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COMMISSIONER
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**HEARING BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEES ON FINANCE AND TRANSPORTATION
MAY 29, 2012**

Good morning Chairman Recchia, Chairman Vacca, and members of the Finance and Transportation Committees. I am Janette Sadik-Khan, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT). With me today are Lori Ardito, First Deputy Commissioner, and Joseph Jarrin, Deputy Commissioner for Finance, Contracting and Program Management. Thank you for inviting us to testify on DOT's executive budget for FY'13.

In March, I provided the Transportation Committee with a comprehensive update on the department's continued effort to make New York City's streets safer and bring our vital transportation infrastructure into a state of good repair. DOT pursues these goals through a variety of programs and initiatives—from traffic calming projects to capital investment in bridges and roadways—and we are pleased by the results we have seen throughout the five boroughs. Today our roads are in better condition than they were five years ago; only two of our bridges are rated poor and both are being rehabilitated; and last year traffic fatalities were at the lowest level in history. These achievements speak volumes about the hard work and dedication of DOT's employees, as well as the department's ability to deliver on its promises despite the challenges posed by fiscal uncertainty and a struggling national economy.

DOT's capital plan for FY'12 through FY'21 totals \$7.6 billion, including \$1.7 billion in FY'13 alone. Our robust capital program continues to strengthen the city's transportation network and ensure the state of good repair of our infrastructure. While we have invested heavily in such improvements over the past five years, continued funding of reconstruction projects is essential, especially for bridges in most need of repair. To that end, we are making great progress with a \$1 billion program to rehabilitate seven bridges along the Belt Parkway, and \$430.1 million of that will be committed over the next year. Construction is already 50%

complete for the bridges over Rockaway Parkway, Fresh Creek, and Paerdegat Basin, and we expect that this first set of projects will be completed in 2014.

In the coming fiscal year we will commence the next group of projects, including the \$136.5 million replacement of the bridge over Gerritsen Inlet. We will also replace the Mill Basin Bridge at an estimated cost of \$219.5 million. The new bridge will be a fixed structure with a 60-foot clearance, eliminating the need to open or close it in order to accommodate tall vessels. All of these projects involve the complete replacement of existing structures and will improve traffic alignments and bring this section of the Belt Parkway in line with current design standards. Taken together, the massive rehabilitation program will enhance safety, reduce congestion, and improve air quality along the Belt Parkway—and will serve New Yorkers for generations to come.

The FY'13 capital budget also includes \$30.4 million for the Select Bus Service (SBS) program to improve bus speeds and reliability of two of the most traveled bus lines in the city. On 34th Street, which serves 34,000 riders a day, we will fund \$8 million of capital enhancements along the existing 34th Street SBS route, supplementing an additional \$15 million in expense monies for this vital transit corridor. On First and Second Avenues, which serves 55,000 riders a day, we have begun installing bus bulbs for the M15 SBS to enhance pedestrian safety and reduce crowding at bus stops. In addition, we look forward to adding a new SBS route on Nostrand and Rogers Avenues in Brooklyn. This ambitious project will not only enhance bus service for over 44,000 daily riders, it will include necessary roadway reconstruction and resurfacing work as well.

The department's plans for FY'13 also include notable street reconstruction projects throughout the city, including the \$41.3 million reconstruction of Times Square. I am pleased to announce that DOT has secured a \$9.8 million federal grant to help complete the funding needed for this important project. The roadways in Times Square, which serve tens of thousands of pedestrians and motorists each day, have not been structurally repaired in decades. DOT will bring the roadway, sidewalk, and utility infrastructure of the Crossroads of the World into a state of good repair, while also enhancing pedestrian safety and creating a balanced space for all street users. Upon the project's completion, Times Square will

feature a world-class plaza with ample seating, a new roadway surface, and underground infrastructure able to accommodate its signature events.

Other critical street infrastructure projects in FY'13 include the \$20.3 million reconstruction of the Grand Concourse service roads from East 166th Street to East 171st Street to reduce speeding, widen medians, and provide other mobility enhancements to improve safety and quality of life for Bronx residents. In addition, we will begin the \$14.5 million reconstruction of three intersections in Staten Island: Victory Boulevard at Clove Road, Victory Boulevard at Manor Road, and Forest Avenue at South Avenue. These improvement projects will provide much needed congestion relief to motorists who use these intersections. We will also implement a \$42.3 million improvement project of Broadway from Ann to Rector Streets in Manhattan. These planned capital improvements for bridges and streets in FY'13 will add substantially to the \$5 billion in investments made over the last five years to the city's transportation infrastructure.

Let me now turn to DOT's FY'13 expense budget, which totals \$710.9 million and is \$25.5 million more than the January Plan. The increase can be attributed to several adjustments, including a baseline of \$5.3 million for Staten Island Ferry security contracts as required by United States Coast Guard maritime security levels. It also contains \$21.6 million in federal and state funds for the second phase of the 34th Street SBS project, bus lane markings, and bridge inspection contracts. In addition, we expect our operating budget to increase further throughout the course of the fiscal year to include federal, state and private grants that support a myriad of DOT programs. With these grants, we anticipate that DOT's fiscal year 2013 expense budget will grow by another \$135 million to the level currently budgeted in fiscal year 2012 (\$845.4 million).

