

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL TESTIMONY  
NYCT PRESIDENT DEMETRIUS CRICHLLOW  
DRAFT AND CONFIDENTIAL – 3/11/25

Good morning and thank you for having us, especially to Committee Chair Brooks-Powers. I'm Demetrius Crichlow, President of New York City Transit, and I'm joined by Co-Chief Financial Officer Jai Patel (who will also be giving remarks today), Chief Customer Officer Shanifah Rieara, and Chief of Policy and External Relations John McCarthy.

Before we get started, I want to acknowledge that this is my first time here since becoming President of Transit last fall. A little bit about me -- I'm a third generation Transit worker, following in the footsteps of my father and grandfather. In April, I'll mark 28 proud years of service at the MTA.

I started my career as an assistant signal maintainer at the Long Island Rail Road, digging ditches and climbing poles to keep the trains moving and repairing crossing gates to ensure our system was safe. Later, I took on the responsibility of overseeing all operations at Penn Station Central Control.

Eventually, I transferred to MTA Headquarters to become Special Assistant for Operations before taking leadership positions at New York City Transit. I've had the privilege of serving as the Chief of our Rail Control Center, Vice President of the Staten Island Railway, and most recently as Senior Vice President of Subways, where our team delivered historically strong subway performance and implemented new, higher standards for cleanliness, safety, and maintenance.

Being appointed President of NYC Transit by MTA Chair and CEO Janno Lieber has been the honor of my career and I'm thrilled to be serving our 50,000 employees and 6 million customers. I'm driven by two things – safety and service. Getting people where they need to go safely and on time is our bread and butter.

I know that for our riders, we're only as good as the last commute, and lately, service has been strong. On weekdays, subway on-time performance averaged 82.5% in January. Weekends are even better at 86.8%.

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Buses have also been improving, thanks in part to the start of congestion relief. Systemwide, bus speeds are up almost 4% from last month and crossing times in the morning rush have dropped dramatically – 48% at the Holland Tunnel, 30% at the Williamsburg Bridge and 30% at the Queensborough Bridge.

Even better, travel times are dropping across the board. The QM8, which travels through the Midtown tunnel, has shaved 10 minutes off its usual runtime. And the SIM8X, which travels through the Lincoln tunnel, has seen nearly a 7-minute reduction in its mean travel time.

Let's talk about paratransit. 2024 was a record-breaking year with a nearly 20% increase in trips provided throughout the year. We carried more than 13.3 million riders and there was also historically high on-time performance, with customer satisfaction in the high 70s.

Some other exciting things we've done recently -- following successful efforts in the Bronx and Staten Island, we've finalized the plan for the Queens Bus Network Redesign, which will take effect starting in June. It includes a \$35 million annual investment to increase bus frequencies and to create new, more direct routes, with better connections to the subway and Long Island Rail Road. We're also debuting Rush routes for the first time ever, providing an express-train style journey for customers traveling long distances. Next up is Brooklyn.

You might have seen that new open gangway subway cars are now running on the G line. They first debuted on the C a year ago and customers are loving the updated design. We have nearly 400 of our new R211 cars in service, helping us deliver better service. With a Mean Distance Between Failures of 220,000 miles, that's five times better than the R46 cars they replace. That means five times fewer breakdowns.

Not to be understated is accessibility in our system. We are cranking out elevators and ADA projects at an unprecedented pace: faster, better, and cheaper. There are now 150 fully accessible subway stations systemwide, with another 36 in construction right now. Even



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more are on the way: 23 projects that are being funded by congestion relief revenues plus another 60 in the 2025-2029 Capital Plan – 30 that we've already identified at high-priority stations and 30 more that will be selected after public input.

It's important to me that we're able to run good service while work is underway. Right now, we're about halfway through a major project in the Rockaways. Service on the A is out while we do extensive rehabilitation and repair work to fix damage from Superstorm Sandy. I had the pleasure of visiting this project with Chair Brooks-Powers earlier this month, and I've been to the Rockaways multiple times before and during the outage to make sure customers have the best possible alternatives.

We've increased express bus service, added two high frequency free shuttle bus routes, and are running a free subway shuttle on the peninsula. LIRR is also offering discounted fares. When alternative service is good, it makes a world of difference for our customers. We saw that last summer when the G line was suspended for signal work, and we are bringing the same focus to the Rockaways.

On fares, the transition to contactless fare payment is moving along. Tap and go is now available to nearly all riders since we brought over Reduced Fare customers back in December – the largest customer group that had not been transitioned to OMNY. Students have been tapping in since the fall with Student OMNY cards and usage is way up from last year, when we were still giving out MetroCards.

I want to thank the Council for supporting efforts to expand the City's Fair Fares program, which provides half price MetroCards to low-income New Yorkers. Our team at the MTA is with you 100% and support the efforts to expand the program. The more folks who can sign up, the better. It's no secret we're doing everything we can to make sure New Yorkers pay the fare.

Fare evasion is an existential threat, and we are taking it head on. As Chair Lieber says, it creates a sense of lawlessness right where you enter the

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system, when we want the transit system to feel like a safe and welcoming place. New Yorkers pay for their bacon, egg, and cheese at the bodega, they pay their barber, they pay for the theater. It's only right that they pay for transit, too.

Until we can replace our existing turnstiles, we're going to stick with our strategy – education, stronger physical barriers, and plenty of enforcement – which no question is working. Subway fare evasion is down 26%, and 9% across buses. Huge thanks to our EAGLE teams and gate guards, our internal teams who have worked hard to modify infrastructure, and of course our partners at the NYPD.

Customers tell us again and again that they want to see more uniformed officers in the system. It's the one thing that all our riders – from every demographic group, income level, and neighborhood – agree on. I'm really excited about NYPD's efforts to deploy two officers per train during the overnight tour. We're grateful to Governor Hochul for funding this investment, and to Police Commissioner Tisch for mobilizing her team so quickly.

The safety of riders and employees is my number one priority, and I'm thrilled to see crime levels dropping in the first two months of 2025. The latest NYPD stats show crime is down 29% versus 2024 and down 45% compared to this time five years ago, right before the pandemic hit. These results are a step in the right direction, but there is more work to be done

I know that recent high-profile incidents have New Yorkers on edge. In addition to advocating for more cops, we will keep pressing the criminal justice system to come down hard on subway criminals.

If you commit a crime or harm one of our riders or employees, you're going to get caught and we will seek the maximum penalty. Last year, thanks again to Governor Hochul, we installed cameras in all of our over 6,000 subway cars. We have cameras everywhere now in our system – helping law enforcement solve crimes every day, and are

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working closely with our partners in the criminal justice community (the DAs especially) to keep bad actors out of the subway.

The transit system is too important to the city, to the region, and to the country to allow the perception of safety, or lack of it, to chase people away. It's how millions of people every day get to work, school, doctor's appointments and everything the city has to offer. It's a force for equity – for the same fare, a stockbroker can travel from the Upper East Side to Wall Street and a nurse can travel from Jamaica to Elmhurst Hospital. It's one of the few things that makes New York affordable, and it's the economic engine of the state.

The question now is, do we keep pushing forward or do we go backward? And that's where I'll turn it over to Jai, for more on MTA's finances.

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[[JAI'S PORTION OF TESTIMONY]]

Thanks, Demetrius. I'm glad to be here and to report that MTA's operating budget is in a good place after a challenging few years. It was five years ago, almost to the day, that COVID hit and decimated ridership. You'll remember, we were looking at a business model for transit that no longer worked. We made the case in Albany for new funding, and thankfully Governor Hochul and the NYS Legislature delivered.

That budget deal included \$400 million in annual recurring savings by the MTA, and thanks to our disciplined approach, we hit that target last year and expect to exceed it this year with \$500 million in new efficiencies -- without resorting to layoffs, service cuts or fare hikes.

Another point of pride: MTA's budget is 3% lower today than it was in 2019, even with a ton of extra subway, bus and rail service and the added cost of operating a huge new terminal at Grand Central Madison. We will continue to look for more opportunities to reduce costs, but what I really want to talk to you about today is MTA's capital budget, which involves contributions from not just the MTA itself but also the City, State and federal governments, among other sources.

March is peak budget season in Albany, and our team is up there all the time, fighting for every last dollar to fund MTA's proposed \$68.4 billion 2025-2029 Capital Plan, which prioritizes bringing the system into a State of Good Repair. Many components are falling apart and need to be replaced or preserved. If we don't do this critical work, it's no exaggeration to say we will be looking at another Summer of Hell. Does anyone really want to go back to 2017?

I hope we can count on your support for full funding. Like Demetrius said, transit is too important to New York to let the system fail. So, with that, we're happy to take your questions.

**NYC Department of Transportation Testimony  
Before the City Council Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure  
March 19, 2025**

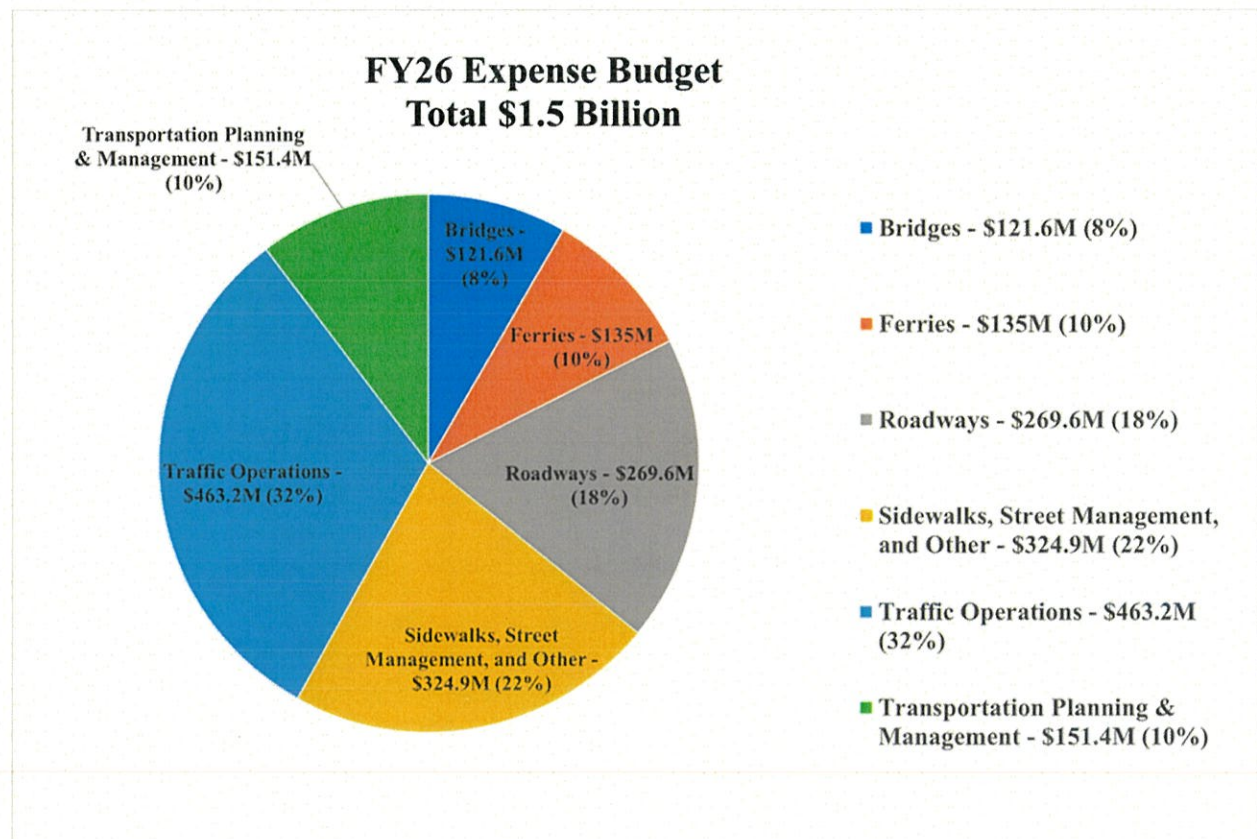
Good afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation. With me today are First Deputy Commissioner Margaret Forgione, Executive Deputy Commissioner Paul Ochoa, and Deputy Commissioner of Transportation Planning and Management Eric Beaton. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Eric Adams on DOT's Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget, and Fiscal Years 2025-2035 Capital Plan.

DOT has a charter mandate to manage 25 percent of all land in New York City, including 6,300 miles of streets and highways, 12,000 miles of sidewalk, 44,000 intersections, and over 800 bridges and tunnels. DOT's charge is to ensure that all New Yorkers can get from point A to point B safely, efficiently, and in an environmentally responsible way. Thanks to continued investments by Mayor Adams and the City Council, New York City has the largest and most complex department of transportation in the country, and we are leading the nation in reimagining the use of public space and making streets safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and all road users. This budget will allow DOT to continue this important work, and today I will share some highlights of the agency's recent and upcoming projects.

## Expense Budget

DOT's FY26 Expense Budget is \$1.5 billion, and you can see the breakdown of this funding on the screen and in the chart in my testimony.

- \$122 million for bridge maintenance and inspection;
- \$135 million for ferry operations and maintenance;
- \$270 million for roadway maintenance;
- \$325 million for other DOT operations and administration, including sidewalk management and inspection;
- \$463 million for traffic operations, including signals, streetlights, automated enforcement, and parking; and
- \$151 million for transportation planning and management, including installation of street signs and roadway markings.

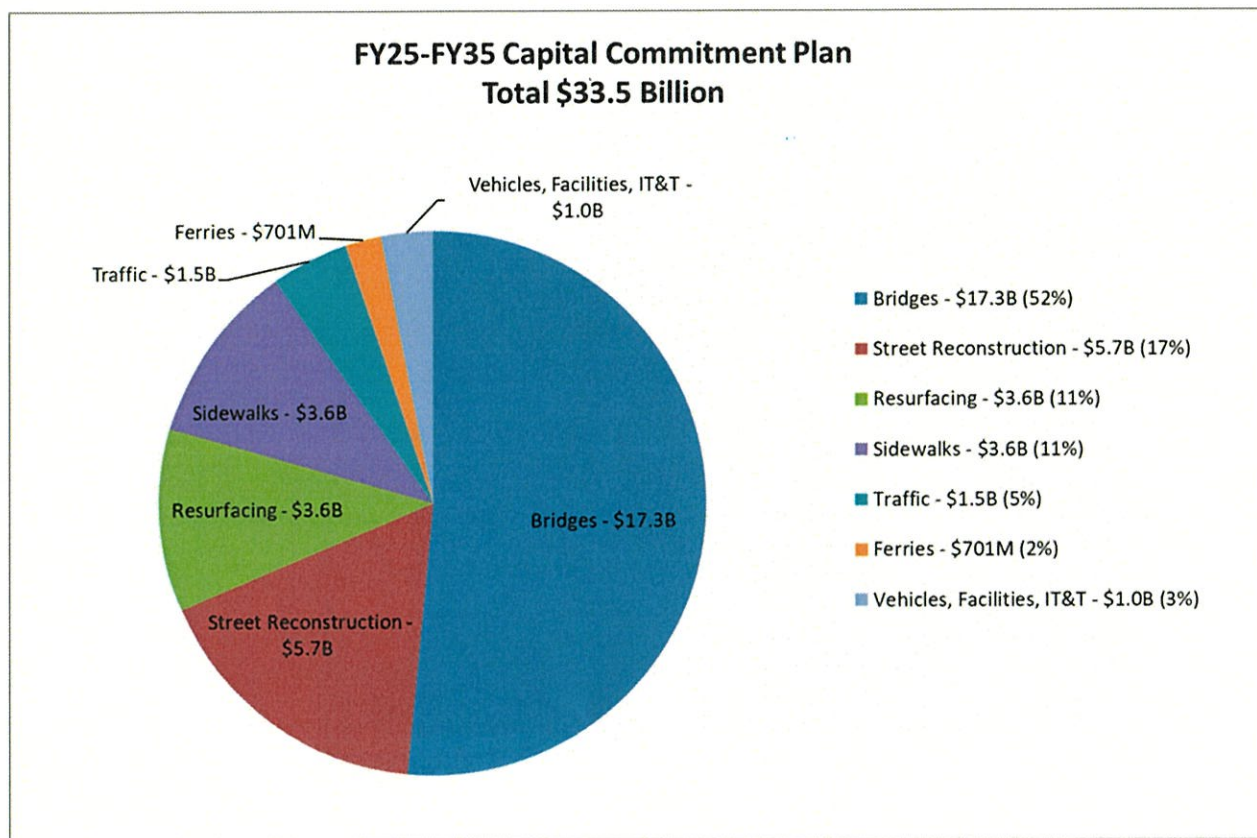




## Capital Plan

DOT's approved FY25-FY35 Capital Plan is \$33.5 billion, and you can see a breakdown of this funding in the chart displayed on the screen and in my testimony.

- \$17.3 billion for bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation;
- \$5.7 billion for street reconstruction;
- \$3.6 billion for resurfacing;
- \$3.6 billion for sidewalk and pedestrian ramp repair and reconstruction;
- \$1.5 billion for streetlights, signals, and automated enforcement;
- \$701 million for the Staten Island Ferry; and
- \$1 billion for the facilities and equipment needed to support DOT's operations.



## Vision Zero

Let's talk Vision Zero. Last year marked the 10-year anniversary since the start of Vision Zero. Traffic fatalities were at their lowest level since 2020 – down five percent since the start of the Adams administration. Senior pedestrian fatalities were at the lowest in recorded history, down 17 percent from 2023. Since the program began in 2014, the agency has been committed to bringing road safety to every corner of the five boroughs and distributing our street improvement projects equitably, and that commitment is having results. As shown in our recently released *Equity and Street Safety* report, traffic deaths have declined most significantly in lower-income neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color, and these neighborhoods have received a higher share of street redesigns since Vision Zero began. Of course, one death is too many, and we will continue to work to deliver high-impact projects across the city that enhance road safety and bring us closer to the goal of zero fatalities on our streets.



*Grand Concourse and East 180th Street, Bronx*



In the spring, we will begin construction for the fifth phase of the Vision Zero Great Streets Reconstruction of the Grand Concourse, between East Fordham Road and East 198<sup>th</sup> Street. This \$55M project will include grade separate bicycle facilities, pedestrian safety improvements, and landscaped medians.



*Daylighting at Banker Street & N 15th Street in Brooklyn*

On daylighting, DOT recently released a groundbreaking study of daylighting pursuant to Local Law 66 of 2023 sponsored by Chair Brooks-Powers. The study found that while daylighting is a useful tool in certain locations, it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. The study also found that hardened daylighting with infrastructure installed to prevent vehicles from occupying that space enhances safety. This budget increases funding for additional hardened daylighting, allowing us to focus on delivering the treatments with real safety benefits for all New Yorkers.

This morning, we announced regional slow zones in each of the outer boroughs as the latest part of our Sammy's Law rollout. Last fall, we implemented the Lower Manhattan Regional Slow Zone below Canal Street. With this rollout, each borough will have a regional slow zone: City Island in the Bronx, DUMBO and Vinegar Hill in Brooklyn, Broad Channel in Queens, and St. George in Staten Island.





*Speed limit change at Prospect Park West, Brooklyn*

Beyond our continued street designs and infrastructure projects, we are working with state legislators in Albany to reauthorize New York City's life saving speed camera program. Speeding remains one of the most dangerous driving behaviors, contributing to about a quarter of the city's traffic deaths each year. The cameras are working: the average number of daily violations issued by each camera dropped 94 percent since the start of the program. Additionally, corridors with speed cameras installed in 2022 experienced 14 percent fewer injuries and fatalities than locations with no cameras. We look forward to working with the Council to renew this program, including by passing a Home Rule message. Let's get ready to pass it!

### Streets Plan

Now, on our recently released annual Streets Plan Update, which looks back over the past year of record-breaking hard work to improve intersection safety, expand the protected bike lane network, reimagine our streets for pedestrians, and so much more.

On intersections, I'm happy to say that in 2024, DOT redesigned 2,688 intersections — over five times the 400 intersection Streets Plan benchmark. We installed 885 Accessible Pedestrian Signals, exceeding the 500 intersections benchmark. And DOT's pedestrian ramp program oversaw the upgrade or installation of pedestrian ramps at over 9,300 corners. These improvements make intersections safer for cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers alike while helping New Yorkers with disabilities cross the street.





*Broadway Vision Public Space, Manhattan*

DOT continues to create new pedestrian space. Last year alone, DOT added 350,000 square feet of new pedestrian space throughout the city.

DOT also continues to reimagine the use of public space, though this work is often not measured by the Streets Plan. The agency launched a permanent outdoor dining program—already more than two times the size of the city’s pre-pandemic program. We have supported over 200 Open Street locations every year. And we expanded Summer Streets to all five boroughs and north to Harlem.

DOT is also improving cycling in the city. Last year, the agency added 29.3 miles of protected bike lanes, the third highest number built in the City’s history following a record 31.9 miles in 2023. This includes critical new bike connections on Queens Boulevard and Manhattan’s Second, Sixth, Seventh and Tenth avenues. The agency also upgraded an additional 4.4 miles of bike lanes through ‘hardening’ with physical infrastructure to better protect cyclists from other vehicles.

As we continue to build cycling infrastructure, we will continue to educate New Yorkers about the benefits of cycling. Biking is not a privilege, but a safe, green, and healthy way to travel around the city.





*Bus Lane at 96th Street, Manhattan*

We are also delivering better bus lanes for New Yorkers. Through transformative bus lane projects on Manhattan’s 96th Street, Second Avenue, and along Allen, Pike, and Madison streets through the expansion of bus-mounted camera enforcement, last year NYC DOT delivered 17.9 miles of new, upgraded, or newly-protected bus lanes—the highest annual mileage for protected bus lanes, improving commutes for 269,000 average daily riders.

Despite these record accomplishments, some of the most ambitious Streets Plan benchmarks have proven unattainable due to various logistical and resource constraints. Prior to the bill’s passage, the agency cautioned that the benchmarks would require significantly more funding and logistical support to achieve. This gap was only made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic hitting soon after the bill passed, leading to hiring and spending freezes. With this in mind, the Adams administration has been aggressively rebuilding agency capacity to meet the intent of the Street Plan, even on a COVID-delayed schedule.

On staffing: the Transportation Planning and Management division largely responsible for Streets Plan implementation has increased staffing over 12 percent, from a COVID low of 466 staff members to 525 staff members currently.





*Sidewalks and Inspection Management (SIM) Yard in South-Bronx*

On space: more staff and more operational output require more facility space, and DOT and DCAS have been working together to secure more space through the complex city process. This includes new space for concrete crews in Brooklyn in 2024, a new dedicated facility for in-house markings crews that will allow that program to expand, and ongoing work to upgrade the Maspeth Central shop that houses significant operational responsibilities, including DOT's sign shop, our in-house markings crews, and our parking meter maintenance unit.

Also included as part of this year's preliminary budget is \$319 million for the reconstruction of our Flatlands Yard facility in Brooklyn. This yard is a critical 24/7 site for DOT operations as it houses the team responsible for Brooklyn's roadway repair and snow plowing, as well as Fleet Services, which performs maintenance on DOT's heavy-duty vehicles.





*Street Ambassadors in Jamaica, Queens*

On public engagement: the Adams administration has shown a deep commitment to local engagement, including with the Commissioner in Your Borough initiative where I spend one day a month in a different borough, meeting with elected officials, community boards, business improvement districts, and more. DOT has expanded how we do outreach, including through on-street engagement with Street Ambassadors, door to door surveys of residents and businesses, and online workshops. Last year alone, DOT received feedback from local community members at nearly 2,600 events. In addition, the Council has enacted a number of local laws around notification that affect the timelines of project delivery. Together, these can cause projects to take longer but are important for helping deliver projects in line with local community needs.

On funding: the Adams administration has committed significant capital and expense funding towards the Streets Plan effort, including the initial down payment of over \$900 million, as well as funding other needs.

On operations: the agency has stated from the first Streets Plan that its ambitious targets go beyond the agency's existing capacity and that of our in-house crews and contracting partners. Achieving the Streets Plan in its entirety would, for example, require roughly doubling the number of markings used for new bus and bike lanes. DOT has been increasing its in-house construction capacity, including opening a new yard for additional concrete crews, and purchasing our first "stripe hog", which is a specialized piece of markings equipment that uses high powered water to prepare a surface for markings.



DOT will continue to strive to achieve the Streets Plan benchmarks and to develop projects that advance safe and sustainable transportation, including delivering critical safety, infrastructure, and quality of life improvements that are not measured by the Streets Plan.

#### Recent and Upcoming Project Highlights

Turning now to highlight a number of exciting projects that are ongoing or in the pipeline.

Earlier this year, we announced that we would establish micro-hub zones to provide safe, dedicated spaces for truck operators to transfer deliveries onto smaller and more sustainable modes of transportation for the last mile of delivery to address the negative environmental and public safety effects of truck deliveries. This budget includes funding for installation of chargers and maintenance to support this program.



*Delivery Cyclist on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Manhattan*

Also related to deliveries, the Adams Administration recently transmitted legislation to the City Council to hold the third-party delivery apps responsible for mitigating the negative consequences of their business models. This legislation would curb unsafe speeding and risky riding behavior by delivery workers, enhance delivery worker safety, reestablish order on our streets, and decrease the risk of deadly battery fires. We look forward to continuing to work with the Council on legislation to regulate this industry.



On shared micromobility, last year, the agency expanded the e-scooter share program to eastern Queens, providing critical connections to major transportation and commercial hubs for roughly 600,000 residents. The program now serves 1.2 million New Yorkers across the East Bronx and Eastern Queens, and this budget provides additional headcount to support the program's expansion.

NYC DOT continues our critical work to maintain the city's infrastructure in a state of good repair. Thanks to the recent passage of the City of Yes, the City has allocated \$218 million in this budget for various street reconstruction projects including roadway improvements and stormwater management and resiliency upgrades throughout the city.



*Commissioner Rodriguez fills the 500,000th pothole in Brooklyn.*

In January, we celebrated filling the 500,000<sup>th</sup> pothole in the Adams administration. During the past three years, we have responded to potholes in 1.8 days, faster than in previous administrations. And potholes have been forming at a much slower rate thanks to this administration's commitment to better and more regular paving, and the nearly 700,000 tons of asphalt that the agency produces each year.

This budget also provides critical funding to maintain the City's over 800 bridges and tunnels. It increases funding and adds headcount to allow us to address structural flags faster, better protecting our infrastructure. It also advances \$870 million for the Bridges' Hazard Mitigation program, which will allow us to bring security upgrades to our East River Bridges.



And in Albany this session, we are seeking reauthorization of the City's automated weigh-in-motion (WIM) program on the Brooklyn Queens Expressway and supporting further expansion of WIM enforcement statewide. The system is working, reducing the number of overweight vehicles on the structure by 60 percent. We look forward to working with the Council to pass a Home Rule message to renew the program and continue to protect this aging piece of infrastructure.



*Doing Business with NYC DOT Event*

Finally, when I first stepped into my role as Commissioner, the agency's Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs) utilization rate was only 11 percent. It is with great pride that I share the progress we have made: in the most recent fiscal year, our MWBE utilization rate was an impressive 32 percent, and year-to-date our utilization rate is 37 percent. This achievement underscores our commitment to promoting inclusivity and providing meaningful support to diverse businesses within our community, reflecting a broader vision of equity and opportunity for all.

With an over **\$1.5B** operating budget and **\$33.5B** capital program, DOT's almost **6,000** employees safely and efficiently manage:



6,000 miles of streets



12,000 miles of sidewalk



794 bridges



24/7 S.I. Ferry Service



1,375 mile bike route network



13,000 signals



300,000 streetlights



200M linear ft of markings

### Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Council for the opportunity to testify before you today. I look forward to continuing to work together to make this city safer, more equitable, and more accessible for generations to come. We are so proud of the work that the almost 6,000 people at DOT do every day to keep this great city moving. We would now be happy to answer any questions.





Testimony of Chair and Commissioner David Do  
New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission  
Before the City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026  
March 19, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and esteemed members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. My name is David Do, Chair and Commissioner of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission. With me is TLC's General Counsel, Sherryl Eluto; TLC's Deputy Commissioner for Operations, People, and Innovation, Evan Hines; and TLC's Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Community Affairs, James DiGiovanni. We are grateful for your invitation to provide an update on TLC's regulated industries and the fiscal state of the agency. TLC is a relatively small agency with a large mission: to regulate a taxi and for-hire vehicle industry of nearly 300,000 licensees, from drivers to base operators and vehicle owners. Through strong fiscal management, the agency is continuing to deliver for New Yorkers, and it is my hope that this hearing is an opportunity to build on the progress of the past fiscal year.

As I reported at the oversight hearing held by this committee last month, the TLC-regulated industries are in a stable position, and we are optimistic about the future of for-hire transportation. In calendar year 2024, across all industries, there were over 300 million trips completed. In comparison to the previous year, overall trips have increased by 4.4%. Each sector of our regulated industries is unique, and there is some variation across each type. Taxi trips have increased by 7.5% from calendar year 2023 to calendar year 2024. Importantly, yellow taxi driver wages have reached new heights in part due to the meter rate of fare increase TLC passed in 2022. The agency estimates that between 70-75% of yellow taxi drivers are full-time drivers, and the median earnings for this group are now \$60,000 per year compared to \$55,000 in 2019.

The high-volume for-hire vehicle sector, the largest segment of our regulated industries, completed over 239 million trips in calendar year 2024, compared to about 232 million in calendar year 2023, representing a 3% increase. We also saw similar driver earnings increases in this sector as well. The median earnings for full-time drivers before taxes and expenses are now \$63,000 in comparison to \$50,000 in 2019, which is the result of TLC's robust driver pay rules authorized by Local Law 150 of 2018. Moreover, non-high-volume for-hire vehicles continue to show signs of progress as well, completing 19.7 million trips in calendar year 2024. This is an 18% increase compared to calendar year 2023.

The commuter van industry is beginning to show signs of recovery with 43 vans in service compared to 34 at the beginning of 2024. This may in part be due to Empire State Development's Commuter Van Stabilization Program. Through this program, eligible applicants can receive up to \$40,000 to help offset the cost of annual commuter van auto insurance policies as well as receive reimbursements for specific vehicle safety upgrades, including advanced driver assistance, dash cams, and GPS tracking.





But this progress has not been without significant challenges. One factor is the instability in the for-hire vehicle insurance market created by American Transit Insurance Company's 46-year saga of insolvency. To be clear, TLC does not regulate insurance companies, but the agency does set insurance requirements, including no-fault minimums, to ensure that drivers, passengers, pedestrians, cyclists, and other road users are adequately and quickly compensated for crashes involving TLC-licensed vehicles. Importantly, this coverage differs from liability insurance because it is available immediately to crash victims without the need for a time-consuming and expensive lawsuit. We are working closely with our partners at the New York State Department of Financial Services to ensure that any impacts related to American Transit Insurance Company's insolvency on our regulated fleets, drivers, and ultimately passengers are mitigated. We are reviewing and monitoring proposed language in the state budget that will aid in returning the company to solvency and increase competition in the commercial insurance marketplace.

A second major obstacle was the use of lockouts in calendar year 2024 by Lyft and Uber. The main purpose of these lockouts was to artificially inflate the utilization rate in TLC's driver pay formula to avoid paying drivers, who had already been onboarded to work for Lyft and Uber. Under the current rule structure, drivers are paid for trip time and trip distance, which are then divided by the utilization rate to capture total working time across the entire high-volume industry. Lyft and Uber get credit for 58% utilization for driver pay calculations while only having to hit 53%; this flexibility is intended to incentivize companies to avoid lockouts due to minor fluctuations in utilization. However, in 2024, the utilization rates began to fall below 53%, which meant that driver pay calculations would reflect the actual utilization rate from the previous calendar year, not 58%, resulting in the companies having to pay the drivers more. Instead of fairly paying drivers, as we have long asserted, the companies made deliberate choices to game the system by locking out drivers in order to artificially push the utilization rate back over 53%. They have failed to manage supply and demand.

As a consequence, on February 5, 2025, TLC held a public hearing to propose changes that would increase minimum per-mile pay rates to account for increased driver expenses, change the way utilization rates are calculated and applied, and add restrictions to lockouts to ensure that drivers have reasonable expectations of their working hours and incomes. Specifically, the proposed amendments split the utilization rate into two: a time-based and a distance-based utilization rate to prevent manipulation by the high-volume for-hire vehicle companies and capture driver working time more accurately. In addition, the proposed rules require companies to provide 72 hours' notice before restricting drivers' access to the platform and prevent companies from logging a driver off mid-shift except in certain limited circumstances. Recognizing the important nature of these rules, TLC extended the comment period to March 5, 2025, to give our licensees additional time to review the proposals and voice their opinions. We are currently reviewing the feedback we received on these proposed rules and plan to vote on the final rules in the coming weeks.





