pricing should be structured
4 regarding for-hire vehicles, or FHV's. In the simplest
5 terms, we strongly urge the parties to heed the call
6 of the Regional Planning Association headed by the
7 estimable Ray McGuire, and I would like to make some
8 correction to the remarks that Tiffany-Ann Taylor,
9 the VP for Transportation of the RP made. Their
10 current recommendation is not to impose the standard
11 20-dollar fare that's been proposed. Their suggestion
12 is and I'm quoting from the RPA, "exempt taxis and
13 other for-hire vehicles from the congestion charge
14 but keep the current surcharge on fares within the
15 congestion zone." FHV's are already paying a fee of
16 \$2.75, and the RPA suggests keeping that.

17 Per their report, they urge that the new
18 plan exempt us from these charges but keep the
19 current surcharge. This would concur with the 25
20 State and Local Legislators who strenuously argued in
21 the letter to the Traffic Mobility Review Board that
22 instead passengers of FHV services should pay a small
23 extra surcharge for each ride in the congestion
24 pricing zone below 60th Street in Manhattan.

2 Per the RPA, and I'm quoting again, "the
3 current surcharge for trips taken in these vehicles
4 is a more effective method for both managing
5 congestion and reaching the revenue target.
6 Regardless of the congestion charge, for-hire
7 vehicles must enter the zone to work, but the per
8 trip charge gives passengers and incentive to walk,
9 bike, or take transit." The per trip charge also
10 raises an estimated 400 million dollars..

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.

12 Thank you.

13 JEFF ROSE: Which would be lost. We need
14 to move away from the current structure because, if
15 you charge FHV's to go in and out of the zone, they
16 will have very little incentive to leave the zone in
17 between jobs, and this will actually further
18 exacerbate the problem. A robust affordable FHV
19 market will be critical to encouraging visitors and
20 workers to leave their cars at home. The RPA is
21 saying if it ain't broke, don't fix it. We strongly
22 urge the decision-makers to heed the advice of the
23 RPA rather than make this situation worse by forcing
24 FHV workers to stay and congregate in the congestion
25 zone.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We'll
4 hear next from Jane Lok followed by Glen Bolofsky.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

6 JANE LOK: Hi. Can you hear me?

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Yes, we can hear
8 you.

9 JANE LOK: Okay. I live and work literally
10 two blocks north of the Manhattan Bridge, and I look
11 and walk outside the (INAUDIBLE) and surrounding
12 streets, and aside from maybe three or four hours a
13 day, the streets do not experience congestion at all.
14 In fact, the streets of Chinatown are pretty dead
15 after 7 o'clock so it seems utterly disingenuous to
16 charge a punitive 20 dollars congestion pricing
17 during the vast majority of the day when there is no
18 congestion whatsoever. For reference, Singapore, the
19 godfather of City Planning and heralded as possibly
20 the most successful example, charges 50 cents to 4
21 dollars for only the two to three high-congestion
22 hours in the morning and evening. There is no toll on
23 Sundays or holidays at all, but that is not what we
24 have suggested here. Why not? Because plainly our so-
25 called congestion pricing is not actually about

2 congestion or clean air or all the things that they
3 claim.

4 The way the MTA is now, I do not want
5 people like my parents to use public transportation.
6 In my trips, I have dealt with sweltering heat,
7 flooded stairs and platforms, trip hazards, icy,
8 slippery, dirty floors, angry, aggressive riders. My
9 mother has had spinal surgery twice, and my father
10 has very high blood pressure. Both are older Asians,
11 one of the most targeted and vulnerable demographics
12 in the past several years. I appreciate that the MTA
13 is looking to address many of the issues. Frankly,
14 they're longstanding issues they've not fixed yet,
15 and I don't believe it's fair to punish vulnerable
16 populations for using the transportation that is
17 safer and better for them in the meantime in order to
18 force them to use transportation that is problematic
19 for them, and I expect that their situation is very
20 similar to many in our community. I surveyed over 50
21 members of the Chinatown community who live and work
22 in the CBD. Some eye-opening stats. 62 percent
23 responded that they or their family visit or leave
24 CBD four or more times a week. 93 percent said they
25 use cars to travel to and from the CBD. Among the

2 reasons they said they use cars, 71 percent said they
3 need to carry or transport a lot of goods or people.
4 70 percent said other methods of transportation are
5 not available or would take significantly more time.
6 42 percent said I or other passengers I travel with
7 have physical limitations that will make the other
8 methods difficult or dangerous sometimes or all of
9 the time. 64 percent said I am concerned about public
10 safety of myself or other passenger if they use other
11 methods...