Some of the most important expense program initiatives are our safety programs, including the Safe Routes to Schools program and the installation of pedestrian countdown signals throughout the city. Another initiative that we are excited about is our Neighborhood Slow Zone program, which I highlighted during my testimony in March. The program aims to calm traffic and make residential streets even safer and more welcoming for local residents by reducing the speed limit to 20 miles per hour and installing speed bumps, among other enhancements. In November, we launched an application process to allow communities to

request this treatment and the response was overwhelming. We received over 90 applications from neighborhoods in all five boroughs, and we will soon announce the selected groups and our plans to install slow zones starting this year and continuing through next year.

Another key component of our expense program is the street improvement projects that transform intersections and corridors in all five boroughs. Once again, DOT has an ambitious agenda of projects this year and work is already underway to help calm traffic, enhance safety and make our streets friendlier for pedestrians. For example, on Classon Avenue in Brooklyn we are resurfacing the roadway and reducing the number of travel lanes where feasible in order to discourage speeding and improve traffic flow approaching Atlantic Avenue. In the Bronx, we have started work on Louis Nine Boulevard in order to calm traffic, improve pedestrian safety, and increase the public space by expanding an existing traffic triangle. We are also constructing five landscaped pedestrian safety islands at key locations along Hillside Avenue in Queens, which will help reduce speeding and create safer pedestrian crossings over a 1.5 mile stretch of this high crash corridor. And to improve traffic flow on Staten Island, we recently installed new left turn signals at several intersections and we will continue to look for additional opportunities. These are just a few examples of projects that are being implemented throughout the city in order to make our streets safer and reduce speeds and congestion.

In addition to our traffic safety projects, DOT continues to improve the condition of our roadways. Pothole complaint numbers today are far fewer than they were at this time last year: this past Friday the number of pending 311 requests related to potholes was 108, compared to 4,096 on the same date in 2011. In fact, the city's roads are in better condition than they have been in five years, and the resurfacing work being performed by DOT's roadway crews in all five boroughs will help to increase street ratings even further.

Another notable expense funded project for FY'13 is our ground-breaking cost and energy savings light-emitting diode (LED) light program. As announced last week with Speaker Quinn and Council Member Lappin, work has begun to replace all metal halide fixtures in Central Park, which is expected to achieve an energy savings of up to 62%. DOT will also

install LEDs along Eastern Parkway and the FDR Drive, along underpasses in Manhattan, and on all of our East River Bridges. The LED program is expected to achieve \$300,000 in annual energy and maintenance savings. DOT is also currently looking at a prototype of an LED for Citylights so that we may one day bring the same energy and cost savings to all city streets.

While we make progress on these important capital and expense funded projects, we continue to keep a close eye on the budget situation in Washington. Federal funding remains a critical and growing part of our program, and I would like to thank Chairman Vacca for his advocacy efforts on the city's behalf and the City Council for passing a resolution supporting public transportation in the federal bill. Our Congressional delegation steadfastly opposed the passage of the House bill that would have slashed public transportation funding. That resolve is now being tested in the Conference Committee in Congress, where the House and Senate are debating many of these same issues again. The overall prospect for a federal bill in the near future is murky. The Senate is standing behind its bipartisan bill while the House was never able to pass a full bill on the floor. Instead, the House passed a 90 day extension, with several amendments related to environmental issues, and is now at the negotiating table. Existing law runs out at the end of June, so we expect some type of action before then.

While we wait for the overall federal bill to pass, we continue to aggressively pursue existing funding opportunities. And we have scored notable successes in this arena, obtaining federal funding for projects such as Nostrand Avenue SBS, Fordham Plaza, Times Square, and various improvements to Staten Island Ferry facilities. In addition, the Department received federal funding for the new City Bench program, an aggressive initiative to expand public seating in all five boroughs. Over the next three years we will install 1,500 new benches on sidewalks where there are few or no places to sit, especially at bus stops, in commercial districts, or in areas with a high concentration of seniors and persons with impaired mobility. The first batches of the new City Bench are being installed, providing a useful addition to New York's streetscape, particularly for our older residents.

Finally, as Mayor Bloomberg announced earlier this month, installation of the city's brand new bike share program—called Citi Bike—will start in July, giving New Yorkers access to

an affordable 24/7 transportation option. By next year, the bike share network will feature 600 stations and 10,000 bikes, allowing residents to pick up a bike close to home or work, ride, and then return it to any of the stations located throughout the city. Notably, this program will run at no expense to the city's taxpayers, and we are optimistic that it will prove very popular.

Before I conclude my testimony, I would like to thank the City Council for its partnership on a number of important initiatives. I am pleased to announce that today we are adding a parking regulations layer to DOTMap, making it easy for New Yorkers to check the location of parking signs throughout the five boroughs. This map fulfills a requirement of Local Law 32 of 2011, and I would like to thank Council Member Garodnick for working closely with us on that legislation. We were also happy to support Intro 784, which the Council passed earlier this month, and would clarify the transferability of muni-meter receipts and make on-street parking easier for New York City's motorists. Also, thanks to support from Chairman Vacca, we will be partnering with local Council Members to fund and host bicycle helmet giveaway events throughout the city. We are also grateful for the Reso A funding contributed by Council Members toward important safety and reconstruction projects as part of the capital budget. By working together on these and other issues, we have been able to make real improvements to the city's transportation network, and we look forward to continuing this partnership moving forward.

Thank you again for inviting us to discuss DOT's executive budget, and we are happy to answer any questions you may have.

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