In addition to raising driver pay rates, we also passed new rules to implement Local Laws 33 and 56 of 2024, allowing for a formal procedure for the licensing of businesses that provide electronic tablets and software for interior advertising in for-hire vehicles. These rules were crafted to ensure that drivers share in the financial benefits of this innovation. Our rules state that an interior advertising provider must pay at least 25% of the gross revenue generated by the interior advertising system to each driver using or operating an approved tablet in a for-hire vehicle. We listened to the feedback from the driving community and added language to ensure tipping could be added as a feature by high-volume for-hire services. To protect these hard-fought gains, we also included a framework to ensure TLC has the necessary data to examine the compensation received by drivers, issue violations if the companies do not comply with the requirements, and adjust the rate as needed.

I am also pleased to report that we have already exceeded this year's requirement of 15% of trips dispatched to electric or wheelchair-accessible vehicles as part of TLC's Green Rides rule package. Lyft and Uber are dispatching about 20% of trips to electric and wheelchair-accessible vehicles, so we are on track to hit our 2026 target ahead of schedule. As of January 31, 12,635 for-hire vehicles out of the 105,873 licensed by TLC are electric, or 12%. By requiring a shift from gas to electric, we have reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by more than 19,000 metric tons. We remain committed to ensuring that New Yorkers have cleaner air and quieter roads. But driving electric is not only beneficial for our public health and environment but also for drivers. As our *Electrification in Motion* Report detailed, for-hire EV drivers' average monthly pay per trip is consistently higher, by about \$2-3, compared to those in gas-powered vehicles. Electrification has many benefits for our driving community and the public at large, and we will continue to monitor our progress and review policy changes at the federal level as necessary.

Next, I would like to preview TLC's preliminary budget for fiscal year 2026, which is projected to be approximately \$58 million, broken down into \$45 million in personal services (PS) and \$13 million in other than personal services (OTPS). This is an overall decrease of nearly \$2.3 million, or 3.8%, from the previous year. This expected change is the result of the Program to Eliminate the Gap savings initiative and is mostly due to less than planned contract spending, vacancy reductions, and efficiencies in other than personal services.

Currently the TLC's authorized headcount is 546 for fiscal year 2026, which in comparison to fiscal year 2025 is a decrease of 9. This is due to a reduction of unassigned heads rather than a decrease in staffing. TLC is working closely with OMB and Mayor Adams to meet our staffing needs by backfilling critical positions, and we are actually in the process of hiring additional uniformed team members. The Mayor has been a strong advocate for increasing the quality of life for all New Yorkers and understands that as an enforcement agency, TLC is a partner in this effort. As we continue to fill vacancies at the agency, I am proud to announce that 16 TLC enforcement cadets graduated from the academy in October 2024 and are now keeping our city streets safe. These new officers are the first class of the 100 enforcement officers that TLC committed to hiring at the last budget hearing using a combination of existing vacancies





and new funding. Throughout this year we will be continuing our efforts to hire and onboard 84 more officers until we reach our goal. Overall, through strong management and savings, TLC remains in solid fiscal health, and we will continue to monitor revenue collections and work with OMB to make any adjustments as needed.

Next, I will share an update regarding TLC's capital projects. Our Safety and Emissions Inspection Facility in Woodside, Queens, is currently in the first phase of a \$180 million reconstruction. This project is being managed by the Department of Design and Construction and is expected to be substantially complete by the end of 2028. The project is currently at 18.2% completion and is needed to mitigate structural degradation as well as to meet an increasing demand for inspection services. Once completed, the new facility will increase inspection capacity by 200 cars per day and reduce street congestion associated with entering and exiting vehicles. Notably, the scope of the project was expanded to include 70 new electric vehicle chargers, including 30 level 3 fast chargers, to support TLC's Green Rides initiative. The city will seek partial reimbursement for the installation of these chargers from grants such as the Con Edison Power Ready program. For TLC employees, there will also be a new administrative building, a parking garage, and vehicle testing equipment. The current inspection facility remains operational while the new construction is underway.

Across all of TLC's projects, the agency is committed to ensuring that our vendors reflect the diversity of New York City. The Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) program expands opportunities for local entrepreneurs to access government contracts and grow their businesses. TLC's current Fiscal Year 2025 M/WBE utilization rate is 67%, or \$1.5 million in M/WBE contracts, which reflects that we are only midway through the fiscal year. I am confident that by June 30th, TLC will reach an M/WBE utilization very near the same percentage as last fiscal year. This number reflects utilization for eligible contracts, which do not include intergovernmental contracts or requirement contracts. That being said, we are still above our agency's goals for M/WBE utilization, which is 60%, and far above the city's goal of 30%. M/WBE vendors were procured for services required to upgrade our licensing systems through the agency's TLC Connect project and revise our educational course curriculum. Through all of these contracts, we are contributing to advancing equity in our city.

As I conclude my remarks, I would like to thank all of the hard-working TLC employees that made our achievements this past year possible. I look forward to collaborating with the members of the Committee as the budget process continues to ensure that New York City continues to have the safest and most well-regulated for-hire vehicle industry in the country. I am now happy to answer any questions you may have about the TLC's budget or regulated industries.

# **Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing**

**March 19,  
2025**

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Department of Design and Construction  
Thomas Foley, Commissioner

New York City Council  
Committees on  
Transportation and  
Infrastructure

## **Introduction**

**Good afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee. I am Tom Foley, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Design and Construction, and I am pleased to appear before you today. I am joined by Executive Deputy Commissioner Maggie Austin, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Financial Officer Rachel Laiserin, and other members of DDC's leadership team.**

**Fiscal Year 2025 has been a time of growth and change for DDC, and I anticipate that the coming fiscal year will be the same. Even as we continue our traditional role building the City's public buildings and infrastructure, we are taking on more and more responsibility for other programs including Borough-Based Jails, coastal resiliency and green infrastructure. We are improving the way we pay our vendors; we are**



**improving the way the city plans its capital improvements; and we are improving our public outreach with a new website later this year.**

**Lastly, we have continued to advance our Alternative Delivery program to more effectively deliver projects and continue to advocate in Albany for more tools.**

### **Budget Overview**

**DDC builds on behalf of more than 25+ City agencies plus numerous museums, cultural organizations and other non-profits that receive funding from City sources.**

**The January Capital Commitment Plan for FY26 contains over \$5.5 billion in new planned investments. This figure includes over \$2 billion for Infrastructure Division projects, close to \$1 billion for our Public Buildings and support portfolio and \$2.56 billion for Borough Based Jails. Capital spending for DDC varies year over year, as it is dictated by**

**the agencies that sponsor our projects and the funding we receive from them. We advise sponsors about scope and cost, but ultimately priorities are policy driven.**

**DDC's FY 2026 operating budget is \$159 million. This includes \$128 million for Personal Services and \$31 million for Other Than Personal Services. Our budgeted headcount is 1,177. Our total operating budget includes \$140 million in IFA funding and \$19 million in City tax levy funding.**

**In Public Buildings we have 70 projects in active design, 31 currently in procurement, and 93 in construction, with a total value of these projects of approximately \$12.9 billion. In Infrastructure we have 109 projects in active design, 55 in procurement, and 89 in construction, with a total value of approximately \$11.0 billion.**

## **Alternative Delivery**

**I am very pleased to report that we have reached an important milestone in our growing portfolio of design-build projects: within the coming weeks we will complete the City's first design-build project outside of the Borough Based Jails program – a new Parks maintenance facility at Orchard Beach in the Bronx.**

**This project, as described in the Administration's recent Design-Build Progress Report submitted to the State legislature, will be completed 2.6 years faster than would have been possible with lowest bidder contracting and with cost savings of ten percent of the budget, or around \$3.6 million on a \$36 million project. We currently have 22 design-build projects in contract including Borough-Based Jails, public buildings and infrastructure projects. On these 22 projects alone, the City is saving an estimated 45 years of time and \$1.3 billion using**

**design-build. Among those projects are contracts for raised crosswalks, ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps, deep sewer manholes, and multiple Parks restrooms bundled together.**

**In December, Albany gave us the ability to use Construction Manager-Build (CM-Build) for library and cultural projects as well as progressive design-build for future resiliency projects. We have already identified projects that we can apply both of these new contracting methods to, with procurement for four CM-Build projects starting next month and Progressive Design-Build later this year.**

### **Advanced Capital Planning**

**Last year at this hearing, DDC discussed Advanced Capital Planning (ACP), which is how we work with agencies to provide the information and technical expertise they need to plan holistically for the long-term maintenance and necessary upgrades of their capital assets. This type of**

**overall capital planning, as opposed to work being done on a piecemeal or project-to-project basis, holds great potential for the City to save time and money on future projects.**

**ACP has three main elements: a new data portal we created that compiles already available public buildings data in one location; a method to gather the data that we don't have already available to us including inventories of mechanical equipment or whether a building complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and using data to support holistic capital planning across agency portfolios of properties, guided by DDC's technical and engineering expertise. All three elements are moving forward, and we currently have a pilot program with the Queens and Brooklyn public library systems. We will continue to grow the overall program.**

## **Payment Reform**

**Along with proactive planning, another major DDC goal is improving internal processes so that the industry finds it more desirable to work with us. Vendors understandably love nothing more than getting paid on time, and the payment process is known to be arduous.**

**Over the last year, DDC has evaluated its payment process with the goal of paying vendors more quickly and accurately by streamlining the administrative burden. We analyzed more than 60 discrete forms and have worked to remove outdated bureaucratic requirements such as wet signatures and notarizations where not required by law.**

**We also worked with our sister construction agencies – DOT, DEP and Parks – to ensure that we are all asking for the same information in a similar fashion. We are now at the point of rolling out new simple and**

**easy-to-use payment request forms along with a clear step-by-step guide to the process for all.**

### **Borough-Based Jails**

**The Borough-Based Jails program continues to be our largest alternative delivery program as well as our largest overall. This spring we will issue a Notice to Proceed for the design-build team that will create the new Manhattan facility, the last of the four new jails to enter this phase. We will soon have four more humane and secure facilities in active construction. These complex projects greatly benefit from design-build, allowing site prep to begin early and foundation work to start prior to design completion.**

### **M/WBE**

**As we reported in the recent Preliminary Mayor's Management Report, DDC remains a leading agency in contract awards and payments to**

**Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) and through Fiscal 2024, the Agency's M/WBE participation was 24 percent for contracts subject to Local Law 1 of 2013, with \$461.4 million in awards. DDC remains the leading Mayoral agency in awards to M/WBEs with approximately \$5.6 billion awarded since Fiscal 2015, which is 29 percent of all City M/WBE awards.**

**We are growing our M/WBE requirements in our Alternative Delivery program as well and this month announced that our two most recent design-build contract awards went to certified M/WBEs. The first, the new Roy Wilkins Rec Center, is valued at \$128 million. The other is the Parks restrooms contract I mentioned earlier, which is valued at \$22 million. We continue to set ambitious and disaggregated M/WBE goals in both the design portion and the construction portion of our design-build contracts and are seeing the results of these efforts.**



## **Sustainability and Resiliency**

**DDC plays a large role in the City's resiliency efforts and that continues to grow as the agencies we build for such as DEP, DOT and Parks dedicate more of their budgets to resiliency. In the recent PMMR in order to account for this work, we reported new resiliency data - in the first four months of the fiscal year we installed 15,693 square feet of porous pavement and 1,265 feet of coastal protection.**

**Coastal protection at ESCR and BMCR on the lower East Side is creating a 3.22-mile-long flexible flood barrier while also enhancing recreational opportunities. Last month we demonstrated for the media the new flood gates at BMCR, which rise up from the ground using electrical power. We expect our next coastal resiliency project to start in Red Hook in a few months. That project is budgeted at \$184 million and will**

**use a system of floodwalls, flip-up and sliding flood gates and sidewalk and roadway improvements.**

### **Conclusion**

**At DDC, we recognize that we must adapt each and every day by looking inward at our own processes and empowering staff, outward to push for new contracting tools and continued collaboration with our sponsors, and across the boroughs to be more transparent about our work and as policy and priorities change. We will continue to build on these efforts in FY26. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.**



## OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**ANTONIO REYNOSO**

Brooklyn Borough President

### **NYC Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Hearing on the FY26 Preliminary Budget March 19, 2025**

Thank you Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee for holding this hearing today. I am here representing Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso, whose transportation priorities focus on improving public transit—especially in areas where access is lacking—and making walking and biking safer and more accessible.

This year, New York City became the first in the nation to implement congestion pricing, demonstrating that we are still capable of bold, transformative policy changes. However, despite this progress, cars killed more people than guns in NYC in 2024. When my office testified before this committee last year, I stressed the urgent need to fully fund the NYC Streets Plan. This tragic statistic underscores the continued need for street safety improvements, and I applaud the City Council for proposing baselined funding for daylighting intersections.

Meanwhile, other aspects of the NYC Streets Plan remain far behind schedule. In 2024, the plan set a goal of 30 miles of new protected bus lanes, yet only 13.5 miles were completed. The target for 50 new miles of protected bike lanes fell short as well, with just 29 miles delivered. The NYC Streets Plan also commits to expansion of the Open Streets program and creation of vibrant public spaces that both enhance the public realm and contribute to street safety. In the recent Streets Plan update, DOT cites pushback from local elected officials and community members as a general barrier to progress. In other words, the department is prioritizing local support for parking over life-saving street improvements that would improve safety and speed up travel for thousands of New Yorkers. Over the next fiscal year, DOT must stand firm against opposition to street safety measures, and the City Council must ensure the City meets the benchmarks of the NYC Streets Plan and continues to support the partner organizations that help manage the Open Streets and other public space programs.

Additionally, as DOT moves forward with capital projects, school safety improvements in Brooklyn must remain a priority to protect students. I also urge DOT to integrate curb bump-outs and raised crosswalks into routine road maintenance to accelerate these critical safety upgrades. Timing matters. Lives are at stake.

Beyond street safety, I am committed to closing gaps in access to opportunity. Expanding funding for priority bus projects is a direct way to do that. Research from the Pratt Center and

the Riders Alliance shows that 91% of the surveyed riders on Flatbush Avenue buses have experienced delays, and one in three has been fired, reprimanded, or lost wages as a result. Moreover, Flatbush Avenue buses primarily serve Black, female, and low-income riders.

This mayoral administration identified Flatbush Avenue as a priority for bus improvements in 2022. However, only a portion of Flatbush Avenue has seen investment, and that was in the wealthier and whiter segments north of Grand Army Plaza. In addition, Utica Avenue, which runs Brooklyn's busiest bus routes carrying almost 44,000 daily riders, was identified as needing improvements. Prioritizing and increasing funding for these bus projects will directly improve transit reliability and economic opportunities for the mostly low income communities of color who depend on them.

Finally, I urge the City Council to take a bold approach to expanding freight capacity at the Brooklyn Marine Terminal (BMT). We already know that shifting freight from trucks to water and rail is critical. This need has been emphasized repeatedly—by EDC and DOT in Delivering Green and Blue Highways, by EDC in Freight NYC, by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council in its Regional Transportation Plan, and by DOT in Delivering New York. Now that NYC has jurisdiction over BMT, EDC has the opportunity to act on these long-standing recommendations. We must maximize freight capacity at this critical infrastructure hub and protect the footprint of the Red Hook Container Terminal to support a more sustainable, efficient freight network.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I look forward to working with the Council on this effort. Together, we can transform our city's streets and make life in this city easier and safer.





# PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS  
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## City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Preliminary Budget Hearing March 19, 2025

Testimony by  
Lisa Daglian, Executive Director

Good afternoon, my name is Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. Created by the state legislature in 1981, PCAC is *The Official Voice of Riders* on subways, buses, the LIRR, Metro-North, and Staten Island Railway.

Thank you for holding this hearing today. As we anticipate the state budget in the coming weeks, much remains uncertain. What isn't uncertain is the overwhelming need for investment in our vital transit network. The MTA has made no secret about the importance of funding the 2025-2029 Capital Plan. It's critical that the \$68.5 billion plan be fully funded to bring the hundred-and-twenty-year-old system into a State of Good Repair, with upgraded signals and substations; accessibility and station improvements; new buses and train cars; resiliency enhancements; and a host of less prominent but equally important projects that will keep riders rolling for the next hundred-and-twenty-years. Our quality of life and way of life depend on a fully functional transit network. We know that finding the funding will be challenging, which is why we have come up with a [couple dozen ideas](#) that we have shared with our elected leaders in Albany.

### Fair Fares:

We greatly appreciate and commend the Council's continued support for expanding Fair Fares eligibility to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, following expansion to 145% in the current budget. Raising the eligibility threshold to 200% of the FPL would better reflect the high cost of living in New York City and ensure that many more New Yorkers in need can afford the fare. In fact, our [analysis](#) shows over 415,000 more New Yorkers would be eligible for the program, including 160,000 regular commuters. An increase to 200% would mean so much to so many – particularly workers making or near the minimum wage who are largely transit dependent – and make Fair Fares even fairer. It would also require an increase in the baselined funds, though we know there are still unused funds in the current annual allocation.

We strongly support legislation carried by Senator Comrie (S.3887A) and Assembly Member González-Rojas that would expand Fair Fares to the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North in New York City, also for inclusion in the city's increased baselined funds. Expanding Fair Fares to commuter rails in New York City would allow riders who have access to the LIRR and Metro-North, but not a subway, to ride at half the cost of a CityTicket.

## **The Rider-First Fare Agenda:**

In addition to expanding Fair Fares, expanding CityTicket to include a weekly option with transfers to subways and buses would increase access even further, and we are thrilled that the Senate again included the proposal (S.4411/A.6646) in their One-House Budget Resolution. We also applaud their inclusion of extending discounts for seniors, disabled and Medicare-eligible riders on commuter rails to the morning peak, the only time those discounts are not currently accepted (S.4435/A.5384). We thank Senator Comrie and Assembly Members Alvarez and Seawright for carrying these legislative priorities, respectively, and hope you will join us by supporting them to help bring riders more equitable access to affordable transit around the city and region.

## **Buses:**

Bus riders in the Central Business District and beyond are already seeing the benefits of congestion pricing with increased bus speeds (drivers, too). Automated Camera Enforcement, taking over for the ABLE program, is helping clear the way of obstructive vehicles, and few who get a first ticket receive a second. Recidivism continues to drop as fines rise. The “Block the Box” legislation proposed at the state level should also help clear the road for bus riders. But these should add value to the bus lanes and busways the city is creating. Unfortunately, the city has fallen down in its legal obligation to install the mandated number of miles – achieving just 13.5 miles in 2024, far short of the mandated 30 miles —a pattern we’ve seen repeatedly since the Streets Plan began.

We strongly support proposed legislation to require DOT to maintain a capital tracker of its Street Plan projects with monthly updates to connect the plan to tangible projects and their status. We urge Mayor Adams and the Council to work together to end the hiring freeze at DOT so the agency has the staff needed to meet the legal mandate created by the Streets Plan and to make it easier, not harder, for DOT to build bus lanes – particularly in our city’s subway deserts.

## **Voting Rider Representation on the MTA Board:**

As the coordinating body for three rider councils, our mission is to give subway, bus, and commuter rail riders a voice in the formulation and implementation of MTA policy, to hold the MTA Board and MTA management accountable to riders, and to advocate on their behalf as we are doing today. Under authorizing legislation, each of the three rider councils has a non-voting seat on the MTA Board. This year, one of our priorities is to change that dynamic to give these board members a vote and to add an additional independent member recommended by the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, with input from the disability community. That legislation, the Rider Representation Act (S.20A/A.923A), is sponsored by Senator Gounardes and Assemblymember Dinowitz.

## **Investing in Public Transit is Investing in Our Region**

Public transit is essential to the success and vitality of New York City, connecting millions of New Yorkers to their jobs, schools, and communities. With more investment in the MTA for better service, even more riders will discover that transit is truly the best, safest, and most reliable way to get around.

Thank you.



New York City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
Oversight Hearing: Preliminary FY2026 Budget  
March 19, 2025  
Testimony of Eric McClure, Executive Director, StreetsPAC

In preparing our testimony for today's hearing on the fiscal year 2026 preliminary transportation budget, we looked back at the testimony we delivered in [2023](#) and [2024](#), and discovered that, unfortunately, simply repeating those testimonies would be largely appropriate, given the disappointing lack of progress in several critical areas, most notably in the installation of protected bus lanes and bike lanes mandated by the [Streets Plan](#).

As the New York City Independent Budget Office noted in [a report](#) issued last month, funding and staffing for the Streets Plan's mandates have not met the need, and "without targeted investment and strategic hiring, DOT's ability to deliver on the Streets Plan remains severely limited." Additionally, DOT's staffing vacancy rate is double that of city government as a whole, which further undermines the agency's ability to deliver these crucial – and legally required – projects.

It's a fact that streets with protected bike lanes are safer for everyone who uses them, so the failure to meet Streets Plan benchmarks makes it harder for us to make progress toward Vision Zero, another critical program for which [progress has stalled](#). And with DOT reporting that city buses got slower for the third consecutive year in 2024, something that robust progress on dedicated bus lanes could help rectify, it's no wonder that bus ridership appears to have dropped last year while subway and commuter rail trips continued to recover and cycling and other micromobility trips boomed. It's imperative that we meet the mandate for bus lane miles.

### **Secure Bike Parking**

Having called for the city to make a significant investment in safe, secure bike parking infrastructure in both 2023 and 2024, we were excited by the Mayor's announcement last May that the city would begin work on a network of 500 such stations this year. However, more than 10 months after the city issued its RFP, it has yet to identify a partner, and there's been [conflicting information about the status of funding](#) for the program. With a quarter of city households having lost a bike to theft, we know the lack of secure storage options is a huge barrier to unlocking the full potential of bicycles as transportation. A robust secure bike parking network would also help rectify the lack of sufficient charging infrastructure for e-bikes, and would contribute to reducing the dangers of residential battery fires.



Given how big a game-changer this program could be for New York City, it's essential that the Council and City Hall work together to ensure the program is appropriately funded.

### **Subsidizing the Bike Share Program**

We also renew our call for public investment in the city's bike share program, something we highlighted the past two years, as well. According to DOT, the number of Citi Bike trips increased by more than 25% last year, remarkable growth for a system that's now more than a decade old. Bike share remains the only facet of our public transit system that receives no public subsidy – compare that to the nearly [\\$13-per-trip ferry subsidy](#) that the Comptroller found in a 2022 audit – and even at the member rate, the cost for a ride on a pedal-assist bike can quickly surpass that of a subway or bus fare, which creates a perverse incentive for Citi Bike riders to prioritize speed in trying to get to their destinations.

Fully and equitably expanding Citi Bike to all city neighborhoods, and implementing the technology for recharging batteries at stations, will undoubtedly require public investment. We urge the Council and Administration to make that happen, finally, in fiscal year 2026.

### **Capitalizing on Congestion Pricing's Space Dividend**

Congestion pricing has been an unqualified success since its implementation on January 5th. Reduced congestion, faster commutes, fewer crashes, and more pedestrian activity have all been well documented, and the city now has a tremendous opportunity to capitalize on congestion pricing's space dividend: freed up street space in and around the congestion relief zone that's no longer overrun by motor vehicles. The FY2026 transportation budget should invest in projects that recapture and repurpose this space, from expanded sidewalks to separated busways (Manhattan's 34<sup>th</sup> Street is a long-overdue prime candidate) to widened bike lanes (like replicating the Brooklyn's Bridge's north roadway bike path the south side of the span). Congestion pricing has presented us with a generational opportunity to remake city streets, and we should make sure to seize it.



**Testimony to the City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
March 19, 2025**

***Regarding: The Preliminary Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2029 for the NYC  
Department of Transportation***

The American Council of Engineering Companies of New York (ACEC New York) is the voice of the consulting engineering industry. Our organization consists of around 300 engineering and affiliate firms throughout New York that collectively employ 30,000 people statewide, with a concentrated presence in New York City.

Our members are involved in all aspects of engineering for the public sector. We plan and design the civil, structural, mechanical, electrical, environmental, plumbing, fire protection and technology systems for the city's infrastructure, including NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) capital projects.

We thank the committee for this opportunity to comment on the NYC DOT's capital program for the ensuing years. The City Council's oversight and budgetary role is important to ensure the agency's capital program is implemented in an effective manner to continue delivering infrastructure that provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in New York City.

DOT's Capital Commitment Plan for FY24-FY33 included significant planned funding for bridges (\$12.4 billion); streets (\$5.2 billion); resurfacing (\$3.2 billion); sidewalk and pedestrian ramps (\$3.3 billion); streetlights, signals and automated enforcement (\$1.1 billion); the Staten Island Ferry (\$571 million; and facilities and equipment needed to support DOT operations (\$674 million).

However, since the enactment of the long-term Capital Commitment Plan a year ago, DOT has continued to experience staffing challenges in divisions crucial to delivering the capital program. At the Committee's budget oversight hearing last year witnesses testified about DOT's challenges to retain and hire staff in the areas of the "Streets Plan, 25X25, Vision Zero, Fair Fares."

Indeed, DOT itself has testified to the agency's staffing challenges over the past recent budget cycles. From the perspective of the city's engineering industry, it is understandable staffing numbers fluctuate across years to reflect changes in program priorities, but the agency continues to be significantly understaffed in core departments relative to historical levels.

For example, the long-term Capital Commitment Plans states the largest programmatic area for the next 7 years will be bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation (\$12.4 billion). However, DOT's

Division of Bridges in particular is very understaffed. This division is responsible for critically important public projects, and a very large volume of them.

Beyond serving core infrastructure needs to move goods and people in the city, bridge design and bridge construction is also an effective tool for generating jobs for New Yorkers.

To move forward on the Administrations and City Council's goals to support local, good-paying jobs and to strengthen the city's economy while delivering projects that make a difference to our communities, it is important for the divisions delivering the capital program to be operating at full capacity with the resources they need.

If hiring and retention cannot be accomplished, then the agency must rely on external professionals to act as an extension of city staff to move the program forward.

If our association can be of assistance please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you, again, for your attention to this important topic.



To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

The rise of electric bikes and electric scooters in particular highlights the need for infrastructure that supports these new modes of transportation. These vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative to traditional cars, but their adoption is limited by the availability of safe and secure parking options. Ensuring that secure parking is available for both traditional and electric bikes will further accelerate the shift toward cleaner, greener transportation in our city.

In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Cormack



## Caldwell Enrichment Program, Inc.

1288 Rev James A. Polite Ave.  
Bronx NY 10459

[caldwellprograms@gmail.com](mailto:caldwellprograms@gmail.com)

Yolanda Hardy – Director, Barbara Castro – President

March 19, 2023

Email: [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov)

This letter is being written on behalf of NYC Open Streets citywide program.

### Issue:

- The Open Streets program has been shrinking financially year after year, with City Hall refusing to replace funding that has dried up.
- We need \$48 million over the next three years to protect and expand the Open Streets program, which will cover:
  - Staffing DOT positions that support Open Streets work.
  - Directly funding community organizations that operate Open Streets.
  - Fast-tracking the implementation of street improvement work on Open Streets corridors.
  - Continue to and enhance programming provided by NYC vendors; The Hort, King Charles Unicycle Team, etc.
- The lack of funding has had dire consequences; between 2022 and 2023 alone, there was a 40% decrease in the number of listed Open Streets.

### Benefits:

- Communities partnering with NYC DOT together have an excellent record of creating public spaces both seasonal and permanent by working together. NYC is becoming a more cohesive place to enjoy outdoor activities throughout the 5 boroughs. In many cases the community can and has advised upon changing traffic signs and infrastructure that can and have saved lives as well as beautify the community in which they live.
- Until recently, programs for our Bronx youth were not just scarce but inaccessible. We see the Caldwell Enrichment Program Inc. Jennings St Open Street as being strategically located nestled in a buzzing residential neighborhood. Our organization was started in 2012 to focus on youth at risk and curate them into youth at promise, we have included the community at large in our programming.
- NYCDOT Trans Alt/ has helped our Open Street on Jennings Street program to add value programming in The Bronx NY. This is a neighborhood which is in great need. During the summer months and out of school times, both children and youth can be seen participating in recreational activities. The addition of Artists, authors, Hip Hop dance instructor, The Hort and the circus some of the programming we have obtained to add value to their out-of-school times. Parents/guardians and seniors stop by to check on their children or enjoy the programming as well.
- We started the SAFEHOOD sports team, they won basketball trophies, and we have added football and soccer games to our sports roster. This means our teams have been able to travel to other communities safely, and other communities have entered ours.
- We are collectively envisioning spaces inclusive of people rather than vehicles. The South Bronx community was deeply impacted by Covid-19. "The Bronx, which has long grappled with lower-than-average life expectancy and high incidence of chronic health conditions like asthma and diabetes, those infected with coronavirus die at a rate three times higher than those who live just a river away in Manhattan." <https://www.amny.com/new-york/bronx/bronx-residents-twice-as-likely-to-die-from-covid-19-in-nyc/>.

Sincerely,  
Caldwell Enrichment Program Inc.  
Jennings Street Open Street Program  
Y. Lonnie Hardy – Director /VP  
[REDACTED]

Cc: NYC City Councilman Rafael Salamanca, Jr.  
Cc: Borough President Vanessa Gibson

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

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  - Manhattan District Attorney (forthcoming)



The Center for Justice Innovation is a non-profit organization that seeks to transform the policies and practices of the justice system to make it fair, effective, and humane. The Center operates the following sites throughout New York City.

- Family
- Criminal
- Community Development
- Civil/Housing

Center for Justice Innovation

Click on the name of any program to learn more.

STATEN ISLAND

- 1. Staten Island Justice Center

MANHATTAN

- 2. Harlem Community Justice Center
- 3. Headquarters
- 4. Manhattan Justice Opportunities
- 5. Midtown Community Court

MULTI-BOROUGH

- 6. Legal Hand (Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens)

BRONX

- 7. Bronx Child Trauma Support
- 8. Bronx Community Justice Center
- 9. Bronx Community Solutions

BROOKLYN

- 10. Brooklyn Justice Initiatives
- 11. Brooklyn Mental Health Court
- 12. Brownsville Community Justice Center
- 13. Neighbors in Action
- 14. Red Hook Community Justice Center
- 15. Supervised Release Program

QUEENS

- 16. Queens Community Justice Center (Jamaica and The Rockaways)

Staten Island

Brooklyn

Queens

Manhattan

Citywide

For More Information  
Hailey Nolasco  
Senior Director of Government Relations  
hnolasco@innovatingjustice.org

- Access to Justice
- Alternatives to Incarceration
- Driver Accountability Program
- Gender and Family Justice
- Neighborhood Safety Initiatives
- Parent Support Program
- Project Reset
- Restorative Justice Practices
- RISE Project
- Strong Starts Court Initiative
- Youth Action Institute
- Youth Impact

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

Good afternoon Chair Brooks-Powers and esteemed members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. My name is Amanda Berman and I serve as the Senior Director of Court Reform for the Center for Justice Innovation (the Center).

At the Center, we work to develop and implement programming that responds to harm, builds safety, and changes behaviors for the better. Traffic safety is an issue that directly impacts the majority of New Yorkers, whether they are drivers, pedestrians, or cyclists. According to a study by Transportation Alternatives, 70 percent of New York City voters know someone who has been injured or killed in a traffic crash, and 30 percent have been injured in a traffic crash themselves, making this a particularly pertinent issue to be addressed.<sup>1</sup> In 2024, traffic crashes killed 253 New Yorkers, or one person every 35 hours.<sup>2</sup> These fatalities included 16 children aged 17 and under and 121 pedestrians, a 33 percent and 21 percent increase from 2023, respectively.<sup>3</sup> In fact, 2024 tied with 2022 as the worst year for child fatalities under Vision Zero. The cost of this public health crisis for 2024 is estimated to be over \$5 billion.<sup>4</sup>

It is clear that the traditional methods of addressing street safety and dangerous driving are failing. For vehicular charges, many face fines and fees, traditional prosecution, and/or short term incarceration. Contact with the justice system can have a wide range of collateral consequences, from job loss to custody issues to eviction. This can diminish a person's ability to get back on their feet following an arrest. On top of this, traditional methods fail to address the underlying causes of dangerous driving.

In recognizing this, the Center has developed a number of responses, including the Driver Accountability Program, Circles for Safe Streets, and the Driving While Intoxicated screening program. Today, I will be providing an overview of these programs and their impact. It is our hope that the Council will continue to support these valued programs and their work improving the justice system's responses to crime.

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<sup>1</sup> Troutman, M. (2021, January 15). Traffic Violence Touches 70 Percent of NYers, Study Finds.