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.
13 Thank you.

14 JANE LOK: Okay. I will submit the rest as
15 testimony.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We'll
17 hear next from Glen Bolofsky followed by Maria
18 Danzilo.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

20 GLEN BOLOFSKY: Thank you so much. Good
21 afternoon to everyone. I want to thank Madam Chair,
22 Selvena N. Brooks-Powers and her great team, Central
23 Staff, all the Council Members, and elected officials
24 who appeared today as well as the public who took off
25 a lot of time to appear and all the advocates who are

2 very passionate about whether they want congestion
3 pricing or not want congestion pricing. There's
4 advantages and disadvantages to everything.

5 MTA needs funding. We need funding. It
6 should not be all on the backs of drivers. The
7 federal government hasn't stepped in sufficiently.
8 New York City is supposed to be the driving economic
9 force of the country. Well, if that's true, the
10 federal government really should be stepping in to
11 fund, not so much drivers. It particularly hurts
12 individuals in transit deserts who need cars. Cars
13 are a part of life. To rip it from people and to
14 constantly say people shouldn't have cars, well, it's
15 kind of a non-starter. It's almost them saying in
16 reverse people shouldn't have bicycles. Both are
17 wrong and both are right. People need cars, people
18 bicycles. There's room enough for everybody, and
19 everybody has to pay their fair share. I don't know
20 that the biking community is also chipping in as well
21 to drivers. I don't know. I'm asking that question if
22 someone can respond. But the bottom line is for
23 people in transportation deserts and people who are
24 elderly or disabled and need a vehicle, these
25 individuals should be cut a break. I know the

2 Committee. I know the Council doesn't have the
3 authority, but it's hear to listen to the comments of
4 the public and I thank you for listening to my
5 comments.

6 The other part...

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.
8 Thank you.

9 GLEN BOLOFSKY: Okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: You can finish
11 your statement. Go ahead, Glen. You can finish your
12 statement.

13 GLEN BOLOFSKY: Thank you so much. Thank
14 you, Madam Chair. Simply put, when you're in a
15 transportation desert, you've got a car, you need it
16 for your livelihood or you need it to take care of
17 family member, it's impossible to take public
18 transportation when you're sick. It's just not
19 possible. God forbid, someone gets sick, you can't do
20 it. Now, these individuals get a parking ticket then
21 they're socked with having to travel to the Parking
22 Bureau on top of it. They can't get a virtual hearing
23 so everything is inconvenient for the driving public.
24 There's E-ZPass tolls, registration fees, parking
25 tickets, and now congestion so compliance, regulatory

2 compliance, which is my world on parking fines, is
3 impossible just with parking fines, and you add E-
4 ZPass for the average person, it becomes another
5 layer, and now congestion charges are on top of that.
6 They almost need a full-time bookkeeper just to keep
7 track of this all. My recommendation, if the Council
8 has the authority to consider, some funding for an
9 ombudsman to help ensure that our constituents in
10 every district are not taken advantage of when the
11 congestion charges inundate people with bills and
12 tolls for improper fines and that there's some
13 backbone that the public will have independent of the
14 taxing authority and collection authority. I
15 appreciate being heard today. Thank you so much.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you
17 Glen.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We'll
19 hear next from Maria Danzilo followed by Rick Russo.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

21 MARIA DANZILO: Okay. My name is Maria
22 Danzilo. I'm Executive Director of the advocacy and
23 watchdog group One City Rising. I want to thank
24 Chairperson Brooks-Powers and Members of the