<https://patch.com/new-york/new-york-city/traffic-violence-touches-70-percent-nyers-study-finds>

<sup>2</sup> Transportation Alternatives. (2025b, January 27). Child & Pedestrian Fatalities Rose in 2024 While 132 Vehicles Received 100+ Safety Camera Tickets, With Two Exceeding 500, New Data from Transportation Alternatives & Families for Safe Streets.

<https://transalt.org/press-releases/child-amp-pedestrian-fatalities-rose-in-2024-while-132-vehicles-received-100-safe-ty-camera-tickets-with-two-exceeding-500-new-data-from-transportation-alternatives-amp-families-for-safe-streets>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Transportation Alternatives. (2024, October 28). *Record-Breaking Number of New Yorkers Killed or Seriously Injured in the First Nine Months of 2024, New Data from Transportation Alternatives and Families for Safe Streets Shows*. Transportation Alternatives.

<https://transalt.org/press-releases/record-breaking-number-of-new-yorkers-killed-or-seriously-injured-in-the-first-nine-months-of-2024-new-data-from-transportation-alternatives-and-families-for-safe-streets-shows>

## Driver Accountability Program

The Center’s Driver Accountability Program seeks to reduce dangerous driving behaviors and improve street safety in New York City by utilizing principles of restorative justice to engage drivers in meaningful reflection around their driving behaviors, and encourage self-empowerment to change those behaviors. The program also works to reduce systemic harms that are caused by traditional punitive responses, by offering an alternative to fines, fees, traditional prosecution, or short-term incarceration for vehicular charges. We are seeking funding from City Council to support this vital program.

The program draws upon principles of restorative justice to address the dangerous behaviors that are the primary cause of pedestrian fatalities. It utilizes a group participation model that enables drivers to self-reflect and have honest conversations about their own behaviors, the reasons behind their choices, and an opportunity to learn from one another in a non-judgmental environment. Participants are required to actively engage in a series of exercises and discussions led by trained group facilitators.

After a brief introduction, participants complete a questionnaire that requires them to rate and describe their driving beliefs and behaviors, a practice that initiates meaningful self-reflection. Participants are then asked to share their answers, providing a framework for a discussion about what constitutes dangerous driving and why. Incorporating victims’ voices is a critical component of the program. Participants watch the Vision Zero video, “Drive Like Your Family Lives Here,” which includes testimonials from people who have lost loved ones due to unsafe driving. Group facilitators then lead a discussion about the video and the importance of thinking broadly about one’s place on the road and in the community. Participants also learn about the importance of language and why it is critical to view these tragedies as “crashes,” rather than “accidents.”

In the latter part of the session, participants are required to identify two to three driving behaviors that they are committed to changing. The group then develops concrete steps to change each of these behaviors, such as identifying alternative practices and decision-making skills that can be harnessed in those critical moments of judgment. This portion of the group empowers participants to become agents of their own change—an essential element of the Driver Accountability Program’s restorative approach.

Throughout the session, the facilitators introduce important facts and safety tips for the group to consider and discuss, such as the scientific data behind speed limits, the lead causes of fatalities, and the importance of street design and engineering. This allows participants to come away with an understanding of the myriad elements that contribute to street safety, and the role they can play as drivers in that ecosystem.

With the support of the City Council, the Driver Accountability Program currently operates at six sites, in all five boroughs, serving criminal courts in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and Staten Island. The program is offered in both Spanish and English; individuals who are referred with other language needs are provided with translation services to conduct the program in a one-on-one setting. In 2024, 980 participants completed the program across all five boroughs.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Salesforce database. [Data file].



A recent impact evaluation conducted by the Center found a 50 percent reduction in recidivism in Brooklyn and success at improving street safety in both Brooklyn and Staten Island. Specifically, the evaluation found that DAP participants in both Brooklyn and Staten Island were less likely to recidivate on selected DAP charges within six months than the comparison group. In Brooklyn, the recidivism effect remained significant across all periods analyzed, up to two years post-disposition. Participation in DAP was also associated with different case outcomes: DAP participants in Brooklyn were more likely to have their case dismissed and less likely to receive a fine than individuals not mandated to DAP, thereby reducing punitive penalties that perpetuate inequities in our justice system.<sup>6</sup> This evaluation built upon an earlier participant-focused evaluation conducted by the Center, which found that the program was successful in engaging drivers in meaningful self-reflection and changing their driving beliefs and behaviors.<sup>7</sup>

Over several years of operating the Driver Accountability Program, facilitators noticed a growing number of participants who were being referred to the Program for charges related to a suspended license, or other invalid documentation (such as registration or insurance). For this participant population, program staff determined that a more tailored intervention was needed that offered more insight into state laws and regulations governing such documentation, as well as what steps they would need to take to be in compliance with these laws. As such, program staff created a new version of DAP that would focus on supporting participants to better understand the requirements associated with having a license, how to check the status of their license, how to clear suspensions with the Department of Motor Vehicles, and other rules of the road related to documentation. This curriculum, currently titled “Driver Accountability Program 2.0/Documentation,” began a pilot phase in April 2024 in Brooklyn and has since expanded to Staten Island. In 2024, 52 participants were served through the Driver Accountability Program 2.0 group.<sup>8</sup>

### *Circles for Safe Streets*

The Center is also requesting continued support for the second tier of the DAP program, called Circles for Safe Streets: Driver Accountability Through Restorative Justice, which responds to vehicular crashes involving serious injury or death. The Center worked with Families for Safe Streets to develop Circles for Safe Streets which offers more intensive intervention that brings together drivers and victims and/or surviving family members of their crashes through restorative circles to work toward healing, accountability, and reparation. During the circle sessions, victims (or family members) have an opportunity to articulate their feelings, the depth of harm they have suffered, and what has been taken from them as a result of the driver’s actions. Significantly, it also provides an opportunity for the driver to be held accountable, acknowledge the harm they have caused, and express remorse or even take steps to repair the harm.

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<sup>6</sup> Strong, H., Reynolds, D., & Sharlein, J. (2024, November). Steering Towards Safety: An Impact Evaluation of the Driver Accountability Program.

[https://www.innovatingjustice.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2024/DAP%20eval\\_11072024.pdf](https://www.innovatingjustice.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2024/DAP%20eval_11072024.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Sexton, E., & Jeffrey Sharlein. (2022, February). The Driver Accountability Program: A Participant-Focused Evaluation of a New York City Alternative Sentencing Program.

[https://www.innovatingjustice.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2022/Driver Accountability Program Report Final Draft.pdf](https://www.innovatingjustice.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2022/Driver%20Accountability%20Program%20Report%20Final%20Draft.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

Before bringing the parties together, program staff work separately with the drivers and victims/surviving family members to provide intensive individualized support in the form of case management, support groups, and referrals for long-term counseling to address trauma and mental health care that is often needed in the aftermath of these crashes. Additionally, as part of the preparation process, all drivers who participate in Circles for Safe Streets are required to complete the Driver Accountability Program to begin the process of educating and to introduce drivers to the voices of those who have experienced this kind of harm. In the majority of cases, Circles for Safe Streets serves as an alternative to incarceration. In a limited number of cases, where the case requires some period of incarceration due to aggravating circumstances (such as the involvement of alcohol or excessive rates of speed in the crash), participation in Circles for Safe Streets may serve as mitigation and result in a reduced period of incarceration.

### **Bronx Community Solutions Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) Screening Program**

Bronx Community Solutions (BCS) is seeking funding from City Council to remove financial barriers to treatment in the Bronx. Since 2010, BCS has assisted all individuals ordered by Bronx Criminal Court mandate to complete a screening and assessment on DWI-related charges. This initiative began at the request of the judiciary, who noted that participants were having difficulty navigating the complicated network of private providers of these statutorily mandated services. While BCS never charges any cost to participants for services, private providers regularly charge in excess of \$300 to \$400 to complete a screening and assessment. BCS has negotiated with several providers who have been willing to accept a reduced fee of \$150 in order to serve the volume of court mandated cases that come from Bronx Criminal Court, but that still remains a significant financial hurdle for participants and a barrier to entering the treatment process as soon as possible, thus making Bronx streets safer. To eliminate this financial burden on participants and also expedite the treatment process, BCS is seeking funding to cover the costs of DWI treatment and assessments for BCS participants, and to fund the staffing of a DWI treatment coordinator so that BCS may continue to be relied on by the courts to do the necessary work of connecting mandated participants to treatment.

This initiative will provide two key benefits to the community. First, by addressing the significant financial barrier to screening and assessment for DWI treatment, BCS will provide equity and fairness to all mandated participants, regardless of their ability to pay. For those facing the financial burdens of lost income and lost transportation, this will be particularly beneficial. Second, this initiative will be beneficial to the entire Bronx community as every Bronx resident will gain from safer streets. The very nature of DWI charges mean that they may impact any pedestrian, cyclist, driver, property owner, or resident of the Bronx who interacts with the streets of this borough. By eliminating barriers to treatment and getting participants to the help needed to make them a safer driver, this initiative will speed up the timeline to achieving enhanced road safety in the Bronx. In 2024, 274 clients were referred for screening and assessment. Since 2020, among the participants referred and followed by BCS through their treatment process, 84 percent successfully completed treatment.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

## Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. While New York is a city that is heavily reliant on public transportation, traffic safety remains a pressing issue. Last year, traffic crashes killed a New Yorker every 34 hours.<sup>10</sup> Changing dangerous driving behavior requires meaningful interventions. Traditional responses such as fines, fees and jail time not only have disproportionate effects on our most vulnerable New Yorkers, but also fail to address the root causes of such behavior. We thank Council for their support and look forward to continuing this partnership in the upcoming fiscal year.

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<sup>10</sup> Transportation Alternatives. (2024, October 28). *Record-Breaking Number of New Yorkers Killed or Seriously Injured in the First Nine Months of 2024, New Data from Transportation Alternatives and Families for Safe Streets Shows*. Transportation Alternatives.  
<https://transalt.org/press-releases/record-breaking-number-of-new-yorkers-killed-or-seriously-injured-in-the-first-nine-months-of-2024-new-data-from-transportation-alternatives-and-families-for-safe-streets-shows>

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

### **FY26 Center for Justice Innovation Major Proposals**

- **#197482 - Center for Justice Innovation General Funds - \$750,000**

#### **Innovative Criminal Justice Programs; Speaker's Initiative (Renewal/Redesign)**

**Description:** This is an application to support the continuation of the Center for Justice Innovation's innovative criminal justice responses, community-based public safety initiatives, and access to justice programs across all five boroughs in New York City. City Council's support allows us to serve tens of thousands of New Yorkers with mental health services, family development, youth empowerment, workforce development, and housing, legal, and employment resource services. Our goal continues to be improving safety, reducing incarceration, expanding access to community resources, and enhancing public trust in government to make New York City stronger, fairer, and safer for all. With expanded funding, the Center will be able to make deeper investments in housing justice: a key priority area that underpins our efforts at large to build community justice.

- **#194898 - Driver Accountability Program - \$885,000**

#### **Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (Renewal)**

**Description:** The Center for Justice Innovation's Driver Accountability Program has been proven to improve street safety by changing driver behavior, while minimizing harms perpetuated by the criminal justice system's historically punitive responses. It does so by offering a proportionate and meaningful alternative to fines, fees, traditional prosecution, or short-term incarceration for vehicular charges; and by utilizing principles of restorative justice to address the dangerous behaviors that are the primary cause of pedestrian fatalities. The program currently operates at seven sites in all five boroughs, with six of those sites receiving support from City Council. This application seeks funding to sustain those operations, as well as the operations of its more intensive version, Circles for Safe Streets, which brings together drivers and their victims for a process of accountability and healing in cases where traffic crashes have caused critical injury or death.

- **#197361 - Bronx Community Solutions Driving While Intoxicated Program - \$100,000**

#### **Member Item; Bronx Delegation (New)**



**Description:** Since 2010, Bronx Community Solutions (BCS) has assisted all individuals ordered by court mandate to complete a screening and assessment and any potential treatment associated with a charge of Driving While Intoxicated (DWI). This initiative began at the request of the judiciary, who noted that participants were having difficulty navigating the complicated network of private providers of these statutorily mandated services. While BCS never charges any cost to participants for services, private providers of DWI treatment regularly charge participants \$300 to \$400 to complete a screening and assessment. BCS has negotiated with several providers who have been willing to accept a reduced fee of \$150 to serve the volume of court mandated cases that come from Bronx Criminal Court, but that remains a significant financial hurdle for participants and a barrier to entering the treatment process as soon as possible, thus making Bronx streets safer. To eliminate this financial burden on participants and expedite the treatment process, this application seeks funding to cover the costs of DWI treatment and assessments for BCS participants, and to fund the staffing of a DWI Treatment Coordinator so that BCS may continue to do the necessary work of connecting court-mandated participants to treatment.



DARCEL D. CLARK

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
BRONX COUNTY

March 6, 2025

Speaker Adrienne Adams  
New York City Council  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Adams and Members of City Council:

On behalf of the Bronx District Attorney's Office, I am pleased to write this letter in support of key Center for Justice Innovation (formerly, Center for Court Innovation) FY25 City Council Applications. Funding will expand:

- pre-arraignment early diversion options;
- mental health supports;
- restorative justice programming;
- human trafficking survivor leadership initiatives at the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence; and
- innovative pilot programs that address pressing needs in communities within the Bronx.

These programs will enable the Bronx to move towards our shared vision of reducing unnecessary and harmful involvement in the legal system wherever possible and allow us to build public safety through sustainable community-driven solutions.

For the past several years, the City Council has supported the Bronx with **\$710,000** to invest in early system diversion, which includes Project Reset, the Center's citywide pre-arraignment diversion model and same day at arraignments programming that re-directs New Yorkers with misdemeanor arrests from the court system. Project Reset Bronx includes borough-wide restorative justice circles to aid in diversion. This has offered relief from the collateral consequence's participants might otherwise experience if arraigned for low-level crimes. We support the Center's continuing to partner with the Council to implement the next generation of early system diversions for the Bronx to continue to lead the City in scaled restorative justice-based interventions.

The Bronx County District Attorney's Office partners with the **Bronx Child Trauma Support** program to support clinical assessment and treatment of child victims and witnesses to crimes in the Bronx. The continued support of the Council will baseline these direct services conducted through evidenced-based and trauma-informed intervention models designed to prevent or reduce post-traumatic stress symptoms, suicidality, re-traumatization, and future victimization.

Thanks to meaningful changes in the treatment of trafficking victims in the justice system, the Center's Bronx Human Trafficking Intervention Court (HTIC) referrals continue to decline. **Project Healing and Empowerment through Advocacy and Leadership** (Project HEAL) is a survivor leadership and peer support initiative for human trafficking survivors. Additionally, we support the Center's RISE Project which is used in Family Court and provides community-based intimate partner violence prevention services in communities most impacted by gun violence.

Since 2010, Bronx Community Solutions (BCS) has assisted all individuals ordered by court mandate to complete a screening and assessment, **DWI treatment**, and enrollment in the **Driver Accountability Program**. This initiative began at the request of the judiciary, who noted that participants were having difficulty navigating the complicated network of private providers of these statutorily mandated services.

Finally, we support continuation of the **Center's Innovative Core Funding** which addresses the immediate needs of all borough residents by piloting novel and effective approaches to anti-gun violence, victim services, mental health integrations to diversion.

The Center has a long and documented history of conducting original research and operating direct service programs in the Bronx. Their mission to promote equality, dignity, and respect in communities aligns with my Office's vision. Together we can reimagine a fairer and more holistic approach to justice. We can do this by reducing incarceration as well as by building substantial and meaningful community-based support. I encourage the City Council to consider funding each of the Center's programs which will ultimately enhance fairness, accountability, and safety for the people of the Bronx.

Sincerely,



Darcel Clark





OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
RICHMOND COUNTY  
MICHAEL E. MCMAHON  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

February 28, 2025

Honorable Adrienne Adams  
New York City Council  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Support for Center for Justice Innovation Fiscal Year 2026 Initiatives**

Dear Speaker Adams and Members of the New York City Council:

I am pleased to offer my support to the Center for Justice Innovation's application to expand alternatives to incarceration opportunities and to provide mental health support, early diversion programming at the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence, restorative re-entry options for individuals and their families, pre-court eviction prevention options, and innovative pilot programs that address pressing needs in communities across the city. Many of these important initiatives and programs will advance Staten Island towards our shared vision of reducing unnecessary and harmful involvement in the justice system and build public safety through sustainable community-driven solutions.

CJI's long and documented history of conducting original research and operating direct service programs in Staten Island to promote equality, dignity, and respect in communities align with my office's vision. My office has proudly partnered with CJI in the development of a **Staten Island Community Justice Center** to reduce crime and incarceration, strengthen community trust in justice, and create safer, more equitable neighborhoods through community-driven public safety initiatives, youth opportunity, and economic mobility efforts. To maintain existing operations and plan for new programming, existing Justice Center staff will dedicate time to the development of new initiatives and activities including data collection and evaluation plans. Together, we reimagine a fairer and more holistic approach to justice, aiming to reduce incarceration and conviction and build substantial and meaningful community-based supports through innovative courts and alternatives to incarceration programming and services. I strongly encourage



investment in each of the programs and areas outlined above to ensure that they can continue this successful work.

I further urge the Council to support **Youth Impact Staten Island**. The Youth Impact program (formerly Youth Court) is a multi-pronged youth leadership development program focused on peer-led mentorship and violence intervention and prevention practices, with a goal to keep young people in school and out of the criminal legal system, while inspiring community safety and healing from a youth-centered perspective. The program primarily uses a restorative justice model through structured in-school violence intervention partnerships and organized civic engagement. Participants develop hard skills including in oral and written communication, facilitation, conflict resolution and research processes; learn the impact and infrastructure of the justice system; and are trained in community planning and organizing.

Individuals demonstrating persistent and untreated mental illness require access to culturally competent mental health treatment. To address gaps in mental health-related support for court-involved youth in Staten Island, I urge the Council to continue and expand support for the Staten Island Justice Center's **Youth Wellness Initiative**. This initiative provides vital mental health services that address trauma and promote healing for young people on Staten Island involved in the justice system or at-risk of justice system involvement. Additionally, the initiative is geared towards providing holistic support to families by supporting the parents and caretakers of youth enrolled in the initiative.

To address the issue of street safety, I support the continuation and expansion of the Center's **Driver Accountability Program** to provide a constructive and restorative response to dangerous driving and work to change the risky driving behavior of people charged with driving-related offenses in criminal court. The Driver Accountability Program is also addressing more serious cases through a second tier of programming, Circles for Safe Streets, which brings together drivers and their victims through a restorative justice process.

I also urge the Council to continue supporting **CJI's RISE Project**, which provides community-based intimate partner violence prevention services in communities most impacted by gun violence. RISE works to reduce intimate partner violence by engaging individuals who are causing abuse in voluntary programming to stop violence and change behavior, changing community norms to reduce the tolerance for violence, and training credible messengers to identify risk factors for intimate partner violence.

The Council should continue and expand support for **CJI's Innovative Core Funding**. CJI uses this funding to respond to the immediate needs of Staten Island residents by piloting novel and effective approaches to anti-gun violence, providing victim services, mental health integrations to diversion, and other pilots to test for scalable solutions.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this letter as you make important financial determinations on behalf of the City of New York.

If you have questions, please contact Agency Chief Contracting Officer and Grants Coordinator, Dr. Lisa Sloan, via telephone at (718) 556-7089 or via email at [Lisa.Sloan@rcda.nyc.gov](mailto:Lisa.Sloan@rcda.nyc.gov).

Sincerely,



Michael E. McMahon  
District Attorney

MEM/aem



**Testimony: New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings on The  
Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**Testimony by Debipriya Chatterjee, Ph.D.**

*Senior Economist, Community Service Society of New York*

**March 19, 2025**

Thank you to Chairperson Brooks-Powers and to all the Committee Members for this opportunity.

My name is Debipriya Chatterjee, and I serve as the Senior Economist at the Community Service Society of New York (CSS), an organization dedicated to improving the lives of low-income New Yorkers and championing a more equitable city. For over 180 years, CSS has provided direct services, conducted rigorous research and policy analysis, and led strategic advocacy initiatives to alleviate hardship and expand economic opportunity for those most disadvantaged.

My testimony today will focus on transit affordability hardship across the state and how Fair Fares, the City's transit discount program, can be expanded to alleviate that.

Launched five years ago, Fair Fares provides discounted MetroCards and has been a game-changer for thousands of city residents, connecting them to jobs, training opportunities, medical care, social events, and so much more. Today, nearly [360,000](#) working age New Yorkers are enrolled in the program, representing a take-up rate of roughly 35 percent from an eligible population of 991,000 individuals.<sup>1</sup> Recognizing the immense value of the program, the MTA's own [Blue Ribbon panel](#) on fare evasion recommended expanding eligibility to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) as a key strategy to reduce fare evasion.

We applaud the City administration for increasing the income eligibility threshold to 145 percent of the FPL in the FY 2025 Adopted Budget, and for including additional funding for the program. This is important progress from the program's early days, when eligibility was restricted to only those below the Federal Poverty Level—a metric widely recognized as [grossly inadequate](#) for capturing economic need in New York City, especially for working New Yorkers who rely on mass transit for their daily commute since they have been pushed to outer-boroughs and most often cannot afford to maintain a vehicle or avail cab service.

However, we urge the city to go further. Transit hardship affects almost everyone below 200 percent of the FPL. In CSS' most recent Annual Survey of Housing and Economic Security, 19 percent of New York City residents reported that they had often been unable to afford

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<sup>1</sup> CSS estimates based on 1-year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample as retrieved from IPUMS.



transportation in the last year. As cost of living continues to rise—with basic necessities like food and housing becoming more expensive— transportation hardship will also increase.

By including households with incomes between 145 and 200 percent of the FPL, the City could ease transit hardship for an additional 400,000 New Yorkers. Assuming current commuting patterns hold, we estimate this expansion would cost the City between \$36 and \$40 million—a relatively modest investment in the context of a \$115 billion city budget. New York City should follow the lead of [much smaller and less affluent municipalities](#) like Boston, Massachusetts, and Raleigh, North Carolina, which have implemented discounted or fare-free public transit programs for residents up to 200 percent of the FPL. We are heartened to see the state Senate one-house budget bills include expansion of discounted fare program to commuter rails and expansion of the fare-free bus pilot program.

To make the Fair Fares program a success, we need DSS to share enrollment data for Fair Fares disaggregated by race, gender, age, and borough. Such data would help to more effectively target outreach efforts. Second, we need to improve MTA's and DSS's outreach and awareness strategy for publicizing the program. Transparency around MTA's and the City's budgeted resources for this purpose and how each agency plans to spread awareness about Fair Fares would help us better coordinate efforts with community partners to expand enrollment.

Our survey underscores the need for stronger outreach efforts. Among eligible individuals, 17 percent of Black New Yorkers and 10 percent of Hispanic New Yorkers had not heard of the program. Additionally, 33 percent of Black respondents and 24 percent of Hispanic respondents were aware of the program but had not applied or did not know how to. That's half of eligible Black New Yorkers and a third of eligible Hispanic New Yorkers who could be enrolled but aren't—simply because they haven't heard of the program or don't know how to access it.

For the first time, our survey also asked how people learned about Fair Fares. Most enrollees said they were screened for the program while applying for other benefits like SNAP, public assistance, or Medicaid. The next most effective channels were advertising on buses and subways, followed by TV, radio, internet, and social media. Outreach events organized by DSS or the MTA were among the least effective, likely due to their limited geographic reach.

All this is to say that we need a more comprehensive, citywide outreach strategy, working in partnership with community-based organizations, houses of worship, schools, NYCHA, and CUNY to generate more awareness and enrollment in the program.

If we are serious about expanding opportunity and ensuring all New Yorkers can participate in the life of our city, we must make Fair Fares a success. This is one of the few policy levers entirely within the City's control—and we should use it to make mass transit, and life in New York City, more affordable for low-income residents. Expanding access and improving outreach will not only reduce transit hardship but also strengthen our city's workforce and communities. Let's not miss this opportunity to do right by hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who simply need a way to get where they're going. Expand eligibility, ramp up outreach, and invest in making this program truly accessible to everyone who needs it.



Thank you again for allowing me to present this testimony. Please reach out to me at [dchatterjee@cssny.org](mailto:dchatterjee@cssny.org) if you have any questions.

# Danse Theatre Surreality (DTS)

Kyra Hauck & Lauren Hlubny  
founding directors

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## DANSE THEATRE SURREALITY (DTS)

### *Testimony*

US 501(c)3

FR Association Loi 1901

SIRET: 829 802 00012

N° Licence d'entrepreneur de spectacle: 2-1106948 / 3-1106949

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Testimony of Lauren Hlubny  
Danse Theatre Surreality, Brooklyn Artist  
New York City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
March 19, 2025

Re: Continued Funding for North Brooklyn Open Streets

Good afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee,

My name is Lauren Hlubny, and I am a resident of Williamsburg, as well as the Artistic Director of Danse Theatre Surreality, a non-profit dance and theatre company dedicated to creating innovative, inclusive performances. I am here today to strongly advocate for continued funding for North Brooklyn Open Streets.

Since its inception in June 2020, North Brooklyn Open Streets has provided a vital, safe, and accessible space for community members to walk, exercise, enjoy fresh air, and support local businesses. The program has transformed streets like Berry Open Street, Bedford Slip, Banker's Anchor, and Sharon Open Street into vibrant public spaces that benefit residents, workers, and visitors alike.

Beyond its role in improving pedestrian safety and enhancing economic vitality, North Brooklyn Open Streets has also become a cultural and artistic hub. My non-profit organization, Danse Theatre Surreality, was fortunate to present multiple performances of *Shadowboxing in Blue* as part of the programming hosted by Brooklyn Open Streets. This opportunity allowed us to engage directly with the community, bringing performance art into accessible, shared spaces. It is precisely this kind of creative and communal enrichment that makes Open Streets a cornerstone of neighborhood life.

Without continued funding, we risk losing these essential spaces that foster public health, economic resilience, and cultural engagement. I urge the Council to fully fund North Brooklyn Open Streets so it can continue serving as a model for equitable and community-driven urban planning.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Lauren Hlubny  
directors.dts@dansetheatresurreality.org

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "LH", written over a light blue horizontal line.

DTS

3/19/2025

Lauren Hlubny, Artistic Director NYC

Date



**DISABLED IN ACTION OF METROPOLITAN NEW YORK**  
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**Written testimony to the City Council Transportation Committee for March 19, 2025 Preliminary Budget Hearing on Transportation and Infrastructure**

I am unable to stay the whole day to testify at 4p.m. so I am submitting this long testimony regarding the MTA, DOT, TLC, and DDC.

**MTA**

The MTA runs Access-A-Ride (AAR) and the City pays for about 80% of it. AAR is a lifeline for people with disabilities, most of whom, but not all, are seniors, and all of whom have disabilities, whether or not they are visible or invisible disabilities.

- 1. In-person AAR screening** should be abolished as a waste of money. It is very expensive to screen all applicants and it takes too long to set up for people who are temporarily disabled to actually get it and use it so they can continue working after a surgery or accident. Maybe they can if they know the right people to help, but we have encountered people this year who were unable to get it quickly and temporarily. Even though there is something called continual eligibility, it takes several in-person assessments to get it (in 5 year intervals) and after having AAR for 30 years and having continual eligibility, I was told to have an in-person assessment in 2024. I haven't had a miracle cure and I have become more disabled with time like many people have. I was able to complain, but it shows that the system is overly concerned about fraud and is not organized well. It creates stress because many people with disabilities do not have a doctor for that disability anymore just because it is permanent. If you have a weak leg, are blind in one eye, have an old failed surgery, why would you see a doctor for it if there is no new problem; just that you are disabled. Then how do we provide documentation? Theoretically, I think we do not need documentation, but they prefer it. They test for a mobility or weakness disability by making people walk in the hall and go up a few steps to a mock part of a bus that does not move before you can sit down and often the person being tested can do that one time because they are trying hard, but they cannot do it several times like they would have to do it in real life.
- 2. The design of the traditional AAR big vans/buses is faulty** and riders, with seatbelts on, get thrown up into the air and from side to side while riding in them. The vehicles are extremely uncomfortable because they are basically box trucks with seats and wheelchair spaces in them. People with spine problems have pain during and after their rides, but the MTA does not allow us to totally avoid riding in the big vans which cause us pain and more disability because of these vehicles! That does not make sense. Why would AAR be a take it or leave it service when they have other kinds of vehicles from the broker services? For example, if we have been assigned to broker service with wheelchair accessible vehicles or sedans, we usually get them and they are better for our spine. But sometimes in the night, we get assigned traditional AAR big buses instead of the sedans or WAVs. What can we do? We need to get to our job, meeting, appointment, or friend. We need to get someplace but we don't want more pain and more disability, possibly for weeks. The head of AAR says they have people who look at the assignments and change assigned vehicles if necessary but that does not happen reliably and

people have to cancel their trip at the last minute or take some other expensive way to travel such as Uber or Lyft. Access-A-Ride's excuse is that they are giving so many rides and we cannot choose our vehicles. That makes no sense! It is not a preference; it is a necessity for some of us to ride in a certain vehicle because of our disabilities! We are not whimsically changing our minds. AAR is seemingly whimsically changing the vehicle. The wrong assignments should be corrected by computer, not humans because there are too many rides for humans to assess and they do not catch the wrong assignments. If we call them, it is very time-consuming to try to get a different vehicle and usually is not possible. And who has 20 minutes of extra time in the morning to call AAR and be on the phone? AAR manages well to assign accessible vehicles to wheelchair users, why can't they consistently assign the correct kind of vehicle to people with spine problems who request broker only vehicles. Brokers do the majority of all rides. So, we are stuck cancelling our trip unless we have money for an Uber, Lyft, or cab.

3. **Traditional AAR service with white buses/vans or blue and white ones can be very unreliable** and can require riders to wait an hour or two for pick-up. For over a year, **Maggies has been very unreliable** and complaints to the MTA and AAR officials have gone nowhere. They say it is improving. Maybe for some people but not everyone. Are they fudging their stats? I heard the brag about the reliability of traditional service is 92% within 20 or 30 minutes. With 40,000 trips, 8% -- 3,200 people will be having a bad day with Access-a-Ride! AAR can do better.
4. **Making an address mistake in the AAR app** – We are human. No matter how careful we are, it is easy to make a mistake on the app when the same address exists in more than one borough. Typically, AAR agents act like we are trying to put one over on them and cheat and don't want to pick us up where we really are even when we discover our mistake hours before and call to tell them we accidentally made a mistake for the wrong borough but the same address. This leads to us being stranded.
5. **Broker service AAR drivers** often do not properly secure wheelchair passengers with a 4 point securement to their wheelchair and a seatbelt to their person (required by NYS law). Many times the vehicles do not have the proper straps to do this. Then our ride is not safe. Our wheelchairs move around, sometimes a foot backwards towards the ramp door, and we could be very injured in an accident.
6. **Broker service AAR drivers** often do not speak English are impossible to communicate with as to being secured and where to be dropped off. Sometimes 2 broker drivers are sent to the same address and the driver cannot understand when we say we are already in a vehicle going to our destination. It is so dangerous for blind passengers who do not know where they are being let out elsewhere because the driver cannot communicate this. We tell a driver we need to be secured but they don't understand English so they don't know what we are saying. The TLC allows drivers to speak whatever language they speak, but the MTA should not allow drivers who drive for AAR to be non-English speaking for safety reasons.
7. **Broker service drivers are sometimes on the phone talking with family or friends.** Sometimes they watch YouTube or are on FaceTime while driving! Something must be done about this! As with most things with Access-A-Ride, we can complain but we cannot do much about conditions at the time they are happening. Maybe complaints could be made on the AAR app?



8. **AAR drivers are concerned about getting traffic tickets and do get tickets while picking up or dropping off passengers with disabilities.** Some drivers refuse to pick up or drop off people at 375 Pearl St in Manhattan because it is at a bus stop and drivers get tickets. That adversely affects people with disabilities. Then the drivers have to have the know-how and take the time to appeal the ticket. Even then, sometimes they are still fined. Drivers are allowed to pick up people with disabilities at the crosswalk, a bus lane or a bus stop, and in a bike lane. Often, there is no other place to drop off or pick up. Some people have suggested having a different pick up or drop off area, but someone who is blind or someone who has great difficulty walking and needs to have the driver escort them to the door of their destination cannot be picked up on a different block or around the corner. Some blocks only have a bus lane or stop on one side and a bike lane on the other side! Couldn't the system be made to tell if there was an AAR trip scheduled for that time? Or that the license plate proves that the person works for one of the brokers or for Uber or Lyft but is giving a ride through an AAR program?
9. **AAR designated pick-up and drop off spots usually contain someone illegally parked there.** Complaints go nowhere.
10. **AAR could be much better if they were not so worried about fraud.** Fraud is going to happen sometimes, and AAR needs to have systems in place to catch fraud, not punish people with disabilities because officials are overly concerned about fraud.
11. **The AAR e-hail on-demand pilot program has existed for years and needs to be expanded to whomever wants it and to be permanent!** A year ago, AAR randomly asked thousands of people if they wanted to join the e-hail on-demand pilot program, and only 8% wanted to join. There are many who want to join but they are not invited. Supposedly there is a waiting list and the people who want to be in the program were to call AAR Customer Service to be put on the list. But many times when people would call Customer Service, the agent answering would say there is no list!
12. **The AAR e-hail on-demand pilot program needs to a lot more money to pay for longer trips and the tolls.** Many people cannot enroll in the e-hail on-demand pilot program because they do not have the funds to pay for the amount that goes over the currently allotted \$60 per trip. Some people, because their condition demands that they not go in broker or traditional AAR vehicles, must use Uber or Lyft vehicles exclusively. An example is an elderly senior whose back is disintegrating. Should that senior have to stay home because of not being able to afford transportation that works for them?
13. **AAR Taxi Authorization is cumbersome and it takes about 2 months to get paid back. AAR users can ask for a taxi authorization if the vehicle is more than 30 minutes late or if they call the day before and request one for the next day in the same borough or to a few locations like Penn Station. With taxi authorization, you arrange your own ride with a taxi or Uber or Lyft and pay for your ride, then submit the receipt and a lot of information, including your authorization number.** It could be made much better and should be included for anywhere in our five boroughs. The reimbursement should be faster. Once it was about a week. People cannot lay out a lot of money and wait 2 months for it.
14. **The AAR app has improved a great deal but there are still bugs and glitches and such as error messages and strange messages that seem to be talking about technical stuff.** These problems impact us when we are trying to book a trip. We have requested a "home" option on the app, but it has not been made. We always have to type in our own addresses each time.

- 15. Ever since the inception of MTA express bus service, it has been inaccessible to people with mobility disabilities.** I have ridden and tried to ride express buses for more than 20 years and I or anyone else with a mobility disability never know if they will be able to get on the bus when it is right there or off the bus at our destination! Drivers routinely have no idea how to use the lift or move the seats to create a wheelchair space inside the bus. It has taken 5 minutes to get us on up to an hour or never. It can take longer to get on the bus than it takes to ride to your destination. Some drivers do not stop and just say they have not been trained on how to use the lift! The buses out of Brooklyn's Ulmer Park Depot, the X27, X28, X37, and X38 are the worst routes in the City. Sometimes I have had to wait for 3 buses that I try to get on before I can get on one. Because of problems with the lift, firefighters have had us and our wheelchairs off the express buses when we get to our destination. The bus service has been totally unreliable for people with disabilities. Who else is waiting at a bus stop with the uncertainty that they will be able to get into the bus and get to work or an appointment or school in a timely manner? Who else has had offensive and hostile things said to them because they are choosing to take an express bus? Who else is denied even the chance to use the lift if they need it but are not in a wheelchair? Forget it if a person had foot or leg surgery or had a ski accident or other temporary disability. The drivers will not even try to let them on the bus. People with a mobility disability who use a cane or have difficulty walking must be able to walk up the steps and down the aisle if they can possibly do it or not take the bus! The ADA does not say that is ok to leave people with disabilities at the curb when everyone else can get on the bus. The ADA does not say that you can say your buses are accessible when people with disabilities are denied access much of the time! To take the express bus in a wheelchair is a big leap of faith and willingness to take a huge risk of not getting on or off. Then how else are you going to get where you are going once you have committed to taking the express bus and cannot get on? Year after year for more than 20 years I have been to meetings with MTA workers in the depot and at headquarters, made complaints, testified to the MTA to no avail. I do have a key to the bus because sometimes the drivers' keys do not work or they lose them. I know how to teach the drivers how to use the lift and if they will listen to me, and if they can figure out how to move the bus seats to create a space, I can sometimes get on the bus. But sometimes I cannot get on or cannot get off the bus once I get to my destination because there is something wrong with the bus. Evenings and nights are the absolute worst for inability to take express buses if you need the lift because almost none of the drivers have been trained to operate the lift and move the seats.
- 16. We need a totally accessible bus with a totally new design.** Over the years, the MTA showed us 2 buses that eliminated mechanical lifts and the need to move seats for wheelchair users. One model still required the bus driver to get out of the bus, open a door outside, and deploy a ramp. People with mobility disabilities were in a separate lower level. One of the wheelchair spaces would not allow for securement of our wheelchair. Apparently the ambulatory passengers did not like that model. The other model we looked at in front of 2 Broadway had a low floor ramp in front and seemed like it would be ok, but I think it was too high to go under some bridges. It was hard to test because the wheelchair spaces had equipment in them. **The MTA should have an international contest and finally get serious about designing a workable low floor ramp bus that anyone with a mobility disability could get right on!**
- 17. One thing that slows buses down is to insist that everyone board in front and not have all door boarding.** There must be a way to curb fare evasion and still let people board the bus quickly.
- 18. Some passengers do not want to get up from the flip-up seats on regular buses so that an entering person in a wheelchair can park.** Better signage is needed to insist that people get up. In 2010, I

started a campaign to change the wording of the decals on the windows that say to give up your seat if a person in a wheelchair enters. I wanted them to change it to when a wheelchair user enters – to change the expectation. They did change the decals for the windows but they did not put them on the buses! I found out a few years ago that they had the decals but were only putting them on some new buses. What good are they doing at the printer and not on the buses. Now I agree with Michael Ring of DIA who wants much stronger language without using the word please.

19. **The spoke idea for buses and trains is obsolete.** If people are going from an outer borough to another adjacent outer borough, they do not want to go to Manhattan on the way! Once I had to take several buses from Jackson Heights, Queens to Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. It took 3 ½ hours.
20. **The gaps between the platform and the subway train are dangerous.** Wheelchair users and other people with disabilities like blind people and people with mobility disabilities cannot safely manage stepping over or rolling over the gap. This problem is solvable and the MTA has to solve it.
21. **The MTA has to more and do it faster to make information on buses, subways, and subway platforms accessible to people with hearing loss, people who are Deaf, and people who are blind and who have low vision. Providing information in all kinds of formats will benefit people without disabilities, too.** Once one of my young children asked what language the subway announcement was in! It was in mumbling, indecipherable English.
22. **Leaning posts on subway platforms and at Grand Central Madison have got to go or benches need to be added. Travelers need to sit down. Not everyone can stand for long.** The leaning posts are an example of hostile architecture. People can have a condition that won't let them stand and wait or they need to sit down to tie a shoe, take medication, hold a child, relieve pain in an arthritic knee or rest because they are on crutches or use a cane and for many other reasons.

## **DOT**

The DOT has many responsibilities that affect the lives people with disabilities, and yet every time they come to the NYC Council, they are unprepared with information and say they will provide it later and seldom do, or they give excuses for why they have not accomplished what they are mandated to do.

1. **APS – Accessible Pedestrian Signals** need to be regularly checked and DOT should not depend on complaints from the public. Sometimes they are not loud enough for people with hearing loss especially considering that they are in a noisy environment. What good is a quiet APS if you can't hear it to know when to cross the street?
2. **DOT enacted a rule in 2019 with activists' insistence to allow big AAR vans to pick up and drop off in bus stops but now it is 2025 and most people who take AAR ride in fhv broker cars.** Buses have cameras to ticket people in the bus stops, but sometimes that is the only place an AAR broker vehicle can drop off or pick up someone and also an Uber or Lyft vehicle, too, because we have to be able to get out of and into the vehicle and not be in traffic. There is a TLC proposal to increase the fines and use points for people who stop in bus stops. An exception has to be made and DOT and TLC should include broker cars and Ubers and Lyfts so people with disabilities can get around our city.
3. **Pedestrian ramps are mostly in bad shape throughout all the boroughs.** It is very hard to get around using a wheelchair. DOT needs to speed up repairing ramps, adding high contrast with detectable

bumps, and redoing ones that are too steep. Progress is just too slow. They are mandated to have them done by a certain time because of a settled lawsuit we did but they are falling behind.

**These are the kinds of pedestrian ramp problems that we encounter:**

- A. Ramps that are way too steep – all over.
- B. Ramps that are broken or have metal sticking up in them.
- C. Ramps that have a hole at the bottom (all over!).
- D. Ramps that have no high contrast on them so blind people and people with mobility disabilities cannot find them (all over most of Union Square).
- E. Ramps that slant to the side so our wheelchairs are pulled to the side and the street (76<sup>th</sup> St and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Brooklyn).
- F. Ramps that are too close to something else so we can run into that obstacle. (57<sup>th</sup> and Madison – a firebox is in the way)
- G. Missing ramps or a low curb which is not a ramp (on Broadway south of Spring Street).

- 4. **There are few pedestrian ramps and many blocks of inaccessible sidewalks on Shore Road in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn** which DOT has neglected for way more than 50 years but which they are obligated to repair. The City's mistaken design to beautify(?) Shore Road made it completely inaccessible to people with mobility disabilities and unpleasant for all the rest of the population. Who wants to walk on bumpy, uneven, topsy turvy hexagonal pavers when you could walk on smooth sidewalk and use pedestrian ramps and have accessible bus stops?
- 5. **Also on Shore Road, there are completely inaccessible bus stops!** People with disabilities take buses. Why isn't this fixed? We can't get on the buses there and we can't get off!
- 6. **Outdoor Dining should all be accessible but DOT is allowing outdoor restaurants to be inaccessible and require a ramp which is stored elsewhere.** That is a recipe for total inaccessibility. Also, the restaurant industry is pushing for year-round outdoor restaurants in the streets. We are not in favor of year round restaurants because they facilitate rats, do not allow for street repairs and street cleaning, and also allow for deterioration and storage. Storage! In the previous iterations, I saw Christmas decorations being stored in an outdoor restaurant in the summer and construction supplies, too.
- 7. **Quite a few bus stops throughout NYC are inaccessible year after year. Then people with disabilities are denied access to transportation!** DOT appears not willing to spend the money to make them accessible, but it is the DOT who is responsible for bus stops! Some bus stops are on inaccessible island platforms that are not big enough to deploy the ramp and then for a wheelchair user to get on or off the platforms. Some are just dirt and weeds. Some have bricks and no ramp to get to the bus. Why?
- 8. **Most bus stops do not have shelters or do not have shelters with seats for people who must sit to wait. In an attempt to make buses go faster, it is fashionable to remove bus stops and put them further away, but then it is too arduous for seniors and people with disabilities to get to the bus stop.**
- 9. **NYC Ferry – The law requires that they have 4-point wheelchair securements but they don't have them. Some of the boarding areas lack necessary signage. To get a disability discount, one has to have a printer and mail in the application. That is hard for many people because they do not have a**



printer, but blind people cannot do that task independently and why would a blind person need or have a printer?

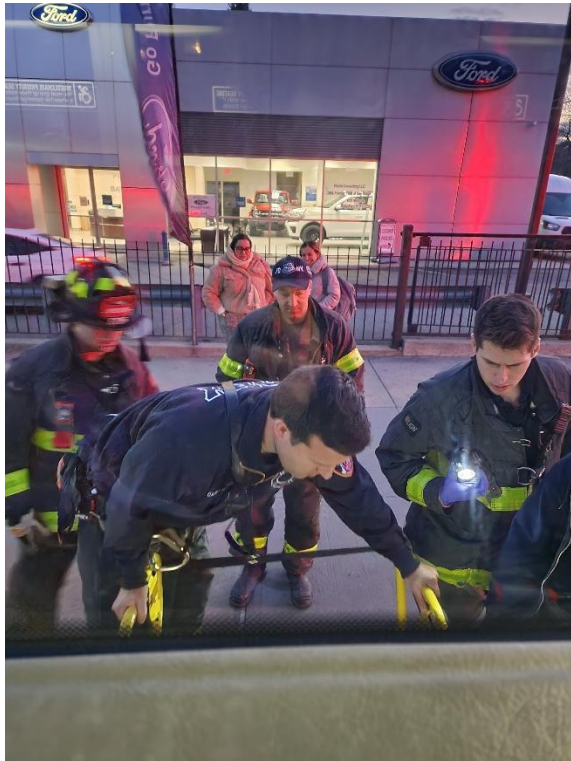
## TLC

1. **Accessible Dispatch needs dedicated funds to continue like it is.** The TLC wants to dismantle Accessible Dispatch to take the funds and apply them to the TIF, Taxi Improvement Fund so drivers can buy WAVs, wheelchair accessible vehicles. While those vehicles are necessary and mandated, it makes no sense to take away a program that thousands and thousands of people with disabilities, including tourists, have used to get around when they are stranded by AAR or unable to find a taxi. The beauty of Accessible Dispatch is that all the vehicles are wheelchair accessible WAVs and the drivers are given extra training on how to secure wheelchair users. Another exceptional thing is that the dispatchers are trained in listening to and helping people with speech differences and other kinds of disabilities and do not dismiss, talk down to, or hang up on people who need help getting a ride! That happens with other dispatchers of for hire vehicles and taxis. Not everyone who has a phone has a smart phone or can use it because of dexterity, age, or cognitive ability, so not everyone can use apps. Many seniors cannot use apps.
2. **The TLC needs to require WAVS who are at the airports to pick us up and if they refuse, they should be sent to the back of the line with no passengers. Now the drivers lie and say their ramp is broken and take a nonwheelchair user when the person in a wheelchair is right there. And the dispatchers do not help enforce the rules.**
3. **We're always playing Whack-a-mole with the TLC because they want to enact rules that make traveling with a disability more difficult or impossible or they do not enforce rules about accessibility.** The TLC does not make sure that their drivers all have the proper straps for securing people in wheelchairs and they do not in actuality make drivers learn how to secure us. Riding in a FHV or taxi is usually very dangerous for wheelchair users if we can get picked up at all.
4. **Taxi drivers usually refuse to pick up wheelchair users.** Complaining does nothing except bring more money to the TLC through a fine and does not change a thing from our point of view. Anyway, how can we complain about drivers who zoom by? Complaining does nothing about the immediate problem of getting a yellow taxi ride. On the other hand, taxi drivers talk about how they cannot make enough money but they refuse to pick us up.
5. **The TLC wants to punish drivers even more by charging more and taking license points for vehicles stopping in bus stops, bike lanes, crosswalks, or bus lanes but people with disabilities sometimes need to be picked up and dropped off in bus stops or even crosswalks and by double-parking.** Blind people and people who cannot walk well or far need to be dropped off at their destination, not around the block or on the next block and not in the street. Wheelchair users cannot be dropped off in heavy traffic. Some blocks have a bus lane on one side and a bike lane on the other.
6. **The only reason we are getting more accessible taxis is because of a lawsuit by activists to require accessible taxis.** NYC is one of the few cities in the nation which has accessible cabs and for hire vehicles. The TLC and the transportation companies don't give access out of the kindness of their hearts.

7. **There is always a longer wait for an accessible Uber or Lyft than there is for an inaccessible one.** That is shameful. And then when we get in, we cannot get secured!

## **DDC**

1. **DDC should pay more attention to accessibility in the properties that they run.** In their 2024-2029 statement of accessibility plan, they were very vague about accessibility. They need to carefully survey all their properties and make them accessible to workers and visitors as soon as possible. They supposedly redid the Brooklyn Borough Hall but there are still many inaccessible elements there! Do they actually know about accessibility? One of the biggest problems in the Brooklyn Borough Hall are the continuing floor height disparities and the high door saddles going into the bathrooms. City Hall has a dangerous floor height disparity between the rotunda and the floor going to the City Council Chambers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. We have complained about it for years and nothing is ever done! For several years, we complained about the inaccessible women's restroom on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of City Hall. Today, on March 19, 2025, the bathroom still has inaccessible elements like a non-ADA compliant latch on the stall door, no soap or soap holder in the accessible stall, no low coat hook in the accessible stall, and 2 doors that trap us when they are closed or even when one door is closed. One door should be removed because sometimes they are open and sometimes they are closed. No one who can be independent should have to have help from strangers to get into the bathroom.
2. **80 Centre Street has been dangerously inaccessible for so many years!** The lift is dangerous and cannot safely hold the weight of a motorized wheelchair and a person in it! What should happen is that a concrete ramp should be built to go where some of the front steps are like what was done with 100 Centre Street. Ramps do not malfunction, lifts do. People with disabilities need to get into 80 Centre because there are many offices and a court there and the Marriage Bureau is there. We have members who have gotten married there, but we risk our life on that lift. We have had members who had to see the District Attorney or go to a court there. Why does it take so long to make a building safe and accessible? We have been complaining since at least 2018 about accessibility at 80 Centre Street.
3. **The upper plaza at City Hall is dangerous for people with disabilities and other people, too!** We have been complaining about this for more than 10 years and met at least twice with people from the Mayor's Office about it but no safe solution has been agreed on. When people are at rallies on the upper plaza, there is an optical illusion and you cannot see that there are steps. Two different people from DIA have fallen off the steps in their wheelchairs and had to go to the emergency room because they were injured. Blind people have fallen off and gotten hurt, too. Other people have fallen off the upper plaza too because it looks like there are no stairs going to the lower plaza. We proposed big planters that are pretty and are quite close together so they operate like a barrier. DDC put 2 small planters there that are ineffective. Now we think that the best idea would be black historical bollards like the ones that already surround the City Hall perimeter and are inside City Hall, too.
4. I am attaching a photo taken on March 19, 2025 of how you cannot see the difference between the upper and lower plazas at City Hall. In the distance, you can see the bollards between the park and the plaza at City Hall. I am also attaching a photo of firefighters working to take my 400 pound expensive wheelchair off the bus when the lift malfunctioned.



**Firefighters figuring out how to take my 400 pound wheelchair off the bus**



**The upper plaza and lower plaza optical illusion  
March 19, 2025**

**Jean Ryan  
President  
Disabled In Action of Metropolitan NY  
Pansies007@gmail.com or jryan@disabledinaction.org**

Kathleen Collins

[REDACTED]

March 18, 2025

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

Copy emailed to: Julian Martin, Policy Director at

[REDACTED]

Re: New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings  
on The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026, The  
Preliminary Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2029 and  
The Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report-  
T2025-3042. This Hearing Is To Be Held On Wednesday,  
March 19, 2025

Dear Chair Brooks-Powers;

My name is Kathleen Collins. I am a native New Yorker  
who is a congenital quadruple amputee who uses a  
wheelchair. I am on the board of Disabled In Action of  
Metropolitan New York, Inc. (also known as Disabled In  
Action or DIA ).



Disabled In Action is a 501(c)(3) grassroots civil rights organization run by and for people with disabilities. Disabled In Action's mission is to eliminate discrimination for people with all kinds of disabilities.

There are so many things to talk about with respect to Access-A-Ride (AAR), accessible taxis and For-Hire Vehicles (FHVs), buses, express buses, bus stops, Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS), pedestrian ramps, bicycles, and e-bikes.

In my longer testimony which will be submitted in the next few days I address these various topics.

Today, I would just like to tell you about how the E-Hail Pilot Program has changed my life. Presently, under the third phase of the E-Hail Pilot Program I am allowed to take 25 subsidized on demand trips for the calendar month and I pay the first \$4 with the MTA subsidizing the next \$60 of the trip and I have agreed to pay the remaining balance of these trips. Significantly, under the E-Hail Pilot Program I can order a For-Hire Vehicle, such as an Uber or Lyft, like anyone else on the spur of the moment and be picked up within minutes. Further, I do not have to reserve the trip by 5:00 p.m. the day before.

This is a significant benefit because it allows me to do things on the spur of the moment and was a lifesaver when my boyfriend's father became sick after 5:00 p.m. and we had to go to the emergency room in Queens and we live in Manhattan. At that time, I had just joined the E-Hail Pilot Program and was able to get an Uber at

11:00 p.m. at night to go to the hospital in Queens where my boyfriend's dad was in an emergency room. If I was not a participant in this E-Hail Pilot Program I don't know what I would have done.

The E-Hail Pilot Program gives me the opportunity to go everywhere at the time I want to leave which is really important when you are at a meeting or family event that you now do not have to guesstimate when you should tell Access-A-Ride to pick you up and hope that they do pick you up at the requested time. I cannot stress how important this program is to me and many others.

I ask that the E-Hail Pilot Program continue to be funded and that it be improved upon in the following ways:

1-Please make the E-Hail Pilot Program available to all Access-A-Ride users who want to use it.

2-Please eliminate the restrictions on the number of rides a person is allotted to take on the E-Hail Pilot Program.

And,

3-Please increase the amount of the cost the MTA will cover for each trip on the E-Hail Pilot Program so that more of the City can be reached without the passenger having to pay significant out-of-pocket costs. We understand that the City and MTA face budget constraints just like everyone else, however, the cost of placing more people on the E-Hail Pilot Program is minuscule in comparison to the City's and MTA's multibillion dollar budgets.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I will be submitting more detailed comments.

Sincerely,  
Kathleen Collins  
Board Member of Disabled In Action

Downstate New York



Downstate New York  
ADAPT  
Website: [dnyadapt.com](http://dnyadapt.com)

March 21, 2025

Council Member Selvena N. Brooks-Powers  
Chair  
New York City Council Committee On Transportation  
And Infrastructure  
Sent Online at <https://council.nyc.gov/testify/>  
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Copy emailed to: Julian Martin, Policy Director at  
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Re: T2025-3042 - New York City Council Budget and  
Oversight Hearings on The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal  
Year 2026, The Preliminary Capital Plan for Fiscal Years  
2026-2029 and The Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Mayor's  
Management Report. This Hearing Was Held On  
Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Dear Chair Brooks-Powers;

The undersigned disability organizations submit this  
testimony to the New York City Council Committee on  
Transportation and Infrastructure.



We address issues related to the following four agencies questioned by the New York City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure:

1-Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)/New York City Transit Authority (NYCTA).

2-New York City Department of Transportation (DOT),

3-Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC), and

4-New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC).

## **1. MTA/New York City Transit**

### **Access-A-Ride (AAR)**

The City Council must take a particularly close look at AAR, since the City of New York funding now supports 80% of its cost. We urge the City Council to follow up on our concerns with additional oversight hearings and to work with us, the Administration and the MTA to improve service.

### **E-Hail Pilot Program**

Those of us who are not fortunate to be a participant in the E-Hail Pilot Program are still required to request rides before 5 p.m. the day before an appointment. When will all AAR customers be included in the E-Hail Pilot Program? The E-Hail Pilot Program needs to be made available to all AAR users who want to use it because it

gives us the ability to be spontaneous like everyone else. The restriction on the number of rides a person is allotted to take on the E-Hail Pilot Program needs to be eliminated.

We are glad to see that the MTA has increased the amount of the cost the MTA will cover for each trip on the E-Hail Pilot Program. However, it would be helpful if the MTA was to cover the total cost of these rides, less the fare everyone pays to ride the buses and subways (as the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of New York and the MTA requires), so that more of the City can be reached without the on-demand passenger having to pay significant out-of-pocket costs. We understand that the MTA faces budget constraints just like everyone else; however, the cost of placing more people on the E-Hail Pilot Program is minuscule in comparison to the City's and MTA's multibillion dollar budgets and has a profound beneficial impact on the lives of New Yorkers with disabilities.

### **Taxi Authorizations**

Until the E-Hail Pilot Program is available to all AAR users, all AAR customers should be able to use taxi authorization between boroughs in the same way that AAR customers can use taxi authorization within a borough and to travel to a limited number of designated places such as the airports in New York City as well as Grand Central Terminal and Pennsylvania Station.

## **Safety of Access-A-Ride and Broker Service**

With respect to safety, many AAR users face their safety being compromised on a daily basis. Access-A-Ride riders constantly experience drivers in both the broker service and the blue and white bus service making video calls on their phones, watching YouTube and TikTok as well as engaging with other social media such as Facebook, and Instagram, while on the road. The City Council needs to require that this cease immediately because the safety of these passengers and the general public is in jeopardy.

So too, when we make our reservation for AAR and see that we are assigned a black car, we who use wheelchairs wonder whether the wheelchair vehicle will have a seat belt and shoulder belt. Additionally, we wonder if the driver will have the four wheelchair securement devices, and will the securement devices be operating properly, and will the driver know how to secure our wheelchairs, and will the driver know how to place the seat belt and shoulder belt on us? The MTA needs to ensure that all riders can be secured properly; it does not do this now.

New Yorkers who are blind, New Yorkers with low vision and New Yorkers with mobility disabilities wonder if the driver will come over to them and assist them into and out of the vehicle, which the drivers are required to do.

Similarly, New Yorkers who are Deaf or have hearing loss find many times that AAR drivers, broker drivers, and bus drivers do not know how to communicate with them. Additionally, there are no real-time visual updates and a lack of American Sign Language interpreters support.

Thus, there needs to be better training of all drivers who provide services to the public since they work with people with various disabilities.

All riders using AAR wonder if we will be picked up on time and arrive at our destination on time. Too many riders using AAR are picked up hours after the designated time and too often riders are given inaccurate information as to when they will be picked up from operators at Access-A-Ride and from the MTA app.

Additionally, assuming that the MY MTA app is operating, which is a major assumption at times, riders who use the broker service have to deal with drivers, vehicles, and license plates that do not match what is posted on the MY MTA app. Some drivers do not match the driver's license picture on the windshield. On some occasions passengers get different drivers and cars than what is listed in the app. While the MTA boasts about the success of the MY MTA app, they have not addressed the problems with it. Consumers need to know who their drivers are for their own safety.



## **Condition of Blue and White Buses**

The general riding public would refuse to ride the blue and white buses (now sometimes known as blue and yellow buses) that are provided to New Yorkers with disabilities. With respect to the blue and white buses, these AAR vehicles are basically a truck chassis with terrible springs. We request that the City Council look at the vehicles that the MTA is purchasing to see how we can get better vehicles that ride smoothly. Presently, many AAR riders, who already have bad backs and necks, complain about their back and neck pain being exacerbated by having to ride in these very bumpy blue and white buses and those without bad backs are concerned that they will acquire another disability, that is back and neck injuries, by riding in these blue and white buses. The general public would not put up with such bumpy rides. If anything, the rides for people with disabilities should be smoother not worse than what the general public experiences on the buses presently operated by the MTA.

## **Access-A-Ride and OMNY**

Everyone except AAR riders can use OMNY. OMNY was first rolled out around the end of December 2020 and then rolled out to those who use reduced fare cards, and to students. However, AAR customers are still waiting for OMNY. The old adage "perfection is the enemy of the good" applies here. What if you told any other segment of the public we will get to you soon but no deadline, you

would be shocked! Why wasn't testing of an OMNY for Access-A-Ride started when OMNY was first conceptualized? This five year delay and lack of any deadline in sight is totally unacceptable and smacks of discrimination.

### **Inability To Communicate**

Another issue is AAR drivers speak many languages which reflects the wonderful diversity of New Yorkers. However, this causes safety issues for many riders with disabilities. Significantly, the MTA requires its bus drivers and the engineers and conductors on its subways and railroads to be able to speak and understand English. In stark contrast, many of the MTA's broker service drivers do not know how to speak with their passengers even with respect to simple sentences such as "Where am I? What address are you going to? Am I there yet?" and "I need a seat belt and shoulder belt." This needs to be corrected. We, people with disabilities, need to receive services equal to that of the rest of the riding public who would be shocked if a bus driver told them he did not understand English.

### **Filing Complaints**

Further, we ask, "When will AAR join the 21st century and coordinate with the Taxi and Limousine Commission concerning filing complaints?". Presently, the information you need to provide to 311 in order to make a complaint about an AAR trip is not provided to AAR customers. The two systems need to be connected and streamlined.

Finally, online Access-A-Ride had a button that states "Give Feedback (coming soon)." However, this seems to have disappeared and no button for feedback has been provided in its place. We would ask that the City Council inquire as to whether this will be accomplished, and, if yes, when will this be accomplished?

### **Call Out and Assist**

The MTA needs to improve training of all AAR drivers, that is drivers of broker service vehicles and the blue and white buses, and the TLC needs to improve training of all taxicab drivers and for-hire vehicles (FHV's) drivers because these drivers are not providing call out and assist to passengers who are blind or have low vision on a consistent basis. Call out and assist is when the driver gets out to help a waiting passenger walk to their car or a paratransit bus since they cannot see the vehicle and the driver provides information to the passenger such as where is the vehicle going, when the vehicle has arrived at its destination and assists the passenger to the door of their destination as well as describes where the passenger is being dropped off. This is another example where people with disabilities' safety is placed in jeopardy due to drivers not being able to communicate with their passengers.

## **Buses**

### **Signage**

With respect to the signs on buses that say “Wont you please give this seat to the elderly or disabled” or “If requested you must give this seat to the disabled” these signs do not seem to be very effective. The sticker over the seats in Washington, D.C. say, “PRIORITY SEATING Federal Law Requires That These Seats Be Available to Persons with Disabilities and to Seniors”. The language that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) uses on its’ vehicles seems to be more affirmative and not an ask but a command: it tells people to avoid sitting in these seats and leave these seats empty. Similarly, accessible parking signs indicate to most drivers that they must keep the accessible parking space available for those who need it.

We recommend that when the New York City Transit Authority changes the signs on the buses as part of its scheduled maintenance, it replaces the old signs with new signs that have the same affirmative statements that the signs that are used in Washington, D.C. communicate to the public. Additionally, it would help if the announcements on trains and on buses remind people not to sit in the seats that are reserved for people with disabilities.

Better affirmative signage and announcements reminding New Yorkers to keep vacant seats reserved for passengers with disabilities are essential because many people have invisible or near-invisible disabilities that affect their ability to stand or hold on to bus or subway straps/handrails for long periods of time. If the disability seating were always left vacant, people with disabilities would not have to worry about asking someone to move for them when it is not evident to the person already sitting that the person with a disability needs a place to sit.

### **Express Buses**

On Monday, March 17, 2025, the Office of the Comptroller published a report on the MTA's express bus service. It exposed something our community has known for years: The MTA fails to keep its express buses accessible. The report highlighted extensive equipment and training problems that essentially shut out people with mobility disabilities from riding express buses. These buses provide a very important service between boroughs which is especially critical to people with disabilities because we do not have full access to the subway system and will not for several years.

Comptroller Lander's report made several recommendations. One additional suggestion we hope the City Council will advocate for is that the MTA provide a video for drivers that they can access on their cell phones to refresh their recollection on how to operate the lifts on express buses until the MTA purchases express



buses with ramps. Similarly, broker service drivers under AAR should be able to access a video on their cell phones that shows how to fasten a wheelchair and how to assembly the seat belts and shoulder belts on passengers using wheelchairs.

## **2. New York City Department of Transportation**

### **Condition of Sidewalks, Pedestrian Ramps, and Roadways**

Crossing streets is hazardous to your health when you have a disability, since you are more likely to have to cross a street that has no Accessible Pedestrian Signal, see infra, than one that does have one. So too, some pedestrian ramps are very dangerous because they guide people with low vision or who are blind into traffic instead of a safe pathway to the other sidewalk. Additionally, at times, New Yorkers with disabilities encounter sidewalks with no pedestrian ramps or pedestrian ramps which are very steep, have cracks and potholes, are uneven or guide you into traffic instead of a safe way to the other sidewalk. When a sidewalk has no pedestrian ramps available, very steep ramps or broken ramps, a person using a wheelchair can be completely stranded until some kind person helps them.

In addition, as Jean Ryan stated in her testimony on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, the City needs to repair sidewalks where tree roots are pushing up the sidewalk because this is not only an unsafe obstacle for people with disabilities, but also is a tripping hazard for everyone.

### **Bus Stops**

Even in the 21st century, we still encounter bus stops that are not accessible; this is not acceptable and illegal. Further, even when the bus stop is accessible there may not be a bus shelter with chairs with backs. We need every bus stop to be accessible and all bus stops need to have accessible bus shelters that have space for wheelchair users and seating with backs for people to wait for buses. The need for all bus stops to be accessible and to have bus shelters with sufficient room to shelter both people who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices, as well as provide seating with backs for other passengers, is even more important now with the changes happening to the climate in New York City.

Bus stop shelters, benches and their placement are the responsibility of the city's DOT. The City Council should use its oversight to delve more deeply into these concerns.

## **Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)**

Crossing streets is even more hazardous when you have low vision or are blind since you are more likely to have to cross a street that has no APS than one that does have an operational APS. APS must work correctly-it is a matter of life and death. The APS the City installs should, among other things, clearly indicate which pedestrian crossing is served by each device as well as provide the name of the street to be crossed in accessible formats such as Braille and raised print. So too, tactile maps of crosswalks also need to be provided.