2 Committee, and I'm stating for the record that MTA is
3 not present for this public testimony.

4 We are a grassroots advocacy group
5 representing everyday New Yorkers who are probably
6 too busy working today to stay on a five-hour Zoom,
7 but they are nevertheless going to be very negatively
8 impacted by this regressive, outdated, and hurtful
9 tax. We care about what is best for the city as a
10 whole, and it is clear from so many people who
11 testified that the city as a whole is going to be
12 very harmed by this tax. Residents, working- and
13 middle-class, commuters, small businesses. This is
14 going to feed inflation and cost of living and hurt
15 quality of life in so many communities, and it's
16 being implemented without real transportation and
17 without taking into account many of the real and
18 serious concerns that have been raised by so many
19 people at so many hearings. Hundreds and hundreds of
20 people have testified against this tax, and,
21 unfortunately, our concerns and issues are just not
22 being heard. However, I am encouraged by the
23 Chairperson's questions today and many of the Council
24 Members who are speaking out against the congestion
25 tax and what appears to be genuine concern about many

2 of these issues, and I really hope that this
3 oversight continues and I thank you very much for
4 that.

5 Just a couple of quick points. Not enough
6 resources are being put on improving public safety on
7 public transit including working cameras in every car
8 and station to protect riders and workers. That just
9 hasn't come up today, and we really need to make sure
10 adequate funds are allocated to that.

11 Not enough is being done to raise revenue
12 so that this tax can be kept to as low as possible
13 with as many exemptions as possible as many people
14 advocated for today. We would like to see the MTA do
15 much more to raise capital elsewhere so this tax can
16 be kept to a minimum. For example, we would like to
17 see MTA install appropriate gates to stop fare
18 beating. This alone is estimated to save 700 million
19 dollars a year. People who ride the subway and pay
20 their fair share should not be subsidizing everyone
21 else.

22 As for air quality, as the Chairperson
23 pointed out, congestion pricing is absolutely going
24 to be very problematic for many...

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.

3 Thank you.

4 MARIA DANZILO: Thank you. I'm just going
5 to finish it up. That are already adversely impacted
6 by bad air and have higher rates of asthma and other
7 environmental issues so better alternatives to this
8 regressive tax should've been considered to make sure
9 the communities outside the zone would not be
10 negatively impacted.

11 As for financial impact on New Yorkers,
12 congestion pricing is not going to affect people who
13 can afford it, but it is going to hurt so many people
14 in Manhattan who need and want to use their cars as
15 is their right.

16 One other final point, I do hope that the
17 Council will consider permit parking for residents of
18 those neighborhoods who are going to be negatively
19 affected. The exodus from New York is real. The loss
20 of the tax base is real. It's the highest in the
21 country.

22 I'm sorry. Just one other point.

23 Outreach. Posting a few fliers at bus stops is not
24 the kind of outreach that should've been used to
25 alert the public about this regressive and harmful

2 tax. We need much more outreach if we're going to
3 have this tax impact people in such a negative way.

4 Thank you so much for the time and for
5 your extra time. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We're
7 going to hear next from Rick Russo followed by Tom
8 Lo.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

10 RICK RUSSO: Thank you, Chair Brooks-
11 Powers and Members of the Transportation and
12 Infrastructure Committee. This is Rick Russo, Chief
13 Operating Officer of the Brooklyn Chamber of
14 Commerce, and I'm delivering testimony on behalf of
15 the chamber of Borough 1 membership and economic
16 development organization.

17 The Brooklyn Chamber conducted a survey
18 of our members regarding congestion pricing. The
19 respondents represent a cross-section of small
20 businesses across the borough. Survey results include
21 the following:

22 59 percent of participants do not support
23 congestion pricing.

24 20 percent of participants strongly
25 support congestion pricing.

2 19 percent of participants support
3 congestion pricing with conditions.

4 Of those that do not support the measure,
5 the top three reasons are:

6 Double taxation for those who already pay
7 tolls at the tunnels and bridges.

8 Increased cost of doing business.

9 Concern that the toll will
10 disproportionately impact low-income groups,
11 particularly those who work in the taxi and ride-
12 share industries.