In view of the fact that the City has been required for more than thirty years to have Accessible Pedestrian Signals and pedestrian ramps, its upcoming Streets Plan, due in fiscal year (FY) 2026, requirement that APS be installed at no fewer than 2,500 intersections over five (5) years, and pedestrian ramps be installed at no fewer than 3,000 street corners by FY 2031 is just a drop in the bucket and is not sufficient to improve safe travel for people with disabilities. [Committee Report, dated January 21, 2025, at p. 21](#)

Additionally, New Yorkers are finding trash cans are being illegally attached to the APS and this forces New Yorkers to have to reach over and at times, touch garbage in order to reach the APS. This is a health concern that DOT needs to address immediately.

Further, DOT is not keeping track of when they receive a complaint that an APS is not working and when the repair is made to the broken APS. Moreover, there seems to be no record of how quickly the APS become inoperable after being installed. DOT claims that the APS are many times damaged from weather and cars. Accurate data needs to be collected to be able to know how well APSs are working and making streets safer.

### **Bicycle Lanes, Bicycles, Electric Bicycles and Electric Scooters**

Since we all need to share the limited space in New York City, all drivers of motorized vehicles, electric vehicles, and bicycles need to be made aware that they are subject to regulations that promote everyone's safety. Additionally, those regulations already on the legal books need to be enforced fairly and effectively.

We, the undersigned disability organizations, support the micro-mobility and delivery service industries. Additionally, our community includes members with respiratory issues, and thus, we support transportation alternatives that protect New York City's environment and reduce air pollution.

Significantly, however, the wider bicycle lanes are making it more difficult and treacherous for New Yorkers with disabilities to cross the street. Presently, bicycles, electric bicycles and scooters are not required to have any insurance and do not have any sound on them to warn persons who have low vision or who are blind that a bicycle is near them. So too, many people have reported

that all these bicyclists do not follow the traffic rules and regulations and are notorious for going through red traffic lights. Further, delivery personnel riding bicycles many times leave their bicycles anywhere and everywhere on the sidewalk and just make it difficult and hazardous to travel on even the sidewalks. Bicyclist ride bicycles for pleasure or for work for a few hours, however, in stark contrast we, people with disabilities, walk all places all the time and need the sidewalks and streets to be safe and free of obstacles, including bicycles and scooters. The City Council needs for the DOT to be more accountable and require DOT not just to hold meetings with disability organizations, but actually consider our recommendations.

### **3. Taxi and Limousine Commission**

With respect to the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission again, we do not know when taxis and FHV's will help us into and out of the vehicle. Riders who use wheelchairs do not know if they will be provided with a seat belt, shoulder belt and four-point lockdowns.

The Taxi and Limousine has allowed several Revel FHV's that are not wheelchair accessible on the roadways of New York City and advocates for the use of electric vehicles that at this time are not wheelchair accessible, and probably will never become wheelchair accessible, without a demand being made that they be accessible. We request the City Council to pass a law that mandates that the New York City Taxi Limousine Commission require that all electric FHV's be wheelchair accessible. If such a law was enacted then manufacturers would make



electric FHV's wheelchair accessible. Our tax dollars should not be used to deliberately exclude us, the largest voting minority in New York City, from access to all modes of transportation.

We recommend that the City Council require that the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission require that all new FHV's be wheelchair accessible vehicles until passengers who use wheelchairs have 100% access to all New York City's FHV's and not only 50% of the active medallion taxicabs. When 100% of all New York City FHV's are wheelchair accessible, everyone who needs a wheelchair accessible FHV will be guaranteed to get a wheelchair accessible FHV and this will allow all New Yorkers to travel throughout the five boroughs in New York City with ease.

### **Accessible Dispatch**

We were glad to hear that the Taxi and Limousine Commission has placed its decision to "replace" the Accessible Dispatch Program on hold until a better proposed rule is written. Any program needs to have a telephone number where a person can immediately speak to a live customer representative trained in dealing with various disabilities who can communicate with the customer and is able to be called back if something goes wrong in getting the taxicab.

What is the point of having more accessible taxicabs if we cannot get a ride in the first place?

Many times, Accessible Dispatch is called when a person is under stress due to an AAR vehicle or FHV not showing up and Accessible Dispatch is the only lifeline left for a person with a disability to get to an appointment or home. The present system makes it easy for a person to access a live person well-trained in the needs of people with disabilities. The Accessible Dispatch Program has a dedicated provider that any person can contact to get a taxicab to come to them. You do not even have to remember the number for Accessible Dispatch since you can call 311 and they can connect you to Accessible Dispatch. In sum, any proposed rule should require the same.

It does not make sense to replace something that is not broken, that is Accessible Dispatch, merely to purportedly save a few dollars which in the end will probably cost more to get a system as good as we already have. This seems to not make sense. If the Taxi and Limousine Commission needs more money to fund the conversion of taxis into wheelchair accessible vehicles, we respectfully submit that City Council should provide more funds for these conversions. So too, the City Council should fully fund the Accessible Dispatch program.

#### **4. Department of Design and Construction**

With respect to the New York City Department of Design and Construction, the Department of Design and Construction must ensure that the capital projects it oversees are accessible to people with disabilities. This is vital. Thus, the Department of Design and Construction needs to make sure that all the infrastructure and public building projects are made accessible to people with all types of disabilities. The Department of Design and Construction needs to be required to confer with cross-sectional grassroots disability advocacy organizations, such as the undersigned organizations, before and not after it does its work and thus, avoid making costly mistakes, such as the Hunters Point Library fiasco.

In sum, we ask that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure provide sufficient funding to address all the issues we raise in our testimony since a city that is safer and accessible to people with disabilities results in a better city for all New Yorkers.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment today since equal access to all New York City's services, activities, programs and facilities is important to all New Yorkers. If you would like additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned organizations.

Thank you for your continued work on behalf of all of us.

Sincerely,

Anne-Elizabeth Straub, Marilyn Tucci, Brandon Heinrich  
Michael Ring and Kathleen Collins  
Co-Coordiators  
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Downstate New York ADAPT

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# Goddard Riverside

INVESTING IN PEOPLE, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

Leah C.

Clubhouse Generalist of TOP Clubhouse

Hi! My name is Leah C., and I am a Clubhouse Generalist at TOP Clubhouse. I have been in this position since Oct. 2024. Since being a part of the TOP Clubhouse community, I've seen all the unique qualities of the environment that people wouldn't notice from first glance.

TOP is a community that needs members to help it thrive. We have two units; business and culinary. Our members take pride in taking care of their space. They are eager to help and enjoy finding a sense of purpose in the daily tasks. From making the coffee to taking the attendance or buttering hamburger buns no tasks are unacknowledged from staff or members. It shows them that they can debunk and rise above the stigma placed on the community. From this they become more confident and involved within TOP.

TOP is a program where members can benefit each other. Through our meetings and programs, they are able to open up to staff and other members and form deeper relationships. Some members who may not come in often love receiving reach out calls because it reminds them that there is a community that cares for them. Members form relationships with each other and are genuinely interested or concerned when they don't hear from a certain person over a period of time. Some members come to TOP with the intention of being in a safe space with other people. Without TOP these relationships would not have been formed.

TOP is small but mighty. Our size is a strength. Our small community does not hinder the relationships formed with each other but strengthens it. The members are able to form deeper connections because they interact on many occasions. The two units allow members to become comfortable with the tasks and the routine. The more comfortable members are with tasks they will take the initiative.

I am urging City Council to invest time to get to know TOP Clubhouse and funding to keep our community open. This space cannot be duplicated and will hurt our members. Invest in small Clubhouses!!



**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy  
New York League of Conservation Voters  
City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing  
March 19, 2025**

My name is Alia Soomro and I am the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers, as well as members of the Committee on Transportation for the opportunity to comment.

In order to effectively fight climate change and protect public health, we need to reimagine how people live and move in our City. According to the [New York City Comptroller's Climate Dashboard](#), New York City's transportation sector is the second highest source of NYC's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Moreover, [private vehicles account for 90% of transportation-based energy use in NYC](#) and are the largest contributors to transportation-related emissions and air pollution, which disproportionately impacts environmental justice communities. With the launch of Congestion Pricing, we must take a comprehensive approach to reimagining our street space throughout the five boroughs.

NYLCV has long-advocated that everyone should have access to reliable, affordable, and clean transportation in addition to safe streets and open spaces. We need to decrease the amount of private vehicles on our streets since they contribute a significant percentage of our carbon emissions and result in public health issues such as air pollution and asthma, vehicle crashes, congestion, and noise pollution. These issues are only more prevalent in New York City's low-income and communities of color, which experience longer commutes, poor air pollution, higher asthma rates, and more premature deaths.

**For FY26, NYLCV urges the City to implement the NYC Streets Master Plan, prioritize Vision Zero policies, and increase the eligibility of the Fair Fares NYC program to 200% of the federal poverty line.** These plans and programs will help to improve existing infrastructure for transit, cycling, and pedestrians as well as solve bottlenecks and congestion, in addition to reducing the amount of dangerous vehicles on the streets. They will also reinforce the use of public transportation and micro-mobility options, will make our City safer and cleaner, and will put money back into our underfunded transit system.

**NYC Streets Master Plan**

NYLCV urges the City to fully commit and fund DOT staff to implement the NYC Streets Plan,

an extensive five-year plan [mandated by law](#) that would expand and improve public transportation options and transition NYC's streets away from being entirely car-dominated, focusing on equity and safety. This plan requires the City to install 250 miles of protected bike lanes and 150 miles of dedicated bus lanes, 500 bus stop upgrades, 1,000 intersection signal improvements, 400 intersection redesigns, 500 accessible pedestrian signs, in addition to improving pedestrian spaces, commercial loading zones, and parking spaces, within five years. On top of these goals, on the campaign trail, Mayor Adams committed to installing 300 miles of protected bike lanes. However, as of [DOT's latest Streets Plan report](#), key benchmarks mandated by the Plan were missed.

According to the [Transportation Committee report](#), in FY24, DOT completed 32.9 miles of protected bike paths, which did not meet the required 50-mile benchmark set forth in the NYC Streets Plan legislation. DOT also failed to meet its quota for bus lanes installing only 15.7 miles of bus lanes in FY24. While this was double the production from FY23, it failed to meet the required benchmark of 30 miles. This is the third straight year that the agency did not meet the requirements. We urge the City to get back on track to meet these benchmarks, including prioritizing investments in bus stop upgrades and protected bike lanes to make our streets safer. We also encourage DOT to work towards a comprehensive citywide bike network with protected bike lanes and bike parking infrastructure along major bike commuting routes.

As Congestion Pricing continues, the City must improve public transportation service, reliability and safety, and reclaim space for pedestrians and cyclists by expanding open streets and greenways. In order for residents to see the benefits of this program, the City must make it easier for New Yorkers to get out of their private cars and into cleaner modes of transportation. The Streets Plan can be an effective tool that works in tandem with Congestion Pricing, and with the rollout of this program, the City must plan holistically and equitably, prioritizing areas of the City that have been historically neglected. We encourage the City to ensure mobility via bus and bike is dependable and safe by increasing enforcement of dedicated lanes, increasing bus service frequency, and connecting shared e-bike and e-scooter programs in transit deserts to mass transit.

### Vision Zero

We also urge the City to prioritize and fund Vision Zero policies that encourage safety through engineering, education, and enforcement to better protect pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Vision Zero, which was launched in 2014, called for eliminating all traffic deaths across the five boroughs by 2024. It sought to do this with expanded penalties and enforcements for dangerous car drivers and new street designs. However, we are not close to achieving the City's own goals.

According to the [Transportation Committee report](#), in the first nine months of 2024, 193 people died in traffic crashes. The number of traffic fatalities in 2024 was higher than in eight of the last 10 years. Additionally, motorized two-wheel vehicle (electric bicycle) fatalities rose by 14.0 percent to 98 in FY24, from the prior year. In the Council's FY25 Budget Response, the Council called on the Administration to restore \$3 million for Vision Zero education and outreach that

was eliminated as part of the Administration's PEG. To date, the funding has not been restored. We urge the Administration to restore this vital funding.

We appreciate that the Mayor's Preliminary Plan includes an additional \$1.4 million of City funds in FY25 and \$3.9 million in baselined funding, starting in FY26, to allow DOT to daylight intersections. The Plan includes funding for 19 additional positions in FY25, 28 positions in FY26 and FY27, and 30 baselined positions, starting in FY28. We encourage the Administration to commit long-term funding for Vision Zero policies and staffing, including launching public education campaigns about road safety and enforcement rules to ensure effective progress towards safety and reliability for all users.

### Fair Fares

The Fair Fares program is crucial in making public transportation more accessible for New Yorkers. The program helps eligible New Yorkers with low incomes manage their transportation costs by providing them with discounted subway and bus fares. This year, NYLCV stands with advocates and elected officials calling for increased eligibility to 200% of the federal poverty line. Not only do we need greater investment in the Fair Fares program to expand eligibility, we also need more investment for outreach and education to make sure the many who currently qualify are using the program, as well as expansion of the program so that other forms of public transportation discounts such as for Citi-Bike, Metro North, and Long Island Railroad, are included. With the cost of living only increasing, it is critical that we ensure affordable transportation for everyone.

### Micromobility & EV Charging

As stated in [NYLCV's 2025 NYC Policy Agenda](#), we also support increasing access to affordable multimodal strategies to bolster the city's public transportation system, with priority to low-income and transit desert communities. This includes support for bike-share programs and bike infrastructure, more public charging stations for e-bikes and e-scooters like the newly-proposed Street Deliveristas Hubs and electrification of strategic CitiBike hubs, light rails, ferries and car-sharing programs. We urge the City to continue equitably expanding and funding the DOT's shared e-scooter pilot program, originally started in the East Bronx, by prioritizing transit desert areas throughout New York City, as well as the Citi Bike program, to serve more neighborhoods in the outer boroughs. Additionally, we hope DOT continues to prioritize public EV charging access. We appreciate the Mayor's Preliminary Plan includes an additional \$546,750 in FY25, \$63,000 in FY26, and in the outyears for a microhubs pilot program. This will fund the legislation passed by the Council to establish the pilot, and will establish two microhubs in Brooklyn and one in Manhattan.

### DOT Staffing

Lastly, we stand with advocates calling for the Administration to end DOT's hiring freeze. According to the [Transportation Committee report](#), DOT has 624 vacancies as of January 2025, a 10.7 percent vacancy rate. If DOT had the funding and staffing to fully do its job, New York City would be able to meet its climate goals, achieve Vision Zero, reduce car dependency, and bring reliable transit service to more neighborhoods.



It is imperative that the City fully commits and funds the NYC Streets Plan, Vision Zero, and Fair Fares, in addition to prioritizing DOT staff retention and hiring. We hope the Council will work with the Administration to fund these crucial initiatives and plans so we can have a truly accessible and equitable City.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

**N Y L P I**

**JUSTICE THROUGH  
COMMUNITY POWER**

**Testimony by  
Christopher Schuyler, Managing Attorney  
Disability Justice Program, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest  
Before  
The New York City Council  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
Regarding  
The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026  
March 19, 2025**

Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers and Committee Members, for the opportunity to present testimony.

**Metropolitan Transportation Authority**

The City contributes enormous funding to the MTA, and as such, is entitled to demand better, more accessible services for all New Yorkers, and particularly for people with disabilities. The State's Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget includes \$241 million in operating subsidies to be paid by the City to the MTA, as well as \$3 billion to be contributed to the 2025-2029 Capital Plan. Such significant financial investment gives the City a say in how its money is spent.

**Access-A-Ride (AAR)**

AAR, with nearly 180,000 users, is a dysfunctional system: rides must be booked at least one day in advance, rides are chronically late, and riders often endure long, unpredictable, shared rides to get to their destination. **We urge the Council – in recognition of the fact that the City funds 80% of the AAR system – to remedy these inequities, by advocating for improvement and expansion of the on-demand pilot and by eliminating AAR assessment centers and instead requiring proof of eligibility to be submitted by treating healthcare providers.** Notably, this latter recommendation would offer great savings to the City, is utilized by paratransit providers across the State, and was previously used by the City prior to the MTA taking over the AAR system. Similarly noteworthy is the fact that each on-demand ride costs far less than traditional AAR rides.

## Subways

**We urge the Council to exercise robust oversight over the MTA to ensure that it keeps and expands upon its promises to improve the accessibility of the subway system.** A more accessible MTA system will benefit the interests of both New Yorkers and the MTA alike. Modernizing the system and making it accessible for the many who have long been shut out of the system, including people with disabilities, the elderly, and parents and caregivers, will encourage increased overall subway ridership – and less of a need for AAR.

Specifically, **the Council must ensure that the MTA provides elevator and stair-free access**, as recently mandated by the federal district court, and expands upon this promise to bring about such access well in advance of the 2055 deadline allowed by the court. **The Council must also ensure that the MTA provides access to people with disabilities by eliminating the gaps between the platforms and trains and the by installing detectable warning surfaces along all platform edges.** Just as stair-free access from the street to the platform is essential to accessibility, so too is platform accessibility. Additionally, **the Council must mandate that the MTA make accessibility improvements serving the needs of riders who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.** For example, when train conductors make verbal announcements, both in routine ways like when a train goes express, or in serious, unpredictable ways including emergencies like active shooter scenarios, riders with hearing disabilities have no way of receiving the message other than to read the faces of fellow riders. This is not equal access to transportation. At a minimum, **the Council must direct the MTA to ensure that a screen on all train cars contemporaneously relays messages as conductors announce them.**

**Critically, the Council must ensure that the MTA is held to its promise to allocate \$7.1 billion of the \$68.5 billion 2025-2029 Capital Plan to subway accessibility projects.**

## Fair Fares

We commend the Council for expanding the Fair Fares eligibility levels to 145% of the federal poverty line. We, however, urge the Council to continue expansion to New Yorkers with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty line, which will make over 415,000 more low-income New Yorkers eligible to receive half-price mass transit rides.

Additionally, while the Fair Fares program was introduced back in 2019, more than half of eligible New Yorkers are still not enrolled in the program. This is especially true for AAR users. **We urge the Council to mandate the implementation of an extensive advertising campaign – particularly targeted at eligible AAR users – to ensure that eligible New Yorkers are aware of the Fair Fare benefits and how to opt into them.**

Additionally, people who contact the MTA and the City Human Resources Administration should be promptly screened for Fair Fares eligibility.

Notably, the Fair Fares program – which is administered by the City, not the MTA – serves as only a bandage over the MTA’s discriminatory practice of excluding AAR users from the discount programs available to subway and bus riders. Subway and bus riders who have disabilities or are senior citizens have available to them a half-price MetroCard. They – and all other subway and bus riders – also have the option of purchasing 7-day and 30-day unlimited MetroCards, which provide significant savings to frequent users. AAR users are excluded from each of these discount programs.

The City contributes significant funding to the MTA, and is entitled to make demands on the MTA. **We, therefore, urge the Council to exercise oversight and compel the MTA to include AAR users in the same discount programs available to all other mass transit riders.**

### **NYC Streets Plan**

The Streets Plan, as mandated by Local Law 195, is a bold reimagining of the City’s surface level transportation networks and public spaces. However, the City Department of Transportation (DOT) has, in each of its first three years, missed several of its key benchmarks, to the detriment of all New Yorkers including those with disabilities. In addition to the completion of fewer miles of protected bike and bus lanes than required by law, the DOT has also failed to meet the required bus stop upgrades benchmark. Due to insufficient staffing and inadequate funding being allocated to DOT in 2026 under the preliminary plan, NYLPI is concerned that DOT will continue its course of failing to meet its Streets Plan benchmarks. **We urge the Council to exercise oversight to ensure all promises within the NYC Streets Plan are timely met.**

Moreover, **the Council must ensure that the City’s Open Streets and Open Restaurants programs are accessible to people with disabilities.** In far too many cases, Open Restaurant sheds lack accessible ramps from the sidewalk to the street level, rendering them unusable by people with disabilities. Open Streets barricades create access barriers for the disability community, both in that Access-A-Ride drivers refuse to move the barricades to permit proper customer pick-ups and drop-offs, and in that drivers with disabilities are not able to move the barricades without assistance. DOT told NYLPI that it is working on the problem, including by adding phone numbers on the barricades, which people in need of help can call to obtain the assistance of a nearby attendant, but this has not happened to date. **The Council must ensure that these issues are expeditiously remedied at Open Restaurants and Open Streets locations throughout the City.**

## **Green Rides Initiative**

NYLPI strongly recommends that **the Council urge the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) to amend and enhance its Green Rides Initiative to require that all For-Hire Vehicles (FHVs) be both wheelchair accessible and zero emission by 2030.** By permitting the industry to choose between wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) and zero-emission vehicles, the transportation needs of the disability community are at risk. If given the choice, NYLPI foresees that inaccessible zero-emission vehicles will be purchased at a far greater rate than WAVs, given the relative costs of each type of vehicle. Though WAV zero-emission vehicles are not currently available in the United States, the City can harness its immense market power to influence changes in this regard; TLC must consult with vehicle manufacturers to encourage the design of a marketable WAV zero-emission vehicle.

## **NYC Ferry**

Members of the disability community have reported that NYC Ferry suffers from various accessibility issues, including lack of signage, particularly important for those who are deaf and hearing impaired, as well as a lack of clear and accessible paths from street to landing. **The Council must ensure that NYC Ferry funding be used to abate such denials of access to people with disabilities.**

## **New York City's FY 2026 Budget**

The New York City Independent Budget Office and State Comptroller DiNapoli have both found that New York City's economic outlook remains strong, and they project significant budget surpluses for FY 2025.

In recent years, the Council has played a critical role in defending vital City services, investments, and infrastructure from budget cuts and flatlining.

At the same time, a federal administration hostile to immigrants, LGBTQ New Yorkers, and climate science, threatens New York City communities and has already begun to seize funds allocated to our City. It is more critical than ever that the City's budget makes bold investments in public services, legal representation, and the transition to a local renewable energy economy, and it is more critical than ever that our Mayor stand up for New York City's communities and independence.



## **Immigrant Health Initiative**

We ask the Council to continue and enhance support for the Immigrant Health Initiative, which continues to save lives and improve health across the City. This program is funded at \$2.43M in FY25 and supports more than 20 organizations, including NYLPI, and is aimed at improving the health and well-being of New Yorkers and their families through direct legal representation, litigation, community education, strategic partnerships with public hospitals, and non-legal advocacy. Through vigorous client and community advocacy and wraparound services, NYLPI improves health outcomes, increases access to healthcare, and provides critical and timely education for communities, healthcare providers, and legal service advocates.

Such access to essential healthcare often results in cost savings for the City, the State, and our safety net health care system by allowing people to resume work and productive lives.

As increasing numbers of New Yorkers are detained in immigration jails, we are one of few organizations focused on medical advocacy on their behalf and on the acute health hazards of immigration detention. In addition, in the face of continued attacks on the asylum process, we have offered culturally competent legal representation, including to those who identify as transgender, gender-expansive, or live with HIV.

## **Nonprofit Rapid Response Network**

The new federal administration is focusing tremendous power on mass deportations, revocation of racial justice initiatives, claw-backs of climate and environmental justice funding, and retribution against those who stand up to it. The human cost to New York's disadvantaged communities will be staggering. Nonprofits and CBOs serving or employing immigrants and other marginalized groups will form a critical shield, but they are also becoming direct targets of federal agencies attempting to conduct raids, chill advocacy, and cut services to people in need. NYLPI recently published guidance for nonprofits responding to the threat of immigration enforcement. See <https://www.nylpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Guidance-to-Nonprofits-Regarding-Immigration-Enforcement.pdf>.

With support from Protect NYC Families, the Nonprofit Rapid Response Network will strengthen and protect New York City's nonprofit sector by providing informational resources, relationship-building, practical training, and legal advice and representation to nonprofits and community-based organizations. It will foster collaboration, build capacity, and distribute

essential resources and legal advice to help nonprofits survive attacks by the federal administration.

Thank you for reviewing my testimony. I am happy to discuss any of these recommendations.

**Christopher Schuyler, Managing Attorney, Disability Justice Program**  
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*About New York Lawyers for the Public Interest*

*For nearly 50 years, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) has been a leading civil rights advocate for New Yorkers marginalized by race, poverty, disability, and immigration status. Through our community lawyering model, we bridge the gap between traditional civil legal services and civil rights, building strength and capacity for both individual solutions and long-term impact. Our work integrates the power of individual representation, impact litigation, and comprehensive organizing and policy campaigns. Guided by the priorities of our communities, we strive to achieve equality of opportunity and self-determination for people with disabilities, create equal access to health care, ensure immigrant opportunity, strengthen local nonprofits, and secure environmental justice for low-income communities of color.*

*About NYLPI's Disability Justice Program*

*NYLPI's Disability Justice Program works to advance the civil rights of New Yorkers with disabilities. In the past several years alone, NYLPI disability advocates have represented thousands of individuals and won campaigns improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Our landmark victories include mandating that the MTA equitably provide its Access-A-Ride services to all applicants and riders with limited English proficiency. We have worked together with the MTA to bring about an "on demand" Access-A-Ride program and to enable New York's most indigent residents to obtain Fair Fare discounts when using Access-A-Ride. We recently filed a class action lawsuit seeking to permit all Access-A-Ride users to access the same discount programs available to all other MTA transit users, as well as a class action to remedy the enormous gaps between subway cars and subway platforms system-wide.*

## **Open Plans Testimony on 3/19/25 Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Budget Hearing**

Open Plans writes today in regard to the Committee's budget hearing. We are an organization that fights for a more livable city, including more people-centered streets, efficient and equitable curb management, and well-managed public spaces. Our streets and public spaces are the lifeblood of our city, and funding and managing them properly is vital to the city's success. Below are our priorities for the FY 25-26 budget.

### **Daylighting**

Daylighting is a street safety technique which removes obstructions from within 20 feet of a crosswalk, increasing visibility at intersections for drivers, pedestrians, and micromobility users. We can "harden" these spaces by placing things like boulders, planters, or micromobility storage with a dual purpose: ensuring that they cannot be illegally occupied, and providing important resources to the surrounding community.

Presently, New York State law requires daylighting at all intersections across the state, but exempts New York City. At the State level, there is a bill to remove this exemption, S445/A3730, and more relevantly, a City bill — Intro 1138 — that would do the same and require 1,000 intersections to be daylit and hardened. This City bill builds on Local Law 66 of 2023, which required 100 intersections to be daylit yearly, and Mayor Adam's commitment to daylight 1,000 intersections in 2024 (which it had done to 314 intersections as of September 2024).

Open Plans has organized Community Boards and local organizations in support of daylighting in their communities. 22 Community Boards representing over three million New Yorkers in the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan have passed resolutions of support for universal daylighting. Additionally, over 115 community-based organizations have signed onto a letter of support for universal daylighting.

There is clear momentum around daylighting in New York City, and our budget should reflect this. The City Council must ensure that the Department of Transportation (DOT) has the resources to implement daylighting — and most

importantly, hardened daylighting, which has shown to provide the most profound safety benefit — citywide. The Mayor’s allocation of \$3.85 million for daylighting infrastructure was a welcome increase from the previous year, but this is simply insufficient to meet the needs on our streets. Based on DOT estimates of the costs of hardened daylighting, we recommend an allocation of \$10 million to daylight 1,000 intersections this year, and to truly begin to address the calls from Community Boards across the city for safer streets.

## Public Space Management

In the last 20 years, the City has grown its involvement and role in creating and managing our public spaces. Important steps like the Public Space Equity Program and the creation of the Chief Public Realm Officer have shown that the City can and should be more involved in our public spaces. Well-managed public spaces stimulate our economy, create jobs (including low-barrier-to-entry stewardship jobs), help combat climate change, increase street and public space, and provide a host of additional benefits to our city. And communal uses of public space — like the 500 bike parking lockers, the implementation of which has been stalled and must be funded and built-out — yield results for all New Yorkers.

This is why, in addition to funding these organizations, the City must bolster its own ability to manage public spaces, and reorient the way it approaches management. In our report, *Framework for the Future*, we propose Public Space Teams — a group overseeing a Community District within the DOT’s Office of Livable Streets consisting of:

- One Public Space Facilitator to oversee public space creation and planning in a District. Facilitators are a blend of existing DOT titles (Project Manager and Community Coordinator) totaling \$150,665 in fully loaded costs.
- One Public Space Coordinator, to assist in community outreach. Coordinators are the same position as a DOT Community Coordinator, totaling \$141,715 in fully loaded costs.
- A team of contracted Public Space Stewards to provide supplemental sanitation and street beautification services, similar to the Hort or ACE programs. Stewards represent a bulk of the spending, and their total cost is dependent on the contract and number of Stewards required in each Community District.

We recommend five pilot Public Space Teams across the City, totaling an investment of \$25 million. These pilot Community Districts would be chosen intentionally with a focus on Priority Investment Areas as defined by the Streets Plan, in addition to existing public space, Business Improvement District coverage and size, and community input.

While we believe that investing in Public Space Teams would provide a management framework that works for all neighborhoods, our ultimate message to the Committee is: do not cut funding from the organizations already doing this vital work. We cannot afford to take steps backwards in the management of our public spaces.

## Staffing

The knowledgeable and experienced staff at DOT make sure our streets are in good repair, our sidewalks are accessible, and that we can get around our city. But, as staff has left the agency, there has not been a concerted effort to replace them with new minds. The IBO showed that the number of staff handling project review and oversight — in Traffic Control & Engineering, Design & Construction, Traffic Engineering & Planning, and Transit Development — has shrunk since 2019.

This reduction in staffing is harmful to making sure existing projects get done on time, and that new projects are planned and completed. This is particularly true for projects related to the Streets Plan, which has been and must be an important roadmap for making sure our streets work for all users. In their 2025 Streets Plan Update, DOT acknowledged that their development on the plan was hamstrung by the “existing capacity of the agency...a situation that has not changed as implementation has been underway.”

If DOT, and our City agencies at large, are short on staff now, we may see some short-term negative repercussions. However, the real impacts will not be seen until several years from now — in the projects that aren’t completed yet, the goals that haven’t been met, and, worst of all, the projects that were never pursued because there was a lack of capacity. It is absolutely vital the hiring freeze is ended, and that the Council takes the staffing and capacity struggles at DOT into consideration this budget cycle.



## Open Streets and School Streets

In March, Open Streets operators called on the City to fully fund the Open Streets program by allocating \$48 million over the next three years to expand DOT and the City's capacity for supporting Open Streets and directly fund the organizations operating these programs. We support this important funding request.

The benefits of Open Streets have been routinely emphasized by City Hall. Mayor Adams said in 2022 that "Open Streets were an essential part of our city's economic recovery, and they will continue to be a core part of our city's future," DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez spoke similarly of the program in 2023: "The data is clear: When we give more space to people walking and biking, business thrives." The city directly reaps these economic benefits, enjoying higher tax revenue thanks to Open Streets.

While the Open Streets program is a sensational and innovative approach to transforming our streets, relying on provisional equipment and volunteer labor is not a sustainable arrangement. To ensure long-term stability for Open Streets sites, they need to be implemented with infrastructure, initially via "light-touch" streetscape changes — paint and planters — and ultimately via capital infrastructure work. Infrastructure investments reduce the amount of labor required to run the Open Streets, and thereby reduce operating costs.

Critically, these redesigns solidify street safety improvements gained by the Open Streets program. However, many of the promised street improvement projects and capital redesigns have been stalled, due to lack of staffing and resources at DOT, as well as interference by the Adams administration. It is key that the City provide DOT with the funding, resources, and staffing required to realize this work.

Furthermore, funding needs to go directly to the community partners operating the Open Streets and should be significantly increased. Volunteer community organizations have taken on the brunt of the work executing Open Streets programs — everything from planning, fundraising, daily operations, community programming, communication and outreach, and site management. The limited funding and decreases in funding that have occurred over the years jeopardize the continuity and future of the program — funding pressure is already leading to downsizing and the disappearance of Open Streets programs.

Similar initiatives in other cities around the world receive substantially more funding. For example, Montreal recently committed to extend their pedestrianized street program for another three years through 2028. This investment allocates \$12 million to pedestrianize streets, including up to \$700,000 that is directly available to each merchants association running one of these programs. This amount — more than 30 times the amount being provided to NYC Open Streets partners — aptly shows the value of these programs and the level of investment NYC should strive for.

A similar investment in Open Streets in NYC would likely produce incredible outcomes — substantial benefits for local businesses, reduced traffic injuries and improved air quality, reduced health care costs, and community programs and enrichment that have widespread socioeconomic benefits. We work closely with over 25 schools across New York City. All of them face the space operational challenges yet receive no funding. Therefore, we urge the Council to fully fund the Open Streets program, including Schools. To reiterate, the specific areas of need are as follows:

- Staffing DOT positions that support Open Streets work
- Directly funding community organizations that operate Open Streets
- Fast-tracking the implementation of street improvement work on Open Streets corridors

In closing: we recognize that, in the light of the current situation at the federal-level, we face difficult times financially. We also stress that investments in our streets, our public spaces, and our transportation infrastructure pay back dividends in the short and long-term. We urge the Council to consider this fact in this budget cycle.