13 For those who do support the measure,
14 their top three reasons are:

15 Decreasing environmental impact,
16 specifically air pollution.

17 Unclogging New York City's busiest
18 streets, reducing traffic.

19 Raising money for NYC's subway, bus, and
20 rail system to improve services.

21 For those that support the measure with
22 conditions, their top three conditions are:

23 Pricing variation based on vehicle size.

24 Pricing variation based on time of day.

25 Discounts for (INAUDIBLE) drivers.

2 We recommend the following to ensure that
3 communities are not unfairly burdened and that we
4 continue driving economic growth across the city.

5 Areas to consider:

6 Increased transit options and services on
7 the outskirts of Brooklyn. We recommend expanded
8 (INAUDIBLE) access to Canarsie (INAUDIBLE) transit
9 desert and Coney Island. A New York City ferry stop
10 would benefit the community and provide a faster
11 option to get to Manhattan.

12 Tiered pricing by vehicle size and use.
13 Delivery trucks are required to enter Manhattan to
14 meet their customers' demands and schedules. They do
15 not have alternative transit options to perform this
16 work. Currently, commercial vehicles are required to
17 pay the commercial vehicle tax of 400 dollars per
18 truck. This is in addition to the congestion pricing...

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.

20 Thank you.

21 RICK RUSSO: Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. We'll
23 hear next from Tom Lo followed by Christopher
24 Schuyler.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

2 TOM LO: Hello.

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: We can hear you.

4 TOM LO: Hi. Good afternoon, Madam Chair.

5 Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak
6 today. My name is Thomas Lo, a small business owner
7 in Chinatown. My testimony today is against
8 congestion pricing. Chinatown has been through a lot
9 over the past several decades, none of which has been
10 more devastating than 9/11. People are still getting
11 sick from the fallout and many have died from the
12 different illnesses associated with 9/11. Businesses,
13 mostly mom and pop shops, family-run restaurants and
14 grocery stores closed and never reopened. Then
15 Hurricane Sandy hit and left Lower Manhattan without
16 electricity for two weeks, further exasperating the
17 downward spiral of Chinatown.

18 One can say that we came back from all of
19 this and, as we were building things back up,
20 suddenly coronavirus hit, and more businesses closed,
21 this time taking down bigger restaurants and
22 supermarkets. A lot of people were left without work,
23 and the racism and discrimination against Asians were
24 on a rise. Asian hate crimes became a thing, most of
25 which happened in Chinatown, and now with the

2 implementation of the congestion tax, it could very
3 well be the nail in the coffin for Chinatown. It will
4 kill what's left of this historic community. It's
5 going to reduce Chinatown to a three, four-block
6 radius and displace everyone else that is not really
7 catering to the tourists. The economy of Chinatown
8 relies heavily on outside visitors, many of which
9 rely on driving. It will deter everyone but the rich
10 from driving into Chinatown as many other speakers
11 have already said.

12 Another thing, I don't see how carve-outs
13 really benefit us either. I'm not really asking for a
14 carve-out. One, I rarely drive. Two, most of the
15 people I know who live in Chinatown don't even own a
16 vehicle. Three, it's not going to promote people for
17 coming into Chinatown. It's still going to keep
18 people out. I've been told that the congestion tax
19 has already been passed and there's nothing we can do
20 about it so all I'm asking is if there's some way we
21 can delay...

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.

23 Thank you.

24 TOM LO: Yeah. Just finish my last
25 sentence. I just want a chance for us to be able to

2 get back on our feet and to give us a fair fight
3 because this is just going to kill our economy. Thank
4 you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: We'll hear next
6 from Christopher Schuyler.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

8 CHRISTOPHER SCHUYLER: Good afternoon,
9 Madam Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to present
10 today. My name is Christopher Schuyler. I'm a Senior
11 Staff Attorney with New York Lawyers for the Public
12 Interest Disability Justice Program, and also I'm a
13 person who stutters.