Respectfully,  
Open Plans

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Dear Chair Brooks-Powers,

My name is Saskia Haegens and I am one of the organizers of the Vanderbilt Avenue Open Street in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn. I am asking the City to fully fund the Open Streets program, by committing \$48 million over the next three years.

We are hoping to start the 6th season of the Vanderbilt Open Street in May. This program has brought us much needed new public space, has made our streets safer, has supported our local businesses, and most of all, it has allowed our community to reimagine how we use our streets.

Countless surveys and petitions show the widespread support for Open Streets. The Council passed legislation to make the program permanent in 2021, and last year DOT amended the traffic rules to further codify the program. One key piece is missing though — and that is the money to pay for all of this!

Instead, the program relies on endless unpaid volunteer labor by organizers such as myself. It relies on nonprofit community organizations scraping together money to run bare-bones operations. This is not sustainable!

Since pandemic financial support ended, the City has decreased the funding to community Open Streets partners — the consequences are that the program has shrunk in size and become less equitable. Meanwhile, the Adams administration is touting the great safety, health, and economic benefits of Open Streets.

Relying on provisional equipment and volunteer labor is not sustainable. Long-term, these great street transformations need to be implemented with infrastructure. Infrastructure investments reduce the amount of labor required to run the Open Streets, and thereby reduce operating costs. However, many of the promised street improvement projects and capital redesigns have stalled, due to lack of staffing and resources at DOT.

Without new, dedicated funding, the program won't survive. We need \$48 million over the next three years to protect and expand the program, which will cover:

- Staffing of DOT positions that support Open Streets work.
- Directly funding community organizations that operate Open Streets.
- Fast-tracking the implementation of street improvement projects on Open Streets corridors.

Thank you,

Saskia Haegens, Vice Chair

Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council

Council Member Selvena Brooks-Powers  
250 Broadway, Suite 1865  
New York, NY 10007

March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Re: Transportation and Infrastructure Budget Hearings and Fully Funded Open Streets Program**

Dear Council Member Brooks-Powers,

**We, the undersigned Open Streets volunteer committees and coordinating organizations, call on the City to fully fund the Open Streets program by allocating \$48 million over the next three years** to expand DOT and the City's capacity for supporting Open Streets and directly fund the organizations operating these programs.

NYC DOT's Open Streets program has been transformative for NYC neighborhoods. It has empowered communities all over the city to reimagine our streetscape and create new public open space. It has allowed community-based organizations to make our streets safer, provide free programming, daily maintenance, outdoor dining, and support for local businesses. That landscape spans Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), schools, arts and cultural nonprofits, restaurants, and groups like ourselves, which are entirely volunteer-run. The program has resulted in many tangible benefits such as economic development and direct reductions in crashes and injuries along Open Streets corridors.

**The economic benefits of Open Streets are well documented.** For example, Open Streets correlate with "considerably lower [vacancies] than their surrounding neighborhoods as a whole" according to a [Department of City Planning report](#) released in 2024. Various other City-run studies over the past several years have shown similarly positive findings, including a [2022 report](#) on the Fifth Avenue Open Street that revealed the program generated an additional \$3 million in spending along that corridor and a 6% increase in spending on adjacent corridors. Another [DOT report from 2022](#) found Open Streets corresponded to a 10% increase in new business during the pandemic compared to a 20% contraction on non-Open Street corridors.

These benefits have been routinely emphasized by City Hall. "Open Streets were an essential part of our city's economic recovery, and they will continue to be a core part of our city's future," **said Mayor Eric Adams, in 2022.** "The research is clear that Open Streets bring more people to our city's public spaces, more business to our city's stores, and more jobs to New Yorkers." **DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez echoed similar sentiments:** "The data is clear: When we give more space to people walking and biking, business thrives," [he said, in 2023.](#) The city directly reaps these economic benefits, enjoying higher tax revenue thanks to Open Streets.



**The Open Streets program makes our streets safer.** By creating temporary open space, pedestrian plazas, shared streets, protected bicycling corridors and implementing traffic calming, crashes and injuries are greatly reduced along Open Streets corridors. This was first noted on the 34th Avenue Open Street in 2021, where injuries [dropped dramatically](#) compared to pre-Open Streets numbers. Similar trends have been seen along other Open Streets corridors across the city, like Berry Street in Williamsburg, which saw a 71% reduction in injuries since its transformation, and Underhill Avenue in Prospect Heights, which saw injuries plummet following the implementation of an Open Street.

These benefits rely on the work of volunteer organizers who provide countless hours of free labor every week and stretch small Open Streets reimbursement grants — at most \$20,000 per year, and usually far less — to run robust community programs. Not only is this DOT reimbursement grant only a fraction of the funding required to run these Open Streets programs, volunteer organizations often have to wait up to a year to receive reimbursement for monies they have paid out of their own pockets, further threatening the program's equity and sustainability. We are all running bare-bones budgets today — a properly funded program would require [at least 10 times](#) the current funding allocation.

While the Open Streets program is a sensational and innovative approach to transforming our streets, relying on provisional equipment and volunteer labor is not a sustainable arrangement. To ensure long-term stability for Open Streets sites, they need to be implemented with infrastructure, initially via “light-touch” streetscape changes — paint and planters — and ultimately via capital infrastructure work. **Infrastructure investments reduce the amount of labor required to run the Open Streets, and thereby reduce operating costs.** Critically, these **redesigns solidify street safety improvements** gained by the Open Streets program. However, many of the promised street improvement projects and capital redesigns have been stalled, due to lack of staffing and resources at DOT, as well as interference by the Adams administration. It is key that the City provide DOT with the funding, resources, and staffing required to realize this work.

Furthermore, **funding needs to go directly to the community partners operating the Open Streets** and should be significantly increased. Volunteer community organizations have taken on the brunt of the work executing Open Streets programs — everything from planning, fundraising, daily operations, community programming, communication and outreach, and site management. The limited funding and decreases in funding that have occurred over the years jeopardize the continuity and future of the program — funding pressure is already leading to downsizing (see e.g. [Vanderbilt Avenue](#)) and the disappearance of Open Streets programs.

Similar initiatives in other cities around the world receive substantially more funding. For example, Montreal [recently committed](#) to extend their pedestrianized street program for another three years through 2028. This investment allocates \$12 million to pedestrianize streets, including up to \$700,000 that is directly available to each merchants association running one of these programs. This amount — **more than 30 times the amount being provided to NYC**

**Open Streets partners** — aptly shows the value of these programs and the level of investment NYC should strive for.

A similar investment in Open Streets in NYC would likely produce incredible outcomes — substantial benefits for local businesses, reduced traffic injuries and improved air quality, reduced health care costs, and community programs and enrichment that have widespread socioeconomic benefits. Therefore, we urge the Council to fully fund the Open Streets program. To reiterate, the specific areas of need are as follows:

- Staffing DOT positions that support Open Streets work
- Directly funding community organizations that operate Open Streets
- Fast-tracking the implementation of street improvement work on Open Streets corridors.

Sincerely,

34th Ave Open Streets Coalition, Queens — City Council District 25

31st Ave Open Street Collective, Queens — City Council District 22

Caldwell Enrichment Program (Jennings Street), The Bronx — City Council District 17

Decatur Block Association (E 194th St and E 195th St), The Bronx — City Council District 15

Evelyn Place (b/w Aqueduct Ave E and Grand Ave), The Bronx — City Council District 14

Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council (Vanderbilt Avenue Open Street & Underhill Plaza), Brooklyn — City Council District 35

Fort Greene Open Streets Coalition (Willoughby Avenue), Brooklyn — City Council District 35

Hall Street Open Street, Brooklyn — City Council District 35

Park Slope Plaza, Brooklyn — City Council District 39

5th Avenue Open Streets (Park Slope Open Streets), Brooklyn — City Council District 39

North Brooklyn Open Streets (Berry Street), Brooklyn — City Council Districts 33 & 34

Friends of Cooper Park (Sharon Street & Maspeth Ave), Brooklyn — City Council District 34

Troutman Open Streets (Troutman Street), Brooklyn — City Council District 34

Canal Street Merchants Association, Manhattan — City Council District 1

Loisaida Open Streets Community Coalition, Manhattan — City Council District 2

FABnyc (East 4th Street Open Street), Manhattan — City Council District 2

Park to Park 103 (West 103rd Shared Street), Manhattan — City Council District 7

West 111th Street Block Association, Manhattan — City Council District 7

Street Lab

Open Plans

Transportation Alternatives

**March 19, 2025**

**Comments of Zach Miller  
Vice President of Government Affairs  
Trucking Association of New York**

before the

**New York City Council Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure**

Good morning, Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. My name is Zach Miller, I am the Vice President of Government Affairs for the Trucking Association of New York. Since 1932, TANY has advocated on behalf of the trucking industry at all levels of government, providing compliance assistance, safety programs, and educational opportunities to our members, and in the process, creating jobs, supporting the economy, driving safety, and delivering a sustainable future.

I testify today regarding the critical budgetary needs of the Department of Transportation (DOT), particularly as they relate to freight mobility. New York City is home to one of the finest and most respected Freight Mobility Offices in the United States. Given that trucking is responsible for delivering 90 percent of the city's freight, the systems we put in place today will shape the future of our city's economy and quality of life.

As we project a 68 percent increase in freight tonnage by 2045, it is essential that we invest in infrastructure to keep pace with this demand. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated shifts in delivery patterns, with 80 percent of deliveries now going to residential customers and 45 percent of New Yorkers receiving at least one delivery to their homes each week.

It is crucial that we continue to invest in initiatives that will ensure the safe, efficient, and sustainable movement of freight across the city. Some key initiatives that the Office of Freight Mobility is currently engaged in include:

- **Increasing overnight truck parking capacity** to reduce congestion and enhance safety.
- **Expanding and enforcing commercial loading zones** to prevent traffic disruptions and ensure timely deliveries.
- **Developing neighborhood loading zones** to improve access in residential areas.
- **Revamping the truck route network** to optimize freight movement.
- **Promoting off-hour deliveries to receivers** to reduce peak-hour traffic and minimize disruptions.
- **Supporting microhub distribution centers and lockers** to further streamline certain types of last-mile deliveries.

- **Implementing busways and blue highways** to enhance both freight and passenger mobility.

These initiatives are not just about moving freight—they are about ensuring that our city remains a vibrant, functioning metropolis as we face future challenges.

As such, I implore the Council to ensure the DOT receives the necessary funding to continue this essential work. The trucking industry is committed to ongoing collaboration with the City Council and the DOT to help bring these efforts to fruition.

Thank you for your time and for considering these critical needs as part of the budget process.



### **Third Avenue Business Improvement District**

2825 Third Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

Bronx, NY 10455

718-218-5430,

[bengel@thirdavenuebid.org](mailto:bengel@thirdavenuebid.org)

<https://www.thirdavenuebid.org/>



March 21, 2025

The Honorable Selvena N. Brooks-Powers

NYC City Council

City Hall Park

New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Brooks-Powers and Members of The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee,

I am a program manager with the Third Avenue Business Improvement District in The Hub of the Bronx, representing businesses and residents in the Mott Haven and Melrose neighborhoods. Our BID was founded in 1990 and is the oldest in the Bronx. We represent over 200 businesses and provide crucial supplemental sanitation and public safety services.

This past year we have:

- Distributed backpacks in the fall to students returning to school
- Held a Thanksgiving turkey giveaway with Lincoln Hospital
- Hosted an open street on Willis Ave
- Conducted a CDNA through the Avenue NYC program with NYC SBS

Additionally, we present public programming in Roberto Clemente Plaza, a DOT managed public plaza.

As a small BID with an assessment of less than half a million dollars, we do not have the capacity to provide the amount of programming needed to keep this DOT plaza active year-round. I am writing to advocate that the DOT receive the appropriate budget to provide for programming in public plazas, especially in low- and moderate-income communities. Ensuring that plazas like Roberto Clemente are funded and programmed year-round will meet the DOT's stated goal to support community, commerce, and culture. We advocate that the DOT receive the budget needed to hire the appropriate staff to plan for and provide public programming in plazas that serves our community.

Thank you for your time and attention on this matter and please reach out with any questions or clarification in this matter.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Engel

Program Manager Commercial District Revitalization

Third Avenue Business Improvement District



**::TESTIMONY TO THE NYC COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE::**

Budget Hearing | Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Brooks-Powers and committee members. My name is Sally Burns and I am the Planning Associate for Union Square Partnership. We're the nonprofit business improvement district stewarding the ever-evolving landscape of Union Square and 14<sup>th</sup> Street.

Union Square is a key transit hub, a powerful jobs center, an extraordinary residential community, a center for culture and recreation, a home to notable institutions, a burgeoning tech campus, and a favored shopping destination serving millions of New Yorkers; however, its park is outdated, with infrastructure in disrepair, and the streetscape on its main thoroughfare is underinvested, seemingly temporary, and incomplete.

The Union Square District Vision Plan [USQNext] sets out to address these issues by transforming the public realm in Union Square Park and along 14th Street. Union Square lies at the junction of the Broadway Vision Plan and the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Busway, the two most transformative surface transportation projects Manhattan has seen in generations, but 14th Street remains a work in progress. When implemented in 2019, the administration stopped short of making permanent streetscape upgrades to the corridor, limiting the impact of the entire busway project. While the busway carried almost 5M riders last year and riders have seen as much as a 24% improvement in bus speeds since the busway was introduced in 2019, the pedestrian experience on 14th Street is inconsistent, disorganized and often desolate, with deteriorating sidewalk sections creating poor conditions for people with limited mobility. As a result of our Vision Plan, 14th Street would be transformed with a robust, green streetscape, delivering a best-in-class pedestrian experience and a high-quality retail environment along this crosstown boulevard.

Union Square Partnership is requesting \$10M to be allocated to the NYC Department of Transportation, including \$9M from New York City Council and \$1M from the Manhattan Borough President for an initial capital commitment towards the Union Square Vision Plan's construction. This funding will signal long-term support for the project, help finance its implementation and sustain future phases.

We would like to thank Manhattan Community Board 5 for their letter of support and Councilmembers Rivera, Bottcher, Powers, Krishnan, and Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine's staff for taking the time to meet about this important project.

Thank you!



**TO:** Selvena N. Brooks-Powers, Chair of Committee on Economic Development, Majority Whip of City Council, CM for the 31st District

**CC:** Elizabeth Yeampierre and Kat Trujillo, UPROSE

**FROM:** Ahmad Perez, UPROSE

**DATE:** 3/19/2025

Hello Chairperson Brooks-Powers,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. My name is Ahmad Perez, and I serve as the Infrastructure Coordinator at UPROSE, Brooklyn's oldest Latino community based organization. For decades, UPROSE has worked at the intersection of racial and climate justice, moving community-driven planning and advocating for a Just Transition that ensures historically marginalized communities like Sunset Park are at the forefront of the transition to a just, green and equitable economy

As you know, Sunset Park is home to New York City's largest Significant Maritime Industrial Area (SMIA) and second-largest Industrial Business Zone (IBZ), and is a frontline community that has long contributed to the city's industrial economy while bearing the burden of environmental harm and economic disinvestment. In response to the community's request, UPROSE developed the GRID 2.0, a community-based plan to address the causes and impacts of climate change rooted in the expertise and lived experiences of Sunset Park residents.

The plan envisions a shift away from an extractive economy that pollutes our air, water, and soil towards a regenerative economic future. The GRID recognizes that transportation and infrastructure investments must be aligned with community-led planning and climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.. **To that end, we call on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to prioritize:**

1. Support the creation of a GRID Special Purpose District to preserve industrial land for clean energy development, green manufacturing, and maritime innovation.
2. Align the BQE/Gowanus Expressway revisioning with community needs, invest in electrified freight and rail alternatives, and integrate climate adaptation measures into transportation projects.

3. Improve bus and subway connectivity to clean energy and industrial job hubs.
4. Enforce local hiring requirements, support community investment agreements, and prioritize small businesses in industrial retrofitting and green infrastructure services.

The GRID plan charts a course through 2035 to ensure that Sunset Park becomes a model for regenerative, community-led development. We stand ready to work with the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to build a future where infrastructure investments are equitable, climate-resilient, and community-driven.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and we look forward to continuing this critical conversation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ahmad Perez', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ahmad Perez  
Infrastructure Coordinator  
UPROSE



Los Deliveristas Unidos  
Worker's Justice Project

March 19, 2025

Presented to:  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
Hon. Selvena N. Brooks-Powers, Chair  
Prepared By: William Medina

Good morning, my name is William Medina, and I am a leader and organizer at the Worker's Justice Project. Today, I want to highlight the importance of having safe streets for everyone including the more than 65,000 delivery workers in New York City who are seeking better road conditions, such as micro-mobility improvements, better infrastructure, and also to be part of a society that promotes clean energy development, safe conditions, and environmental care.

As we see every day, we are an industry in constant motion, providing a service to our community so they can receive essential products like food and medicine. However, for this, the city needs to not only train, educate, and equip all workers but also implement an infrastructure plan that ensures the safety of those of us doing this work. Currently, the streets we travel on do not have adequate bike lanes for safe transit, nor do we have barriers to protect us from pedestrians and prevent accidents. These mobility issues are visible at every corner of the city, and without the support of the government, it is impossible to implement plans that improve these conditions. For us, it is vital to educate workers in this industry because we have the capacity to create outreach plans, inform about street safety, and provide services from our worker centers, such as processing driver's licenses, assisting with ticket payments, and teaching how to move around the city more safely while respecting traffic rules.

Year after year, this has had a positive impact on our community, where many of our members have found a sense of belonging and have recognized that they can offer better service while respecting New Yorkers. This is why we depend on the city to carry out all these initiatives, which we have undoubtedly proven are the foundation for improving this and many other industries that recognize the hard work within our immigrant communities.

Without their support, the workforce will be left vulnerable to punishment and persecution in a city that needs urgent structural change. This financial support will help thousands of people access training on risk assessment, safe mobility, and signage, as well as programs and the implementation of new laws, such as the use of spaces like access to restrooms and other resources the city offers, including updates on structural changes.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

William Medina

# Alan Mooiman



Brooklyn NY 11238

United States

March 22, 2025

Dear Council Member Brooks-Powers,

During the depths of the pandemic, our open streets provided a glimpse of what a more connected city could look like, even in the midst of social distancing. I was living in the East Village at the time, and Vanderbilt open streets in particular caught my attention, and became a contributing factor when I evaluated a move to the neighborhood. The opportunity to enjoy a neighborhood and support local businesses without the roar of traffic brings communities together, generates revenue for local businesses and the city, and improves overall public health and well-being. It's critical to continue to invest in these programs so that the people who live in this city can thrive.

I've seen firsthand how other cities are re-evaluating their streetscapes, and have spent significant time in Europe where streets are treated properly as the public space they are, not just reserved for the flow of metal boxes. We must keep up if we want to remain competitive in the global economy, which is why it's critical that Open Streets are fully funded with \$48 million over the next 3 years.

In the long run, I'd love to see this be no longer necessary as we evolve our public space infrastructure to be more pedestrian-forward, but the operating costs in lieu of that infrastructure are a necessary stopgap.

Sincerely yours,

Alan Mooiman





ALICIA VAICHUNAS FOR CITY COUNCIL • [REDACTED], MASPETH, NY 11378 • [REDACTED] • ALICIAVFORNYC@GMAIL.COM

March 19, 2025

**Testimony of Alicia Vaichunas  
Before the New York City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
March 2025 Preliminary Budget Hearing**

Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the urgent need for improvements in our city's transportation infrastructure.

**Department of Transportation (DOT)**

The DOT is responsible for maintaining our streets, sidewalks, and transportation infrastructure, yet persistent issues continue to plague our communities.

It is imperative that DOT:

- **Improve Road Maintenance:** The current pace of pothole repairs and sinkhole restorations is inadequate. These hazardous conditions impact drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians alike. DOT must be more proactive in filling potholes, coordinating with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to repair sinkholes, and ensuring that all city streets are safe and passable.
- **Reduce Lag Time Between Milling and Repaving:** The gap between milling and repaving is far too long, often leaving roads in dangerous, uneven conditions. This delay creates hazards for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers while causing unnecessary wear on vehicles. DOT must adopt a more efficient timeline to ensure that repaving is completed promptly after milling.
- **Maintain Public Property:** DOT-owned properties must be kept clean, free of graffiti, and properly maintained. Neglected infrastructure reflects poorly on our city and contributes to a declining quality of life.
- **Expedite Traffic Safety Requests:** The long wait times for speed bumps, stop signs, and other traffic calming measures put lives at risk. When communities submit requests, they should receive timely responses, and DOT must streamline the approval process to ensure that necessary safety improvements are made without bureaucratic delays.
- **Regulate E-Bikes Through Licensing:** The proliferation of e-bikes has introduced new safety challenges. Council Member Robert Holden's proposed **Priscilla's Law** calls for a licensing system to regulate e-bikes and hold riders accountable. This is a commonsense step that will promote safety for all New Yorkers.

## Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)

New Yorkers depend on reliable, safe, and clean public transportation. Yet, despite significant funding, service remains inconsistent, and riders often feel unsafe.

To improve transit conditions, the MTA must:

- **Expand Express Bus Service:** Many neighborhoods still lack adequate express bus service, forcing long and inefficient commutes. The MTA must increase the number of express routes, particularly in areas underserved by the subway.
- **Increase Bus Service During Rush Hour:** Overcrowded buses are a daily reality for thousands of commuters. The MTA must prioritize increased frequency during peak hours to reduce congestion and improve reliability.
- **Ensure Subway Cleanliness and Maintenance:** Subways must be well-maintained, free of trash and graffiti, and regularly cleaned. A cleaner and safer subway system will encourage ridership and improve the commuting experience for all New Yorkers.

## Department of Design and Construction (DDC)

The DDC plays a vital role in delivering capital projects across the city, yet a lack of coordination and communication with local communities continues to be a major concern.

The agency must:

- **Improve Community Affairs:** Many neighborhoods are left in the dark about major DDC projects that impact them. The agency must proactively engage with local stakeholders, provide timely updates, and address community concerns throughout the construction process.
- **Enhance Coordination with Elected Officials:** Too often, project liaisons fail to communicate effectively with elected officials and their offices. Better collaboration will ensure that projects move forward efficiently while minimizing disruptions to residents and businesses.

## Conclusion

Our city cannot afford to ignore these critical infrastructure issues. New Yorkers deserve safe roads, a reliable transit system, and an efficient approach to capital projects. I urge this Committee to hold DOT, MTA, and DDC accountable for delivering the services that our communities rely on every day.

Sincerely,



Alicia Vaichunas

Civic Leader and Candidate for Council District 30

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

The rise of electric bikes and electric scooters in particular highlights the need for infrastructure that supports these new modes of transportation. These vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative to traditional cars, but their adoption is limited by the availability of safe and secure parking options. Ensuring that secure parking is available for both traditional and electric bikes will further accelerate the shift toward cleaner, greener transportation in our city.

In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Andy Shen

Wednesday, March 19, 2025  
10:15AM Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Dear City Council,

New York City deserves to be the best city in the world and the Open Streets program is a big step in the right direction. When people get out of their cars they are able to enjoy what makes this city so great: it's people.

I am writing to express my unwavering support for the continuation and expansion of the Open Streets program. This initiative has proven to be an invaluable asset to our community, significantly enhancing the quality of life for residents across the city.

The Open Street program serves as a catalyst for social interaction, bringing me and my neighbors together. This fosters a stronger sense of community. New York City is uniquely positioned to lead the nation on creating strong, walkable, vibrant neighborhoods.

By continuing to fund these third spaces residents can connect, engage in recreational activities, and build lasting relationships. The Open Streets program is not merely a temporary measure; it is an essential investment in the long-term physical and economic health of our city.

I urge the City Council to recognize the Open Streets program's profound positive impact and to commit to continued funding and expansion.

Thank you,  
Anthony Castrio

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

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In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Bettina Chou

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong and sincere support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

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In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Binyamin Radensky



Council Member Selvena Brooks-Powers  
250 Broadway, Suite 1865  
New York, NY 10007

CC:

DOT - Ryan Lynch, Chief of Staff

DOT - Emily Weidenhof, Assistant Commissioner, Public Realm

DOT - Carlos Castell Croke, Assistant Director of Government Affairs

CM Abreu

CM Cabán

CM Feliz

CM Gutiérrez

CM Hanif

CM Hudson

CM Krishnan

CM Restler

CM Rivera

CM Salamanca

CM Sanchez

BP Gibson

BP Levine

BP Reynoso

BP Richards

Comptroller Lander

March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Re: Transportation and Infrastructure Budget Hearings and Fully Funded Open Streets Program**

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Council Member Brooks-Powers,

**We, the undersigned Open Streets volunteer committees and coordinating organizations, call on the City to fully fund the Open Streets program by allocating \$48 million over the next three years** to expand DOT and the City's capacity for supporting Open Streets and directly fund the organizations operating these programs.

NYC DOT's Open Streets program has been transformative for NYC neighborhoods. It has empowered communities all over the city to reimagine our streetscape and create new public open space. It has allowed community-based organizations to make our streets safer, provide

free programming, daily maintenance, outdoor dining, and support for local businesses. That landscape spans Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), schools, arts and cultural nonprofits, restaurants, and groups like ourselves, which are entirely volunteer-run. The program has resulted in many tangible benefits such as economic development and direct reductions in crashes and injuries along Open Streets corridors.

**The economic benefits of Open Streets are well documented.** For example, Open Streets correlate with “considerably lower [vacancies] than their surrounding neighborhoods as a whole” according to a [Department of City Planning report](#) released in 2024. Various other City-run studies over the past several years have shown similarly positive findings, including a [2022 report](#) on the Fifth Avenue Open Street that revealed the program generated an additional \$3 million in spending along that corridor and a 6% increase in spending on adjacent corridors. Another [DOT report from 2022](#) found Open Streets corresponded to a 10% increase in new business during the pandemic compared to a 20% contraction on non-Open Street corridors.

These benefits have been routinely emphasized by City Hall. “Open Streets were an essential part of our city’s economic recovery, and they will continue to be a core part of our city’s future,” **said Mayor Eric Adams, in 2022.** “The research is clear that Open Streets bring more people to our city’s public spaces, more business to our city’s stores, and more jobs to New Yorkers.” **DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez echoed similar sentiments:** “The data is clear: When we give more space to people walking and biking, business thrives,” [he said, in 2023.](#) The city directly reaps these economic benefits, enjoying higher tax revenue thanks to Open Streets.

**The Open Streets program makes our streets safer.** By creating temporary open space, pedestrian plazas, shared streets, protected bicycling corridors and implementing traffic calming, crashes and injuries are greatly reduced along Open Streets corridors. This was first noted on the 34th Avenue Open Street in 2021, where injuries [dropped dramatically](#) compared to pre-Open Streets numbers. Similar trends have been seen along other Open Streets corridors across the city, like Berry Street in Williamsburg, which saw a 71% reduction in injuries since its transformation, and Underhill Avenue in Prospect Heights, which saw injuries plummet following the implementation of an Open Street.

These benefits rely on the work of volunteer organizers who provide countless hours of free labor every week and stretch small Open Streets reimbursement grants — at most \$20,000 per year, and usually far less — to run robust community programs. Not only is this DOT reimbursement grant only a fraction of the funding required to run these Open Streets programs, volunteer organizations often have to wait up to a year to receive reimbursement for monies they have paid out of their own pockets, further threatening the program’s equity and sustainability. We are all running bare-bones budgets today — a properly funded program would require [at least 10 times](#) the current funding allocation.

While the Open Streets program is a sensational and innovative approach to transforming our streets, relying on provisional equipment and volunteer labor is not a sustainable arrangement. To ensure long-term stability for Open Streets sites, they need to be implemented with

infrastructure, initially via “light-touch” streetscape changes — paint and planters — and ultimately via capital infrastructure work. **Infrastructure investments reduce the amount of labor required to run the Open Streets, and thereby reduce operating costs.** Critically, these **redesigns solidify street safety improvements** gained by the Open Streets program. However, many of the promised street improvement projects and capital redesigns have been stalled, due to lack of staffing and resources at DOT, as well as interference by the Adams administration. It is key that the City provide DOT with the funding, resources, and staffing required to realize this work.

Furthermore, **funding needs to go directly to the community partners operating the Open Streets** and should be significantly increased. Volunteer community organizations have taken on the brunt of the work executing Open Streets programs — everything from planning, fundraising, daily operations, community programming, communication and outreach, and site management. The limited funding and decreases in funding that have occurred over the years jeopardize the continuity and future of the program — funding pressure is already leading to downsizing (see e.g. [Vanderbilt Avenue](#)) and the disappearance of Open Streets programs.

Similar initiatives in other cities around the world receive substantially more funding. For example, Montreal [recently committed](#) to extend their pedestrianized street program for another three years through 2028. This investment allocates \$12 million to pedestrianize streets, including up to \$700,000 that is directly available to each merchants association running one of these programs. This amount — **more than 30 times the amount being provided to NYC Open Streets partners** — aptly shows the value of these programs and the level of investment NYC should strive for.

A similar investment in Open Streets in NYC would likely produce incredible outcomes — substantial benefits for local businesses, reduced traffic injuries and improved air quality, reduced health care costs, and community programs and enrichment that have widespread socioeconomic benefits. Therefore, we urge the Council to fully fund the Open Streets program. To reiterate, the specific areas of need are as follows:

- Staffing DOT positions that support Open Streets work
- Directly funding community organizations that operate Open Streets
- Fast-tracking the implementation of street improvement work on Open Streets corridors.

Sincerely,

34th Ave Open Streets Coalition, Queens — City Council District 25

31st Ave Open Street Collective, Queens — City Council District 22

Caldwell Enrichment Program (Jennings Street), The Bronx — City Council District 17

Decatur Block Association (E 194th St and E 195th St), The Bronx — City Council District 15

Evelyn Place (b/w Aqueduct Ave E and Grand Ave), The Bronx — City Council District 14

Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council (Vanderbilt Avenue Open Street & Underhill Plaza), Brooklyn — City Council District 35

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Park Slope Plaza, Brooklyn — City Council District 39

5th Avenue Open Streets (Park Slope Open Streets), Brooklyn — City Council District 39

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Troutman Open Streets (Troutman Street), Brooklyn — City Council District 34

Loisaida Open Streets Community Coalition, Manhattan — City Council District 2

FABnyc (East 4th Street Open Street), Manhattan — City Council District 2

Park to Park 103 (West 103rd Shared Street), Manhattan — City Council District 7

Street Lab

March 19, 2025

Dear City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continued funding and expansion of the Open Streets program. This initiative has become a vital part of our community, significantly improving the quality of life for residents across the city.

The benefits of the Open Streets program are numerous, and with sustained support, we can continue to build on its success. One of the most impactful aspects is its role in **Public Health and Community Building**. By creating shared public spaces, the program fosters social connections and strengthens neighborhood bonds. Personally, it has provided me with opportunities to interact with my neighbors in ways that wouldn't have been possible otherwise. These spaces are essential in combating social isolation, a growing issue in cities like New York. **By maintaining funding for Open Streets, we can ensure that residents have welcoming places to connect, engage in recreational activities, and develop lasting relationships.**

This program is not just a short-term experiment—it is a crucial investment in the long-term well-being of our city, both physically and economically. **I urge the City Council to acknowledge the significant positive impact of the Open Streets program and to commit to its continued funding and expansion.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Breanna Bianchi

Happy Resident of New York since 2023

My name is Brent Bovenzi. I am a resident of Williamsburg. I am speaking in support of dedicated funding for open streets to the order of \$48 million. I am a volunteer of the North Brooklyn Open Streets and I have seen first hand what an incredible impact the open streets program has made. Neighbors get the chance to meet each other. Berry St has only a single empty storefront across its entire 19 blocks. Every day parents can walk side-by-side with their stroller while their older kids feel safe learning how to bike. But that impact is now threatened. Without dedicated funding I fear that only a small fraction of open streets will be able to continue long term. The city has relied on volunteers bootstrapping this program for far too long. Without a stable budget and timely reimbursements, the neighborhood groups that make this a reality will not be able to continue.

We all know the benefits of open streets. That is why this city council legalized them three years ago. Now that the federal covid funds have run out, it is time for the city council to put its money where its mouth is with a dedicated line item for open streets in the budget.

I also urge the city to fully fund the RFP for 500 secure bike parking locations across the city. Almost anyone who owns a bike in the city can talk about their bike getting stolen. Secure parking is a vital piece of our transportation system but it is also the piece most lacking. The proposal is already put together; we simply need the funds to get started.

Both of these are simple investments that will return dividends in tangible changes for New York. I hope the city council can follow through and deliver. Thank you.



To the Committee Members of Transportation and Infrastructure NYC Council,

My name is Carla. I'm a resident of Greenpoint Brooklyn, native New Yorker, and citizen tree pruner. As a lifelong resident, I want to see our city continue to fight and flourish so it's nice for me and nice for those who come after me. And I want the classic New York City phrase of "I'm walkin' here" to ring true for many rude on the surface and kind on the inside interactions to come. This is why I am asking for you to fully Fund our Open Streets today.

DOT has a responsibility to maintain our open streets and plazas so that New York can continue to be and feel like truly a walkable, livable city. Open streets have become our town squares, public spaces that we so desperately need are watching the fabric of our society splinter. These are spaces where people from all walks can share a spontaneous moment, take a breather, meet one another. It's become more evident than ever that we need to relearn how to cooperate and see each other as people again, regardless of political sides, identities, and otherwise. Open streets are one amazing way that we can help create the environments for this to happen.

I hope my sincerity and care for our city and its people come through in my letter and that you seriously consider the funding necessary for this initiative that brings so many people together.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Carla Yuen



Dear Council Members,

NYC DOT's Open Streets program has transformed neighborhoods, creating public space, improving safety, and supporting local businesses. My neighborhood in Prospect Heights has benefited greatly from the Vanderbilt Ave Open Streets programming. However, these benefits rely on volunteer organizers stretching very small reimbursement grants and putting in hundreds of hours of unpaid labor. While I love volunteering to support my local community space, each year as public funding decreases, the demands on volunteers increase for less and less return given the shrinking budget. The decreases in funding that have occurred over the years have gotten to a point that they jeopardize the continuity and future of the program — my neighborhood used to do three days per weekend of programming and now we're down to only one, and we're begging entertainment to perform for free.

My husband's native city of Montreal dedicates \$12 million to pedestrianized streets over 3 years, with up to \$700,000 available per program. A similar investment in NYC would yield incredible benefits, boosting local economies, reducing traffic injuries, improving air quality, and expanding community programs. The programs in my neighborhood sparked real community connections, deeper ties and a stronger local economy.

Please consider fully funding Open Streets by allocating \$48 million over the next three years to strengthen city support and directly fund the organizations running these programs. Thank you.

Cheers,  
Carol Krakowski

Hello,

I'm Catherina Gioino. I previously worked for Oonee as their Head of Community Partnerships and Advocacy and currently operate at the nexus of journalism and transportation policy. I saw the startup grow from a three-person company dashing across the city during the DOT's pilot program of the Oonee Mini to now leading the nation's first secure, bike parking network in Jersey City. I saw firsthand all the people who came up to us during that secure bike parking pilot program, and they said how much this was needed in their community. We went from the Lower East Side to Downtown Brooklyn to my hometown in Astoria, Queens and in between, and in each location, people rushed to speak with us, say how they were so ecstatic to have something like this in the community, and ultimately, express chagrin over the temporary nature of the pilot program. The secure bike parking facility in their neighborhood meant they could rest assured their bike would not be stolen; that they have a secure parking spot for their own bike were they dealing with a development company or a real estate agency telling them they can no longer store their e-bike indoors; that people who didn't have the physical capabilities of lifting their bikes up three, four, five flights of stairs to make sure that the bike stayed safe as opposed to outside open to the elements and other kinds of vandalism or thievery. We dashed across the city, speaking with people of all backgrounds, from supporters of the program to those who were against— and we were able to assuage their concerns (six spots for bikes in the spot of one car!).

I also know firsthand what it is to have secure, reliable and cheap transportation: I grew up in Queens to a single mom living under the poverty line. I lived at the cusp of the 1.5 mile-distance needed for a fully free student Metrocard, so the dollar ten at the time to pay each way for the bus was too much. Instead I saved up and purchased a cheap Craigslist bike and rode to school every day starting in middle school and have continued daily ever since. I saw what it meant financially for my mom and me to ensure that I had a quality place to park my bike at home and at school; the financial repercussions of what it meant to not have a stable transportation option when I saw what happened to my friends and my coworkers at the restaurants I worked at when their bikes were stolen. And I see now the fear I have everyday when I lock up my non-Craigslist bike, fearing the worst for the bike I've worked hard to buy and build. We need secure, bike parking facilities across the city.

It's no longer a luxury but a necessity for a city that continues to make strides in building its bike and pedestrian infrastructure. As we tout the success of congestion pricing and make strides in pedestrianization efforts everywhere, we need to ensure that having a safe place to secure one's bike is included in our grand vision. Of all the stats that have been enumerated throughout the proliferation of micromobility, one stands out the most: outside of personal safety and road conditions, the second biggest obstacle of picking up biking/micromobility is the safe and secure storage of a personal vehicle. If we can remove one more obstacle, getting even just one person to pick up biking or micromobility is already a win for the city, and I can guarantee that number will continue to grow with more secure bike parking infrastructure such as Oonee in place.

Thanks,  
Catherina Gioino

Dear Council Member Brooks-Powers,

I live on 5th avenue in Brooklyn, which has been the site of a wonderful Open Streets program. Like other Open Streets programs like it, 5th avenue open street has transformed our avenue into a neighborhood gathering place, improving safety, and supporting local businesses.

However, the program has relied on dwindling volunteer organizers who stretch very small reimbursement grants and put in hundreds of hours of unpaid labor. Lack of funding caused us to downsize from the whole neighborhood of blocks to just 2 blocks last year, and we may not have it at all this year.

Other cities invest far more — Montreal, for example, dedicates \$12 million to pedestrianized streets over 3 years, with up to \$700,000 available per program. A similar investment in NYC would yield incredible benefits, boosting local economies, reducing traffic injuries, improving air quality, and expanding community programs.

We must fully fund Open Streets by allocating \$48 million over the next three years to strengthen city support and directly fund the organizations running these programs. Thank you.

Best,  
Charlie Guthrie

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

10:15AM Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Dear City Council,

I am writing today to strongly advocate for the continued funding and expansion of the Open Streets program. This initiative has demonstrably improved the quality of life for our community.

The Open Streets program offers significant benefits, particularly in **Public Health and Community Building**. As a resident, I've directly experienced these positive impacts. Open Streets provide a much-needed incentive for residents to spend more time outside and engage in physical activity. By creating pedestrian-friendly spaces, the program also fosters a sense of community, crucial in combating rising loneliness. These streets act as vital 'third spaces,' facilitating social interaction and bringing neighbors together in a safe, accessible environment. I've personally formed invaluable connections through these interactions, connections that would not have occurred otherwise.

Furthermore, Open Streets directly benefit local businesses by increasing foot traffic, strengthening our local economy. This creates a positive feedback loop, enhancing both community cohesion and economic vitality.

The Open Streets program is not a temporary luxury; it's a vital investment in our city's long-term physical, mental, and economic health. **I urge the City Council to recognize the program's profound positive impact and commit to its continued funding and expansion.** Let's build on this success and create a healthier, more connected, and vibrant city for all.

Thank you,

Christian Morales

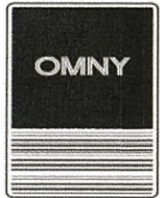
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Brooklyn, NY 11222

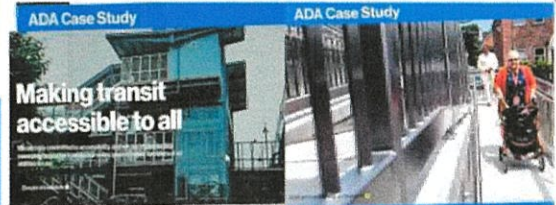
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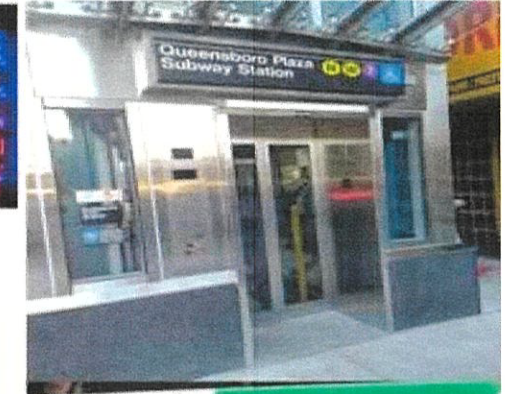


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**CHRISTOPHER D GREIF  
PRESIDENT ADA ACCESSIBILITY  
TRANSPORTATION GROUP**







## NEXT ADA ACCESSIBILITY TRANSPORTATION GROUP PAGE

HONOR EDITH PRENTISS

FUTURE TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY



R211T



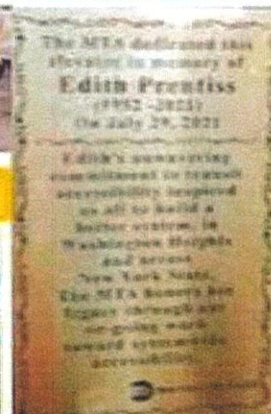
R211S



R211A



HONOR LEGENDARY  
EDITH PRENTISS



Thursday March 20, 2025 6:30pm

ANY QUESTION EMAIL [chrisgreif@yahoo.com](mailto:chrisgreif@yahoo.com)





## CHRISTOPHER D GREIF

Community Outreach Officer  
of the  
NYCT Advisory Committee  
for Transit Accessibility (ACTA)

Executive Committee  
New York City Transit Rides Council

Long Island Rail Road  
&  
Metro North Railroad  
Accessibility

President ADA Accessibility  
Transportation group  
Advocate for Disability Over 31 Year

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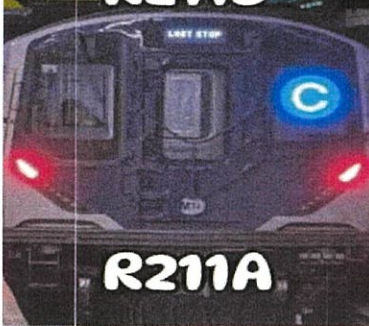
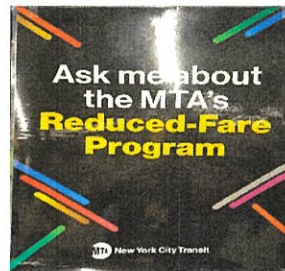
# New Trains

R211A R211T R211S



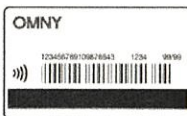
[chrisgreif@yahoo.com](mailto:chrisgreif@yahoo.com)





## ADA ACCESSIBILITY TRANSPORTATION GROUP PAGE

WE LIKE TO SEE THE CITY FUND THE MTA WITH THE MONEY  
IT NEEDS TO RUN



BIGGEST ELEVATORS

WIDE RAMPS

BOARDING ASSISTANCE

RAILROAD ALERT TRAIN CREW ACCESSIBILITY

PASSENGER NEED HELP ON TO THE TRAINS

NAVI LENS

WE NEED UPDATE

AAR BUSES MTA BUSES

TRAIN CARS UPDATE REDUCE FARE BUSES

& VAN

LED LIGHTS STATION

ACCESSIBILITY SIGNS

The Future of  
Accessibility  
Rides with Us



*Dear Council Member Brooks-Powers,*

*I am writing to express my full support for the Open Streets program in NYC. I have utilized the open streets every season since its inception and have seen my neighborhood transformed by its existence. NYC DOT's Open Streets program has transformed neighborhoods, creating public space, improving safety, and supporting local businesses. However, these benefits rely on volunteer organizers stretching very small reimbursement grants and putting in hundreds of hours of unpaid labor. The decreases in funding that have occurred over the years jeopardize the continuity and future of the program — funding pressure is already leading to downsizing and the disappearance of Open Streets around the city.*

*Other cities invest far more — Montreal, for example, dedicates \$12 million to pedestrianized streets over 3 years, with up to \$700,000 available per program. A similar investment in NYC would yield incredible benefits, boosting local economies, reducing traffic injuries, improving air quality, and expanding community programs.*

*We must fully fund Open Streets by allocating \$48 million over the next three years to strengthen city support and directly fund the organizations running these programs. Thank you.*

*Claire Hapke Preciado*



**From:** [Claire Hapke](#)  
**To:** [Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fully Support Open Streets  
**Date:** Friday, March 21, 2025 5:21:22 PM

---

Hello!

I am emailing to share my full support for the Open Streets program on Vanderbilt Avenue. I utilize it most days it is open and have felt safer walking through the neighborhood without cars on those days. I have also connected more with my neighbors during open streets and urge you to commit to fully funding the program with the full \$48 million. Thank you.

Claire Hapke



Wednesday, March 19, 2025

10:15AM Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Dear City Council,

I, like many others, am writing to express my steadfast support for the continuation and expansion of the Open Streets program. This initiative has proven to be an invaluable asset to our community, significantly enhancing the quality of life for residents across the city.

The Open Streets program has achieved several benefits and there is more we can accomplish by continuing to fund the program. **As a single woman, one of the many benefits I have directly experienced is feeling safer in my neighborhood (and surrounding neighborhoods) through Community Building.**

The Open Street program serves as a catalyst for social interaction, making it easier to connect with others which can be challenging to do on your own. I have made a plethora of new friends and connections through this program, all of whom have become a vital part of my life, bringing me both joy and support. I would not have had these invaluable interactions if it were not for the Open Street program.

These interactions and having a sense of community is especially important as more people suffer loneliness in our society. I work at a mental healthcare company specializing in severe mental health challenges, and I can tell you firsthand that this issue of loneliness is widespread and deeply damaging. I can also tell you that group support is one of the tools we lean on consistently to combat this.

New York City is uniquely positioned to fight the loneliness epidemic. By continuing to fund these third spaces where residents can connect, engage in recreational activities, and build lasting relationships.

**The Open Streets program is not merely a temporary measure; it is an essential investment in the long-term physical and economic health of our city.** I urge the City Council to recognize the Open Streets program's profound positive impact and to commit to continued funding and expansion.

Sincerely,  
Claire

*Dear Council Member Brooks-Powers,*

*NYC DOT's Open Streets program has transformed neighborhoods, creating public space, improving safety, and supporting local businesses. However, these benefits rely on volunteer organizers stretching very small reimbursement grants and putting in hundreds of hours of unpaid labor. The decreases in funding that have occurred over the years jeopardize the continuity and future of the program — funding pressure is already leading to downsizing and the disappearance of Open Streets around the city.*

*Other cities invest far more — Montreal, for example, dedicates \$12 million to pedestrianized streets over 3 years, with up to \$700,000 available per program. A similar investment in NYC would yield incredible benefits, boosting local economies, reducing traffic injuries, improving air quality, and expanding community programs.*

*We must fully fund Open Streets by allocating \$48 million over the next three years to strengthen city support and directly fund the organizations running these programs.*

*Thank you,*

*Daniel Deverell*



*Brooklyn, NY 11238*

Friday, March 21, 2025

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

The rise of electric bikes and electric scooters in particular highlights the need for infrastructure that supports these new modes of transportation. These vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative to traditional cars, but their adoption is limited by the availability of safe and secure parking options. Ensuring that secure parking is available for both traditional and electric bikes will further accelerate the shift toward cleaner, greener transportation in our city.

In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniel Sutton



March 20, 2025

Email: [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov)

Subject: Support for NYC Open Streets Program

Dear Pierina Sanchez,

I am writing on behalf of the NYC Open Streets program, which is facing critical financial challenges.

Concerns:

- The funding for the Open Streets initiative has consistently declined, and City Hall has not stepped in to replace the lost resources.
- To safeguard and grow the Open Streets program, we urgently require \$48 million over the next three years. This funding will be allocated toward:
  - Hiring DOT staff dedicated to Open Streets efforts.
  - Providing direct financial support to community organizations that manage Open Streets.
  - Accelerating street improvement projects on Open Streets corridors.
  - Maintaining and enhancing programming offered by NYC vendors such as The Hort and the King Charles Unicycle Team.
- The lack of financial backing has had severe repercussions. From 2022 to 2023, we observed a staggering 40% reduction in the number of designated Open Streets.

Benefits:

- Communities collaborating with NYC DOT have an impressive track record of transforming public spaces into vibrant seasonal and permanent venues. This partnership is making NYC a more unified environment for outdoor activities across all five boroughs. Residents have actively contributed to improvements in traffic signage and infrastructure, which have not only beautified their neighborhoods but also enhanced safety.
- For a long time, programs for Bronx youth were not only limited but also hard to access. The I Am My Community Inc, Evelyn Place Open Street is ideally situated in a lively residential area. Since our inception in 2017, we have focused on guiding at-risk youth towards positive futures while engaging the broader community in our initiatives.
- Thanks to NYCDOT Trans Alt, our I Am My Community Inc, Evelyn Place Open Street program has introduced valuable programming to the Bronx, a community in great need. During



the summer and school breaks, children and youth actively participate in various recreational activities. We have been able to bring in artists, authors, hip-hop dance instructors, and organizations like The Hort and the circus to enrich their out-of-school experiences. Parents and seniors also take part by checking on their children or enjoying the activities themselves.

- We have established the Aqueduct Classic sports team, which has won basketball trophies and expanded our sports offerings to include football and soccer. This has allowed our teams to safely compete with other communities while fostering connections.

- Together, we are reimagining spaces that prioritize people over vehicles. The South Bronx community has been profoundly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. As reported, "The Bronx, which has long grappled with lower-than-average life expectancy and high incidence of chronic health conditions like asthma and diabetes, has seen Covid-19 mortality rates three times higher than those in Manhattan.

We urge the city to invest in the Open Streets program to ensure its continuation and growth for the benefit of our neighborhoods.

Cc: NYC City Councilman Pierina Sanchez

Cc: Borough President Vanessa Gibson

Thank you for your time and support.

Warm regards,

Darney Rivers

C.E.O./Founder

I Am My Community Inc.

16 Metropolitan Oval, Suite 4F

<https://darneyrivers.wixsite.com/iamc>

**Subject: Support for NYC Open Streets Initiative - Avenue B**

I am writing in support of the NYC Open Streets initiative and its funding, especially the Avenue B Open Street. Originally, the Avenue B Open Street ran from 6th Street to 14th Street but was reduced to 7th Street to 10th Street in recent years. I was an original volunteer on the street during the pandemic and have continued to be involved, even after the city and its contractor took over day-to-day maintenance of the street barricades.

The Avenue B Open Street has provided more pedestrian-friendly accommodation in an underserved area. The setup has substantially slowed vehicles, making the street safer for pedestrians using the full street and those crossing the road. It has made the corridor safer for pedestrians and bikers alike, while still allowing cars and trucks to pass for local purposes.

The Avenue B corridor is particularly well-suited for an Open Street. The street is relatively narrow for an avenue and lacks room for bike lanes. Larger thoroughfares, such as First Avenue and, to a lesser extent, Avenue C, can be used for through traffic. The East Village/Alphabet City/Lower East Side area is short on open space, aside from Tompkins Square Park, which is not large enough for the significant population. The construction activities related to the East River Coastal Resiliency Project have exacerbated this issue.

A variety of activities, especially during the summer months, occur on the Open Street, ranging from yoga and fitness to musical performances and children's activities. It has made walking down Avenue B much more pleasant and created a safer corridor for cyclists. I have even observed delivery workers from FedEx, etc., who park along 14th Street or at Stuytown, using the Avenue B Open Street to carry their packages. It has been a huge benefit for residents including those like me who live adjacent to the street.

Since the Open Street was shortened to run alongside the park (7th to 10th), I have noticed more speeding and dangerous driving in the remaining section from 11th to 14th Streets. This puts pedestrians and bikers in more danger. I would like to see the Avenue B Open Street extended back to its original boundaries and the city move forward with permanent traffic mitigation.

While the main focus of my support is the Avenue B Open Street, I've also been a fan of other Open Streets around the city which I've explored over time, largely by bike.

In summary, I urge the city to continue supporting and funding the Open Streets program and its activities. Thank you.

Sincerely,

David White

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of David White.



**The New York City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**  
**Preliminary Budget Hearing – Transportation and Infrastructure**

RE: Increasing Department of Transportation funding to deliver improved street safety

March 20, 2025

Dear Chair Brooks-Powers and the Committee Members,

I write to testify on the Department of Transportation's underfunding. My particular concern involves a street redesign in Council District 2 on West Third Street between LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street. Committee Member Riviera represents this district. I work in Washington Square Village and use West Third Street to access my office.

It is vital that City Council restore an adequate level of funding to the DOT and support the DOT's delivery of safe street infrastructure to all roadway users.

The DOT installed a sidewalk expansion on the south side of West Third Street with brown textured paint, and this sidewalk extension is full of parked cars. This is dangerous because the only way to park in this space is to drive on the protected bike lane.

The DOT's Manhattan Borough Commissioner's representative told me on the phone that West Third Street's redesign was done with available materials and that **the DOT lacks funds to harden the sidewalk expansion and physically prevent cars from breaching the pedestrian and cyclist space**. The Police Department has not cooperated with the DOT in enforcing parking laws on this street.

I have had close calls with vehicles while crossing West Third Street from the north, not expecting to encounter cars driving in the bike lane. A runaway driver crashed into and gravely injured a cyclist using this bike lane during a police chase last December. I regularly see cyclists swerving into the door-zone of the legally parked cars to avoid motorists in the bike lane.

This lack of funding impacts drivers, too. A resident of Washington Square Village told me that she struggles with the blind spot created by the double-lines of parked cars when exiting Wooster and Greene Streets. She cannot see oncoming traffic when turning onto West Third Street, and drivers in the right-of-way cannot see her approaching from the side streets. She has had close calls and told me she must grit her teeth and hope she avoids a crash.

West Third Street needs **concrete blocks, planters, bike racks, benches, bollards**, or at the very least **flexible delineators** to prevent vehicles from parking in pedestrian and cyclist zones. The intersections of West Third, Wooster, and Greene Streets need **hardened daylighting** to eliminate dangerous blind spots for drivers at these intersections.

I reported the issue to 311 and received a call from a patrolling officer. She said she had never noticed an issue because the street redesign fails to clearly limit vehicle access to the sidewalk extension. The

alternate-side parking signs on the curb do not indicate that the curbside space is part of the sidewalk. Without DOT's reconfiguring the sidewalk extension or revising the parking signs, the officer said it will be impossible to enforce away this design flaw.

District Manager Mark Diller of Community Board 2 told me that the Board has been trying to solve this issue for over two years. I tried to engage NYPD Community Link on coordinating a cross-agency response but have received no reply.

West Third Street clearly shows the danger that drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists all undergo daily because of the DOT's underfunding. **Without funding for hardened street calming infrastructure, well-intentioned redesigns fail to deliver on their promise for increased road safety.**

DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodríguez made the need for funding clear in his testimony on March 19. As the DOT accelerates its compliance with Local Law 195, more money is needed to keep up with the law's high benchmarks while assuring the redesigns' success.

I hope my testimony sheds light on how current funding levels fail to meet our actual needs. I ask that City Council intervene in this crisis to ensure that the DOT has funds to implement thoughtful and effective street redesigns across the city.

Sincerely,  
Devin Friedrich

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

The rise of electric bikes and electric scooters in particular highlights the need for infrastructure that supports these new modes of transportation. These vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative to traditional cars, but their adoption is limited by the availability of safe and secure parking options. Ensuring that secure parking is available for both traditional and electric bikes will further accelerate the shift toward cleaner, greener transportation in our city.

In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Diana Chang

March 22, 2025

I'm writing in support of funding for the Open Streets program. Since the Avenue B Open Street (Manhattan) began during the pandemic, we've seen a safer Avenue B, with a measurable decrease in traffic incidents. Pedestrians (including children walking to and from schools), cyclists and delivery people have been able to move and work more safely. Free public programming on the Open Street has drawn customers to the businesses on upper Avenue B, and has allowed us to support local performers as well as offer a variety of arts and music to neighbors, including those with lower incomes. The work of The Hort has kept Avenue B clean, another bonus for our local businesses. I urge you to continue funding a safer and more prosperous Avenue B.

Dianne Lake

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

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In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ellen Nguye

Dear Council Member Brooks-Powers,

NYC DOT's Open Streets program has transformed neighborhoods, creating public space, improving safety, and supporting local businesses. I sometimes sit in the sunshine right at Vanderbilt and Dean, petting my favorite neighborhood dog and watching kids ride tricycles in the street - and it soothes my soul in trying times.

Unfortunately Open Streets and the benefits they provide rely on volunteer organizers stretching very small reimbursement grants and putting in hundreds of hours of unpaid labor! The decreases in Open Streets funding that have occurred over the years jeopardize the continuity and future of the program — funding pressure is already leading to downsizing and the disappearance of Open Streets around the city.

Other cities invest far more — Montreal, for example, dedicates \$12 million to pedestrianized streets over 3 years, with up to \$700,000 available per program. A similar investment in NYC would yield incredible benefits, boosting local economies, reducing traffic injuries, improving air quality, and expanding community programs.

We must fully fund Open Streets by allocating \$48 million over the next three years to strengthen city support and directly fund the organizations running these programs. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Emily Rose  
Crown Heights - 11216



Dear City Council,

I am writing to express my unwavering support for the continuation and expansion of the Open Street program. This initiative has proven to be an invaluable asset to our community, significantly enhancing the quality of life for residents across the city.

The Open Streets program has achieved several benefits and there is more we can accomplish by continuing to fund the program. A major benefit I have directly experienced is Public Health and Community Building. The Open Street program serves as a catalyst for social interaction, bringing me and my neighbors together. This fosters a stronger sense of community. I would not have had these invaluable interactions if it were not for the Open Street. These interactions and having a sense of community is especially important as more people suffer loneliness in our society. New York City is uniquely positioned to fight the loneliness epidemic. By continuing to fund these third spaces residents can connect, engage in recreational activities, and build lasting relationships.

The Open Streets program is not merely a temporary measure; it is an essential investment in the long-term physical and economic health of our city. I urge the City Council to recognize the Open Streets program's profound positive impact and to commit to continued funding and expansion.

Best,  
Emma Haskel

**From:** [Eric M. Trautmann](#)  
**To:** [Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Support for open streets  
**Date:** Sunday, March 23, 2025 1:03:30 PM

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Hi,

I'm writing to support fully funding the Open Streets program and am asking the City to commit \$48 million over the next three years to protect and expand Open Streets. The Open Streets program is a crucial and wonderful program that makes it possible for my daughter to play, bike, and build community. It's one of the things that makes our neighborhoods wonderful, but needs support to continue functioning.

Thank you!

Eric Trautmann

Brooklyn, NY 11215

## Fahad Khan

Brooklyn, NY 11201 |

| Testimony

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**Saturday, March 22, 2025**

New York City Council  
250 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

**Dear New York City Councilmembers,**

I support fully funding the Open Streets program and am asking the City to commit \$48 million over the next three years to protect and expand Open Streets.

Sincerely,

**Fahad A. Khan**

# Testimony of Gib Veconi regarding City funding for Open Streets

March 16, 2025

My name is Gib Veconi, and I've lived in the neighborhood of Prospect Heights, Brooklyn for more than thirty-three years. As Chair of the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council (PHNDC), in 2020 I organized the Open Streets program on Vanderbilt Avenue in Brooklyn and helped to manage it through 2024. One of the most [visible](#) and [successful programs](#) of its kind in New York City, the Vanderbilt Avenue Open Street [helped](#) over twenty local hospitality businesses continue to operate through the COVID-19 pandemic, more than half of which are minority- and woman-owned. Vanderbilt Avenue has continued to offer outdoor dining, family and cultural programming, and active and passive recreation since that time.

In December of 2024, the City Council passed the Mayor's [City of Yes for Housing Opportunity](#) program, which the City claims will enable the creation of 82,000 homes over the next 15 years. Although many of these homes will be in neighborhoods like Prospect Heights, where the ratio of existing open space to residents is well below City standards, City of Yes does not provide any mechanism to mitigate additional adverse impacts to open space from increased residential density.

Open Streets can address this problem by creating temporary public open space on public roadways. When the Vanderbilt Avenue Open Street is in operation, it creates nearly four acres of public open space, for instance.

Unfortunately, community partners like PHNDC are currently required to spend much more to operate full-closure Open Streets than they are reimbursed by the NYC Department of Transportation. This situation is not sustainable for existing Open Streets partners, and represents a barrier to new Open Streets being started.

I therefore call on the City Council to significantly increase funding for full-closure Open Streets programs to mitigate open space impacts in areas expected to experience increased population density through land use actions like City of Yes and neighborhood rezonings.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this testimony.

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

The rise of electric bikes and electric scooters in particular highlights the need for infrastructure that supports these new modes of transportation. These vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative to traditional cars, but their adoption is limited by the availability of safe and secure parking options. Ensuring that secure parking is available for both traditional and electric bikes will further accelerate the shift toward cleaner, greener transportation in our city.

In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Henry Wong

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

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I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

My building does not allow e-bikes in the building so secure on street parking for that would be very desirable.

Many buildings do not allow e-bikes in the building so secure on street parking is the only way someone could own one.

Fortunately, my building provides secure bike storage in the basement. Many buildings do not have any on premises bike storage resulting in a decision to purchase a bike or keep it in one's small apartment where it takes up valuable space and adds to crowding on the stairs or in an elevator.

Many people likely keep e-bikes in their building. This can be risky. It would be safer for them and people living in their building if their e-bikes were stored on the street.



Most new bicycles cost in excess of \$500. They require secure storage.

There are many reasons to have secure on street bike parking.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ira Gershenhorn

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

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I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jacob Scott

March 21, 2025

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am a bike rider and I am concerned about the lack of safe storage for bikes in the city. I am also a citizen who is worried about a warming world. As a way to combat this warming, we should be encouraging all modes of green transportation and commuting, including biking. Unfortunately, there are very few, if any, places to securely store a personal bike if you want to use it to commute to work or school, run errands, visit friends or family, or just get around the city in general.

Therefore, I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a resident, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

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I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
John Noble

Testimony in support of funding for Open Streets  
By Jonah Scheib (City Council District 2 resident)  
March 19, 2025

For the March 19, 2025 Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

In June 2020, the Avenue B Open Street was also launched. Maintained by volunteers for over two years and by DOT in partnership with The Horticultural Society since, the closure of Avenue B from 6th to 14th Streets has made our neighborhood cleaner and safer. From 2019 to 2023, the ratio of cars to micro-mobility devices (bikes, scooters, skateboards, etc.) has “flipped” to where, **in both 2023 and 2024 vehicle counts, there were more pollution-free vehicles on the street than cars!**

The Open Street has also been a haven for street activations and programming, **with over 135 full-scale events since launch**. This includes events that support the physical, cultural, and spiritual well-being of our community, as well as featuring in high-profile events like Trick Or Streets and Car Free Earth Day, as well as music, dance, art, fitness, cultural, and sustainability events. Because we have had the ability to program from 6th Street to 14th Street, we have had the ability to bring positive press and media coverage to both DOT and the Open Streets program.

Despite this success, in 2024 the Open Street was reduced to just three blocks between 7th and 10th Streets. This greatly reduces activations, as we need to be able to program in different locations to lessen the impact on any one block, as well as share the benefits with the diverse population residing near Avenue B from 6th to 14th Streets. Since the removal of barriers between 10th-14th Streets, speeding and close calls with strollers, cyclists, and pedestrians have increased dramatically, turning what was a safe stretch of Avenue B for almost 4 years into a dangerous speeding zone once again. **We don't understand why a successful open street, operating for four years, has been reduced in scope, increasing dangerous conditions for all in the area.**

The Avenue B Open Street enjoys tremendous support in the East Village, Alphabet City, Chinatown, and other nearby neighborhoods. It has the enthusiastic support of CM Carlina Rivera, Manhattan CB 3, local businesses, and those in the neighborhood - our [petition](#) has over 2000 signatures in support, mostly from nearby ZIP codes. **Therefore, I suggest that there be a line item in the budget to support Open Streets, on Avenue B in Manhattan as well as throughout the five boroughs, so that all may enjoy the health, safety, culture, community and other benefits that Open Streets afford to all New Yorkers.**

Thank you.

My name is Joshua M. Pierre and I am a resident of Bed Stuy, Brooklyn. I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation and expansion of secure bike marking and parking infrastructure across New York City.

As a frequent cyclist, I understand firsthand the challenges and anxieties associated with bike ownership in our city. Bike theft remains a significant deterrent to cycling, impacting both recreational riders and those who rely on bicycles for commuting and daily transportation. The fear of theft, coupled with the lack of reliable and secure parking options, creates a barrier to wider bike adoption.