14 Just at the outset, New York Lawyers for
15 the Public Interest is broadly supportive of
16 congestion pricing with respect to the various goals
17 that are inherent in the plan in terms reduced
18 congestion which will free up the roads for emergency
19 vehicles and paratransit vehicles as well as improved
20 air quality and, of course, for funding the MTA's
21 capital plan, of which 10 billion of it has been
22 promised to needed accessibility improvements.

23 However, people with disabilities and
24 those belonging to environmental justice communities
25 should not bear the burden of paying for this.

2 They've been long under-served by mass transit. In
3 the instance of people with disabilities, the subway
4 system is largely inaccessible just due to the
5 decisions of the MTA over decades of time, and so
6 they rely on paratransit and other services like for-
7 hire vehicles.

8 Moreover, recognizing that the Council
9 doesn't have authority that the Traffic Mobility
10 Review Board has when it comes to exemptions and the
11 implementation, we at NYLPI are concerned with what
12 proportion of the money funded by congestion pricing
13 will go to actual accessibility improvements
14 throughout the system. We know they're calling for
15 about 15 billion funded by congestion pricing. They
16 promised 10 billion to accessibility improvements
17 over the capital plan but what proportion of that is
18 going to accessibility.

19 Also, what if the congestion pricing is
20 struck down or delayed by the various challenges?
21 Does the MTA have a contingency in order?

22 Next up, we wanted to bring up Access-A-
23 Ride, and the MTA earlier said about the satisfaction
24 being very high. Those satisfaction numbers are
25 largely driven by the success of the on-demand pilot

2 in its unrestricted form. The MTA talked about
3 expanding the pilot and saying it's going to keep the
4 same budget, but that's because there's going to be
5 increased cost and fare-rationing so we're wondering
6 whether some of this congestion pricing money could
7 go to Access-A-Ride instead of to customers.

8 I want to talk about exemptions. Again,
9 the exemptions are very murky in terms of how they'll
10 benefit people with disabilities. We know that people
11 with disability license plates will be exempt as well
12 as Access-A-Ride passengers, but what about people
13 who use for-hire vehicles who can't use the subway or
14 due to the Access-A-Ride issues, rely on for-hire
15 vehicles to get around, to get to their jobs? Will
16 they be paying the toll.

17 Lastly, just on environmental justice
18 communities. We know that certain environmental
19 justice communities such as the South Bronx have
20 increased risks of air pollution and that the MTA is
21 promising certain mitigation measures, but we're
22 wondering whether there is data available to support
23 whether the mitigation measures will actually be
24 effective in reducing the risks.

2 Lastly, those people who live in
3 environmental justice communities often live in
4 transit deserts as well, and so we think that they
5 should be either exempt or have cost-saving plans.

6 Thank you. I'll submit my testimony in
7 written form in more detail as well.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CHEN: Thank you. If any
9 of the following people are available on Zoom, please
10 raise your hand and you'll be called in the order
11 that you do.

12 Thomas Greck (phonetic), Lawrence Zogby
13 (phonetic), John Benzer (phonetic), Axel Carrion
14 (phonetic), Wilma Cordero, Gus Lampropoulos
15 (phonetic), May Tsang (phonetic), Abram Morris,
16 Elizabeth Adams, Miriam Benzman, Dorothy Lacont,
17 Michelle Birnbaum, Mollen Meta (phonetic), Zoey Liu
18 (phonetic), Cathy Chan (phonetic), Ishtiak Ahmed
19 (phonetic), Anna Champanee (phonetic), Terry Crystal,
20 Rashad Karim (phonetic), and Eric Shapiro Renfro
21 (phonetic).

22 Okay, if we have inadvertently missed
23 anyone that is registered today and has yet to be
24 called, please use the Zoom hand function if you are
25

2 testifying remotely and you will be called in the
3 order that your hand is raised.

4 If you are testifying in person, please
5 come to the dais.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for
7 all of those that took part in today's Committee
8 Transportation and Infrastructure hearing and shared
9 your thoughts around the congestion pricing program
10 that is imminent. We look forward to working closely
11 with the Department of Transportation, the TLC as
12 well as the MTA as the implementation continues to
13 roll out.

14 With that, this Committee meeting is now
15 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 August 21, 2023