Secure bike marking programs, coupled with the development of dedicated, protected bike parking facilities, are essential steps towards fostering a more bike-friendly and sustainable city. These initiatives offer several crucial benefits:

- Deterrence of Theft: Secure marking systems, such as those utilizing unique, tamper-proof identifiers, make stolen bikes more difficult to resell and easier to recover, significantly reducing theft rates.
- Peace of Mind for Cyclists: Knowing their bikes are securely marked and parked allows cyclists to ride with greater peace of mind, encouraging more frequent and consistent use.
- Promotion of Cycling as a Viable Transportation Option: Secure bike parking infrastructure, whether in the form of dedicated racks, lockers, or bike parking hubs, provides a safe and convenient place to store bicycles, making cycling a more practical and appealing choice for daily commutes and errands.
- Reduction of Traffic Congestion and Pollution: By encouraging cycling, secure bike parking contributes to reducing traffic congestion and air pollution, aligning with the city's sustainability goals.
- Protection from Weather and Damage: Secure parking options also protect bikes from weather damage and accidental damage from other people.
- Charging: Many secure bike parking facilities have built in charging facilities for e-bikes. This makes it safer (reducing the risk of fires) while also making it easier to use green transportation around the city.

Ultimately, I believe that secure bike marking and parking are integral to the advancement of cycling as a viable and reliable mode of transportation in NYC. It unlocks the ability to ride bikes with the peace of mind that bikes will not be stolen or damaged by others or by weather. This will encourage more people to bike, and reduce the need for car travel.

I urge the City Council to prioritize investments in secure bike marking programs and the development of comprehensive bike parking infrastructure across all boroughs. This investment will not only benefit cyclists but also contribute to a healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable transportation system for all New Yorkers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joshua M. Pierre

[Redacted Signature]

Dear Council Member Hudson,

NYC DOT's Open Streets program has transformed neighborhoods, creating public space, improving safety, and supporting local businesses. However, these benefits rely on volunteer organizers stretching very small reimbursement grants and putting in hundreds of hours of unpaid labor. The decreases in funding that have occurred over the years jeopardize the continuity and future of the program — funding pressure is already leading to downsizing and the disappearance of Open Streets around the city.

Other cities invest far more — Montreal, for example, dedicates \$12 million to pedestrianized streets over 3 years, with up to \$700,000 available per program. A similar investment in NYC would yield incredible benefits, boosting local economies, reducing traffic injuries, improving air quality, and expanding community programs.

Personally, my family and friends, along with our neighbors enjoy Open Streets as a way to soak in the NYC Summer and connect more deeply to our community. We have travelled to and strolled along countless pedestrianized streets and plazas in our home borough, and have spent hours each weekend taking advantage of programming on Vanderbilt Avenue and the special Summer Streets programs in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

We must fully fund Open Streets by allocating \$48 million over the next three years to strengthen city support and directly fund the organizations running these programs.

Thank you,  
Josh



Submitted March 21, 2025

[REDACTED]  
Brooklyn, NY, 11205

To whom it may concern,

I'd like to testify that I am in support of additional investment in **secure bike parking**. I live on Cumberland St in Fort Greene just south of Fort Greene park. Our lack of secure bike parking causes many neighbors to simply lock their bikes against trees, poles, and other public installations on the street. This leads to many bikes being damaged accidentally or sometimes through vandalism. The damaged bikes, no longer suitable for use, are left where they are, where they obstruct the work of city sanitation workers, as well as the convenience of our neighbors with mobility needs.

I'm hopeful we can have more secure bike parking. I've noticed those designed by Oonee to be an example of a practical solution: free for residents to use, beneficial for local businesses, and also modular so that it's designed to fit into the surrounding context of a variety of neighborhoods. There's one by the Barclays Center that's well used and I'd love to see more solutions like it.

Sincerely,

Julian Fu

[REDACTED]

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

The rise of electric bikes and electric scooters in particular highlights the need for infrastructure that supports these new modes of transportation. These vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative to traditional cars, but their adoption is limited by the availability of safe and secure parking options. Ensuring that secure parking is available for both traditional and electric bikes will further accelerate the shift toward cleaner, greener transportation in our city.

In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Justin Strauss

**From:** [Kate Huyett](#)  
**To:** [Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fund open streets!  
**Date:** Friday, March 21, 2025 4:55:41 PM

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[REDACTED]

I support fully funding the Open Streets program and am asking the City to commit \$48 million over the next three years to protect and expand Open Streets. I live in Prospect Heights and part of the reason we chose to live here was the Vanderbilt open street near where we live. I have an 18 month old son and having public spaces without cars where we can eat, shop locally, and play/socialize like open streets is key to building community and is great for local businesses. It makes our neighborhood more of a destination and multiple studies have shown open streets are great for local businesses.

Best  
Kate

Kate Huyett

[REDACTED]

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

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I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Katie Chiou

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

10:15AM Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Dear City Council,

As a resident of Brooklyn and fellow neighbor, I would like to express my unwavering support for the continuation and expansion of the Open Streets program. This initiative has proven to be an invaluable asset to our community, significantly enhancing the quality of life for residents like me and my neighbors across the city.

The Open Streets program has achieved many benefits and there is more we as a city can accomplish by continuing to fund the program. The Open Streets program serves as a catalyst for social interaction, bringing me and my neighbors together and fosters a stronger sense of community. I would not have had these invaluable interactions if it were not for the Open Streets program. These interactions, and having a sense of community, is especially important as more people suffer loneliness in our society and feel disconnected from the outdoors. **By continuing to fund these third spaces residents can connect and engage with one another through outdoor activities, events programming, and passive recreation.**

The Open Streets program may have started as a temporary measure, but it has grown into a thriving tenet of community life. Not only that, but it is an essential investment in the long-term physical and economic health of our city with storefronts along the Open Streets having a much lower vacancy rate than non-Open Street corridors. **I urge the City Council to recognize the Open Streets program's profound positive impact and to commit to continued funding and expansion.** COVID may be over, but the need for community has only grown stronger. The Open Streets Program is a simple, inexpensive, and high ROI program that must be continued.

Thank you,

Kevin Costa,

Voter, resident of Brooklyn and member of CB1 Brooklyn

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

The rise of electric bikes and electric scooters in particular highlights the need for infrastructure that supports these new modes of transportation. These vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative to traditional cars, but their adoption is limited by the availability of safe and secure parking options. Ensuring that secure parking is available for both traditional and electric bikes will further accelerate the shift toward cleaner, greener transportation in our city.

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I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kevin Wang



To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

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I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kyle Yee

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

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I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lia Clark

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I strongly support the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
McLean Cozine

**From:** [Michelle Chai](#)  
**To:** [Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PLEASE fund the Open Streets program!  
**Date:** Friday, March 21, 2025 3:49:04 PM

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Hello,

I am writing as a Brooklyn resident to urge you to fully fund Open Streets by allocating \$48 million over the next three years to strengthen city support and directly fund the organizations running these programs.

Open Streets have been a literal life-saving program (they improve safety for street users, and especially for our most vulnerable pedestrians and people on bikes) and have provided much-needed free outdoor space for people to relax, gather, and play in. Not only are they enjoyed by residents in the immediate area, but they attract so many people from other places (without Open Streets) because of the safe, calm, and beautiful outdoor space they provide. The FREE programming (live music, kid's programs, dance events, etc.) is also a highlight of MANY people, who come from all over to enjoy the outdoor entertainment. I am a regular attendee at Vanderbilt Ave's salsa dancing events, for example, and these events are always incredibly well attended by a diverse crowd of people from everywhere. If these are other events were to be cut due to a lack of funding, the loss would be felt immensely by many.

Please fund Open Streets and keep them alive for everyone to enjoy!

Michelle Chai

-----  
"If you're asking people to read your book and be transformed by it...the book is asking for you to become the person that you need to be to write the damn thing. It is asking you to be transformed in the process. And for me, the hardest part about writing this book was not putting the words together, the sentences together -- it was growing up in the process of writing the book. The book wanted me to be a better person than I was when I started out. I think that was harder than any of the sentences or any of the practical kind of literary concerns."

- Author Junot Diaz, talking to Kurt Andersen on "Studio 360" in May 2010

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

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I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Michelle

**From:** [miriam.fisher](#)  
**To:** [Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] City Council March 19, 2025, 10 A.M. Transportation and Infrastructure  
**Date:** Thursday, March 20, 2025 5:28:58 PM

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[REDACTED]

I am submitting written testimony re the City Council Hearing on March 19, 2025 10 A.M.,  
Transportation and Infrastructure.

### **Better Bus Stops**

As we wait for our improved buses, we also need seats, back supports for those with spinal disabilities. And we all need shelter, protection from weather: heat, snow, rain, not just poles marked 'Bus Stop.' Expect more weather severity with climate change.

Manhattan Community Board 4 Transportation Committee did a preliminary assessment of bus stops in the district, starting with 23rd Street. A letter was sent January 13, 2025, to Ed Pincar, Dept of Transportation, and MTA President Demetrius Crichlow. No reply yet.

Chelsea has a large and growing senior population, increased 40% between 2010-20. There are also many with disabilities, and Selis Manor, with hundreds of residents who are blind or visually impaired.

The following 23rd Street sites were noted:

7th Av, north side  
8th Av, south side  
9th Av northside  
10th and 11th Aves, both sides  
12th Av north side  
Selis Manor, shelter

Thank you,

Miriam Fisher

[REDACTED]  
NY NY 10011  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



Dear City Council,

I am writing to express my unwavering support for the continuation and expansion of the Open Streets program. This initiative has proven to be an invaluable asset to our community, significantly enhancing the quality of life for residents across the city.

The Open Streets program has been transformative for the quality of life and safety of the residents in my community. Nothing makes me happier than walking down my local open street and seeing children riding bikes, parents relaxed about their children safely playing in the streets, and neighbors encountering each other on the street. Having a safe space for kids to play outside, beyond the parks, is important. This would not exist if not for the Open Streets program.

From an accessibility standpoint, the streets are imperative for people who are differently abled to be able to move outside without worrying about narrow sidewalks. Seeing neighbors with wheelchairs be able to enjoy a stroll in the fresh air is vital to integrating our neighborhoods across ability, and allows us to build better, more supportive communities.

There is a loneliness epidemic in this country; New York City has a unique ability to showcase to the country what true community can look like and fight the loneliness epidemic locally. The Open Streets are vital to building community within our neighborhoods, which increases public safety in our city. Continuing to fund and expand these third spaces for residents to connect, play outside, and build long lasting relationships is essential to the well-being of New Yorkers across boroughs, and can set a beautiful example for cities across the country.

The Open Streets program is not merely a temporary measure; it is an essential investment in the long-term physical and economic health of our city and its residents. I urge the City Council to recognize the Open Streets program's profound positive impact and to commit to continued funding and expansion.

Thank you,  
Paola Sanchez

Dear Council Member Brooks-Powers,

NYC DOT's Open Streets program has transformed neighborhoods, creating public space, improving safety, and supporting local businesses. However, these benefits rely on volunteer organizers stretching very small reimbursement grants and putting in hundreds of hours of unpaid labor. The decreases in funding that have occurred over the years jeopardize the continuity and future of the program — funding pressure is already leading to downsizing and the disappearance of Open Streets around the city.

As a volunteer with the Vanderbilt Avenue Open Streets program in Prospect Heights, I've witnessed firsthand how funding challenges have severely impacted our operations. Despite strong community support and demonstrated benefits to local businesses and residents, we've been forced to drastically reduce our hours. What was once a vibrant community space available multiple days a week has been scaled back significantly. Yet even with these reductions, we continue to rely on an unsustainable level of volunteer labor to maintain the program.

Our volunteer team dedicates countless hours to setting up barriers, coordinating with local businesses, organizing community events, and ensuring safety for all participants. This level of commitment, while admirable, cannot be sustained indefinitely without adequate financial support. Many of our volunteers juggle full-time jobs and family responsibilities alongside their Open Streets commitments, leading to burnout and turnover.

Other cities invest far more — Montreal, for example, dedicates \$12 million to pedestrianized streets over 3 years, with up to \$700,000 available per program. A similar investment in NYC would yield incredible benefits, boosting local economies, reducing traffic injuries, improving air quality, and expanding community programs.

With proper funding, not only could established Open Streets like Vanderbilt Avenue thrive rather than merely survive, but the program could also extend to communities that currently lack the volunteer network and

resources to implement their own Open Streets. Many neighborhoods across our city would benefit greatly from these pedestrian-friendly spaces but simply don't have the organizational capacity or volunteer base to make it happen without significant municipal support.

Consistent, reliable funding would allow us to hire staff, invest in better equipment, expand programming, and ensure the long-term sustainability of these valuable community assets. It would also provide the stability needed for proper planning and growth, rather than the constant uncertainty that currently plagues many Open Streets programs.

We must fully fund Open Streets by allocating \$48 million over the next three years to strengthen city support and directly fund the organizations running these programs. This investment would demonstrate NYC's commitment to creating livable, walkable neighborhoods for all residents, not just those in communities with exceptional volunteer capacity.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Phillip Godzin

Dear Council Member Brooks-Powers,

NYC DOT's Open Streets program has transformed neighborhoods, creating public space, improving safety, and supporting local businesses. As a native New Yorker, it has provided immense benefits to my immediate and citywide community, and saved our lives during COVID. However, these benefits rely on volunteer organizers stretching very small reimbursement grants and putting in hundreds of hours of unpaid labor. The decreases in funding that have occurred over the years jeopardize the continuity and future of the program — funding pressure is already leading to downsizing and the disappearance of Open Streets around the city.

Other cities invest far more — Montreal, for example, dedicates \$12 million to pedestrianized streets over 3 years, with up to \$700,000 available per program. A similar investment in NYC would yield incredible benefits, boosting local economies, reducing traffic injuries, improving air quality, and expanding community programs.

We must fully fund Open Streets by allocating \$48 million over the next three years to strengthen city support and directly fund the organizations running these programs.  
Thank you.

Thank you,

Rachel Bonsignore

[REDACTED]

Brooklyn, NY 11238



TLC Driver Advocate  
Raul Rivera

March 19, 2025  
NYC Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Today I testify before you to express my outrage and deep disappointment at the abject failure of Chair Brooks-Powers of the Transportation Committee. Under her leadership, our city's transportation infrastructure has continued to deteriorate, and the needs of hardworking New Yorkers have been consistently ignored.

But Chair Brooks-Powers' failure is not an isolated incident. It is symptomatic of a broader systemic problem that permeates the highest levels of our city's government. That's why I'm calling for the resignation of TLC Commissioner David Do and DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez.

Commissioner Do's tenure at the TLC has been marked by a lack of transparency, inadequate oversight, and a failure to protect the rights of hardworking TLC drivers. His inability to address the scourge of illegal pirate vehicles has put countless lives at risk and undermined the livelihoods of law-abiding drivers.

Commissioner Rodriguez's leadership at the DOT has been equally disastrous. His failure to maintain our city's roads, his inability to address e-bikes, and his anti-car policies including monetizing our City for non profits like Transportation Alternative and Open Plans, big tech companies like Uber, Lyft, Getaround, Zipcar, and Citibike.

Mr. Rodriguez lack of vision for a sustainable transportation future have made our city's streets more dangerous, more congested, and less livable.

We deserve better. We deserve leaders who will prioritize our safety, our livelihoods, and our well-being. That's why I'm calling for the resignation of Commissioners Do and Rodriguez, and for Chair Brooks-Powers to step down as Chair of the Transportation Committee.

It's time for a change. It's time for leadership that will put the needs of New Yorkers first. We can do better, and we must do better.

Thank you.



Dear Council Member Brooks-Powers,

NYC DOT's Open Streets program has transformed neighborhoods—creating public space, improving safety, and supporting local businesses. However, these benefits depend on volunteer organizers who stretch small reimbursement grants while dedicating hundreds of unpaid hours. With funding decreasing over the years, the program's future is at risk, leading to downsizing and the disappearance of Open Streets across the city.

Other cities invest significantly more. Montreal, for example, is dedicating \$12 million over three years to pedestrianized streets, with up to \$700,000 available per program. A similar investment in NYC would yield incredible benefits—boosting local economies, reducing traffic injuries, improving air quality, and expanding community programs.

To ensure the success and sustainability of Open Streets, we must fully fund the program by allocating \$48 million over the next three years. Strengthening city support and directly funding the organizations running these programs will allow Open Streets to thrive.

On a personal note, Open Streets has shaped my life in ways I never expected. My first date with my boyfriend was spent walking down Vanderbilt Ave's Open Street, starting at Van Leeuwen and ending in the park. Our first kiss was on Bergen and Vanderbilt. Open Streets don't just create safer, more vibrant neighborhoods—they create space for memories, connections, and love.

Give more New Yorkers the chance to fall in love—with their city, their neighborhoods, and each other. Fund Open Streets for all!

Thank you.

Rebecca Gladstone

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

The rise of electric bikes and electric scooters in particular highlights the need for infrastructure that supports these new modes of transportation. These vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative to traditional cars, but their adoption is limited by the availability of safe and secure parking options. Ensuring that secure parking is available for both traditional and electric bikes will further accelerate the shift toward cleaner, greener transportation in our city.

In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Ricky Chiang

To whom it may concern,

My name is Roger Cost and I am a resident of Jackson Heights, Queens. Thank you for holding this hearing, Chair Brooks Powers, and thank you, CM Won for introducing Int. 1138.

I am testifying today in support of CM Won's bill Int. 1138. Universal Daylighting is a street design intervention whereby visual obstructions closest to intersections are removed to improve visibility for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. In the context of street safety, this design makes pedestrians at crosswalks more visible to drivers, reducing the chance of collisions at intersections. Over half of crashes in New York City occur at intersections, including the vast majority that injure or kill pedestrians. According to DOT 51% of all traffic fatalities and 68% of all traffic injuries occur at intersections. The DOT recommends curb extensions (also known as neckdowns) as a key measure to enhance visibility at intersections.

Right now, New York State Law 1202 prohibits vehicles from parking within 20 feet of a crosswalk or intersection, but exempts New York City, which only prohibits parking directly within a crosswalk or intersection. In other words, the lives of City residents like me and my family are considered less important than 4 additional free car storage spaces per block, which is an outrage. We deserve safe streets just as much as residents of the rest of the state.

Please pass Int. 1138 to make our crosswalks visible and safe for people driving, walking, and biking.

Best,

Roger Cost

Dear Council Member Brooks-Powers,

Our Open Streets program is an absolutely amazing way for communities to get together and support each other during these trying times. While individuals driving themselves from place to place separates people and weakens communities, open streets provides a way for people to get together and share public space in a joyous way. These benefits do not come for free, both for organizers of these programs who put in hundreds of hours of unpaid labor and for the city if we want to keep these opportunities going. The downsizing and disappearance of Open Streets around the city has been such a tragedy, depriving communities of connective tissue at a time when we need this most.

As other world class cities do, we must fully fund Open Streets by allocating \$48 million over the next three years. This will strengthen city support and directly fund the organizations running these programs.

Thank you,  
-Ryan

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

10:15AM Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Dear City Council,

I am writing to express my unwavering support for the continuation and expansion of the Open Streets program. This initiative has proven to be an invaluable asset to our community, significantly enhancing the quality of life for residents across the city.

The Open Streets program has achieved several benefits and there is more we can accomplish by continuing to fund the program. A major benefit I have directly experienced is **Public Health and Community Building**. The Open Street program serves as a catalyst for social interaction, bringing me and my neighbors together. This fosters a stronger sense of community. I would not have had these invaluable interactions if it were not for the Open Street. These interactions and having a sense of community is especially important as more people suffer loneliness in our society. New York City is uniquely positioned to fight the loneliness epidemic. **By continuing to fund these third spaces residents can connect, engage in recreational activities, and build lasting relationships.**

The Open Streets program is not merely a temporary measure; it is an essential investment in the long-term physical and economic health of our city. **I urge the City Council to recognize the Open Streets program's profound positive impact and to commit to continued funding and expansion.**

Thank you,

Solveig

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

The rise of electric bikes and electric scooters in particular highlights the need for infrastructure that supports these new modes of transportation. These vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative to traditional cars, but their adoption is limited by the availability of safe and secure parking options. Ensuring that secure parking is available for both traditional and electric bikes will further accelerate the shift toward cleaner, greener transportation in our city.

In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sriram Balachandran

*Dear Council Member Brooks-Powers,*

*NYC DOT's Open Streets program has transformed neighborhoods, creating public space, improving safety, and supporting local businesses. However, these benefits rely on volunteer organizers stretching very small reimbursement grants and putting in hundreds of hours of unpaid labor. The decreases in funding that have occurred over the years jeopardize the continuity and future of the program — funding pressure is already leading to downsizing and the disappearance of Open Streets around the city.*

*Other cities invest far more — Montreal, for example, dedicates \$12 million to pedestrianized streets over 3 years, with up to \$700,000 available per program. A similar investment in NYC would yield incredible benefits, boosting local economies, reducing traffic injuries, improving air quality, and expanding community programs.*

*We must fully fund Open Streets by allocating \$48 million over the next three years to strengthen city support and directly fund the organizations running these programs. Thank you.*

*-Steve Flack*

*[REDACTED]*

*Brooklyn, NY 11238*

*[REDACTED]*



To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Tehuti English, and I've lived in this city my entire life, where biking has become an integral part of my family's daily routine. Growing up, I witnessed firsthand the frustration and disappointment my dad experienced whenever his bike was stolen—a frustratingly frequent occurrence. Each time, not only did it impact his ability to commute reliably to work, but it also discouraged our family from cycling, a habit we've cherished for years.

Just last year, my dad's third bike was stolen despite being securely locked outside a busy area. Each loss brought with it financial stress, inconvenience, and a sense of violation, as bikes aren't just possessions; they're essential tools for mobility and independence.

Secure bike parking facilities could have easily prevented these incidents. Investing in protected bike infrastructure would mean peace of mind for riders like my dad, myself, and countless other families who rely on bikes for commuting, recreation, and daily errands. It's not just about convenience; it's about creating safer communities and encouraging sustainable modes of transportation.

I urge the city to fully fund secure bike parking infrastructure. It's an investment in our community's safety, health, and well-being.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tehuti English

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

10:15AM Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Dear City Council,

I am writing to express my unwavering support for the continuation and expansion of the Open Streets program. This initiative has proven to be an invaluable asset to our community, significantly enhancing the quality of life for residents across the city.

The Open Streets program has achieved several benefits and there is more we can accomplish by continuing to fund the program. A major benefit I have directly experienced is **Public Health and Community Building**. The Open Street program serves as a catalyst for social interaction, bringing me and my neighbors together. This fosters a stronger sense of community. I would not have had these invaluable interactions if it were not for the Open Street. These interactions and having a sense of community is especially important as more people suffer loneliness in our society. New York City is uniquely positioned to fight the loneliness epidemic. **By continuing to fund these third spaces residents can connect, engage in recreational activities, and build lasting relationships.**

The Open Streets program is not merely a temporary measure; it is an essential investment in the long-term physical and economic health of our city. **I urge the City Council to recognize the Open Streets program's profound positive impact and to commit to continued funding and expansion.**

Thank you,

Tierney

City Council Members,

My name is Vivian Korich, and I am a resident of Downtown Brooklyn. I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation and expansion of secure bike marking and parking infrastructure across New York City.

I am not myself a cyclist, but I recognize the importance of fostering biking as an alternative mode of transportation that helps to cultivate a more sustainable city. Key to this is enabling adoption of critical infrastructure, such as secure bike parking, whether in the form of dedicated racks, lockers, or bike parking hubs. This provides a safe and convenient place to store bicycles, making cycling a more practical and appealing choice for daily commutes, errands, and the many workers in our city who rely on bikes for their livelihood.

Additionally, by encouraging cycling, secure bike parking contributes to reducing traffic congestion and air pollution, aligning with the city's sustainability goals.

Ultimately, I believe that secure bike marking and parking are integral to the advancement of cycling as a viable and reliable mode of transportation in NYC. I urge the City Council to prioritize investments in secure bike marking programs and the development of comprehensive bike parking infrastructure across all boroughs. This investment will not only benefit cyclists but also contribute to a healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable transportation system for all New Yorkers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Vivian Korich

**From:** [William Meehan](#)  
**To:** [Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fund Open Streets  
**Date:** Friday, March 21, 2025 4:25:31 PM

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To the NYC Council:

I am a Prospect Heights resident who has enjoyed the Vanderbilt Avenue Open Street for years. I often visit and enjoy other Open Streets throughout the city, such as Columbus Avenue, Fifth Avenue, and Orchard Street. I also look forward to enjoying the Franklin Avenue Open Street this summer. The hours for these programs are limited mainly by staff and maintenance costs, but they are such a great addition to the neighborhood, so the investment is well worth it.

I support fully funding the Open Streets program and am asking the City to commit at least \$20 million per year to protect and expand Open Streets. This is pennies compared to the overall NYC budget, so I hope you will include it.

William Meehan

Dear City Council,

[illegible]

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Thank you,

Yefim Vedernikoff

To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

The rise of electric bikes and electric scooters in particular highlights the need for infrastructure that supports these new modes of transportation. These vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative to traditional cars, but their adoption is limited by the availability of safe and secure parking options. Ensuring that secure parking is available for both traditional and electric bikes will further accelerate the shift toward cleaner, greener transportation in our city.

In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Zachary Alfaro



Richard Previte

[REDACTED]

New York, NY 10009

Dear New York City,

I wanted to write this morning to express my support for your Open Streets program. I live at [REDACTED], around the corner from the Avenue B Open Street, so that's the one I'm most familiar with. I've been a member for the Avenue B street team for several years now, we meet for a beer once per month, but I used to be the guy who removed the barriers from Avenue B when the Street Teams were responsible for doing that, I think I've done that by myself 62 times so far. Being able to walk safely in the street is a very important thing for many in my community, thank you for your continues support,

Richard Previte

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]


March 18, 2025

Dear Council Members,

I am submitting my testimony for increased support (and expansion) for Open Streets.

As both a volunteer, a resident of Open Streets (Ave B) and have visited several Open Streets, I've seen firsthand how these spaces transform neighborhoods via creating more space to bring people together, support local businesses, and make streets more vibrant and accessible. From organizing events to managing day-to-day operations, I know the dedication it takes to keep these local programs running. But without adequate city support, these community-driven efforts are at risk. The lack of resources has already forced cutbacks, limiting the potential of what Open Streets can offer. Investing in these programs isn't just about keeping streets open—it's about sustaining the sense of community and connection that they create. I've experienced it firsthand, and I know how important it is to ensure these spaces continue to thrive.

Stuart Leung

 East 11th st.

## Open Streets Improved Avenue B Safety!

I live near Avenue B in Manhattan's East Village neighborhood. Having Avenue B as an Open Street since Covid, even in its current diminished form, had made a real difference to pedestrian and bike safety. I am on Avenue B every day and car traffic is much lower and MUCH SLOWER since the Open Street came into being. It wasn't overnight but there seems to be a real and ongoing effect of taming cars. There are at least three public school buildings (some housing several schools) along the Avenue B corridor so this directly affects our children.

Please keep Open Streets funding to preserve what has been accomplished.

My building does not allow e-bikes in the building so secure on street parking for that would be very desirable.

Many buildings do not allow e-bikes in the building so secure on street parking is the only way someone could own one.

Fortunately, my building provides secure bike storage in the basement. Many buildings do not have any on premises bike storage resulting in a decision to purchase a bike or keep it in one's small apartment where it takes up valuable space and adds to crowding on the stairs or in an elevator.

Many people likely keep e-bikes in their building. This can be risky. It would be safer for them and people living in their building if their e-bikes were stored on the street.

Most new bicycles cost in excess of \$500. They require secure storage.

There are many reasons to have secure on street bike parking.

**Please dedicate funds!!!!** During Covid - the one bright spot of our lives in our neighborhood, was the Open Streets program on Avenue B in Manhattan with LOSCC. It supported engagement and interaction among diverse neighbors, and a higher quality of life for all. On Avenue B in Manhattan, as on Open Streets/in neighborhoods around the city, it was AMAZING & powerful to have space for people in the community, to feel safe from cars, to feel free, to gather and to connect. We have seen a gradual reduction in support and resources since, and please hear this voice (speaking for many who don't know to submit testimony): we need budget for the Open Streets program. You cannot expect volunteers and strapped hyper local nonprofits to do it all. We need city funds, both for permanent "hard" Infrastructure, and for staffing and programming. This relatively small amount of funds/investment, means so much! From those in the gentrified apartments, to the NYCHA homes, who actually connect and engage on Open Streets, as there isn't the opportunity to do elsewhere. Please support. Thank you!!!

**To the Members of the Committee**

**Subject: Expanding Secure Bike Parking Across the City**

As a New Yorker, I'm constantly reminded of how many ways we move through this city—subways, buses, ferries, bikes, and cars. We're a city of motion. But I want to highlight something that's becoming more and more urgent: the need for secure bike parking throughout the five boroughs.

More and more New Yorkers are choosing to bike as their main way of getting around. It's fast, affordable, good for your health, and better for the environment. But one thing holds a lot of people back: the fear of having their bike stolen. If we want to support this growing mode of transportation, we need to make sure people can ride without constantly worrying about where they'll safely lock up their bike.

I urge the city to invest in more secure bike parking—especially in commercial areas, near transit hubs, and in neighborhoods where biking is on the rise. It's a relatively small investment that could have a big impact.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

The Open Streets program was an absolute godsend during COVID. I loved being able to spend time outside in my community in a lower risk situation. Today, I get to spend time with my neighbors and make new friends on the Ave B open street when we have programming – these are some of my favorite people in my neighborhood. If we don't fund this program, we're taking away yet another free space to spend time with our neighbors, making everyone in the city a little bit lonelier and a little less likely to stay in the city. We should be fighting for a safer, more welcoming city – not one that forces families to leave or one that prioritizes a transient lifestyle over a more community-oriented one.



To the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of secure bike parking in New York City. As a member of this community, I believe that increasing access to safe, reliable, and secure bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and supporting the city's growing number of cyclists, including those using electric bikes and electric scooters.

New York City has made great strides in improving bike infrastructure, but securing bikes remains a critical barrier for many cyclists. Without secure parking, bikes are left vulnerable to theft and vandalism, dissuading many people from choosing biking as a daily mode of transportation. Secure bike parking provides peace of mind and encourages more residents to use bicycles and electric vehicles, reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and fostering healthier lifestyles.

The rise of electric bikes and electric scooters in particular highlights the need for infrastructure that supports these new modes of transportation. These vehicles offer a more sustainable alternative to traditional cars, but their adoption is limited by the availability of safe and secure parking options. Ensuring that secure parking is available for both traditional and electric bikes will further accelerate the shift toward cleaner, greener transportation in our city.

In addition to the environmental and health benefits, investing in secure bike parking solutions will further align with the city's commitment to creating safer streets and improving public transportation networks. Secure bike parking supports the expansion of bike-sharing programs, the growth of micromobility, and encourages a more sustainable future for New York City.

I urge the committee to move the NYC RFP forward for 500 secure bike parking stations across the city. It is a critical step toward building a more resilient and sustainable transportation network that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Zeyi Lin

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/19/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeffrey A. Mandilics

Address: 30-30 Thompson Ave, LIC

I represent: NYC DDC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/19/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rachel Laiserin

Address: 30-30 Thompson Ave

I represent: DDC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/19/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maggie Austin

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC DDC

Address: 30-30 Thompson Avenue

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: NICOLE GARCIA

Address: 120-55 QUEENS Blvd.

I represent: NYC DOT

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/19/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jackson Chabot

Address: 377 Broadway

I represent: Open Plans

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/19/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Brown

Address: [REDACTED] RYN 436

I represent: ROSE OF Sharon Enterprises

Address: 43 Madison Street 3F

BROOKLYN NY 11238

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/19/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leelre Davol

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Street Lab

Address: 62 Degraw St

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Date: 3/19/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Darnell Seal-McCrorey

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Families For Safe Streets

Address: 111 John Street New York NY

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Date: 3/19/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Raul Rivers

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ben Furnas, Transportation Alternatives

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Transportation Alternatives

Address: 111 John Street

**THE COUNCIL  
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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Charles Guthrie

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn, NY

I represent: Self, 3rd St Block Assn.

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn, NY

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Luis CORTES

Address: 365 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY 11211

I represent: Worker's Justice Project

Address: 365 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY 11211

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mamadou Cello Balde

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Workers justice project

Address: 365 Broadway

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: William Medina

Address: 365 Broadway

I represent: Workers Justice Project

Address: 365 Broadway

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Date: 3/19/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DEMETRIUS CRICCAW

Address: [REDACTED] Huntington

I represent: MTA NYCT

Address: 2 BROADWAY, NY, NY

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Date: 3/19/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jaibala Patel

Address: 2 Broadway

I represent: HTA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: 3-19-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOHN MCCARTHY

Address: 2 BROADWAY

I represent: MTA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: 3-19-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shanifah Rileara

Address: 2 Broadway

I represent: MTA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: 3/19/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amanda Berman

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Center for Justice Innovation

Address: 520 8th Ave NY, NY

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Date: 3/19/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sally Burns

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Union Square partnership

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