

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE

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November 13, 2025  
Start: 10:43 a.m.  
Recess: 12:45 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - 8TH FLOOR - HEARING  
ROOM 2

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joann Ariola  
Amanda Farías  
Farrah N. Louis  
Mercedes Narcisse

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Kevin C. Riley

A P P E A R A N C E S

Demetrius Crichlow, President of New York City Transit

John McCarthy, Chief of Policy and External Relations of New York City Transit

Shanifah Rieara, Chief Customer Officer of New York City Transit

Diniece Mendez, Assistant Commissioner for Transit Development at New York City Department of Transportation

Rick Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs at New York City Department of Transportation

Jean Ryan, President of Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York

Brian Fritsch, Associate Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Katelyn Villatoro, York City Policy Fellow at the New York League of Conservation Voters

Charlton D'Souza, President and Founder of Passengers United

Jose DeJesus, General Recording Secretary for Local 106 and TWU New York State Conference Chair

1 COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 3

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone  
3 check for the Committee on Transportation and  
4 Infrastructure located in HR2 recorded on November  
5 13, 2025, by Pat Kurzyna. Check, check.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Testing, testing.  
7 Testing, testing. This is a microphone test for the  
8 Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on  
9 Hearing Room 2 on November 13, 2025, by Pat Kurzyna.  
10 Test, test.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning, and  
12 welcome to today's New York City Council hearing on  
13 the Committee of Transportation and Infrastructure.

14 At this time during today's hearing, no  
15 one may approach the dais.

16 If you'd like to testify, please see one  
17 of the Sergeant-at-Arms to fill out a testimony slip.

18 Please silence all electronic devices you  
19 may have.

20 Chair, you may begin.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: [GAVEL] Good  
22 morning and welcome to today's hearing of the New  
23 York City Council's Committee on Transportation and  
24 Infrastructure. I am Council Member Sylvina Brooks-  
25 Powers, Chair to the Committee.

2 I want to thank everyone who has joined  
3 us today as we examine one of the most essential  
4 components of our transportation network, the City's  
5 bus system. Buses are the second largest mode of  
6 transportation by ridership in the city, serving over  
7 1 million passengers daily. For many New Yorkers,  
8 particularly those who live in outer borough areas  
9 that lack subway access, buses serve as a primary  
10 mode of transit. They connect New Yorkers to jobs,  
11 schools, health care, child care, houses of worship,  
12 family, and opportunity. However, despite its  
13 critical importance, the City's bus system has and  
14 continues to experience many challenges from low  
15 ridership and the ongoing fiscal recovery from the  
16 pandemic to slow bus speeds, unreliable service, and  
17 other performance issues. Today's oversight hearing,  
18 New York City's bus system, network operations,  
19 equity, and redesign comes at a pivotal moment. The  
20 MTA, in partnership with DOT, is continuing the  
21 process of redesigning the City's bus networks, which  
22 has the potential to change our bus system in ways we  
23 have not seen in generations. This bus network  
24 redesign process is well underway with Staten  
25 Island's Express Link launched in 2018 and the Bronx

2 local network launched in 2022. The Queen's redesign,  
3 which was implemented in two phases this July and  
4 August, is the most recently finalized plan.

5 Brooklyn's redesign is next in line, followed by  
6 Manhattan's network, the Bronx's Express network, and  
7 Staten Island's local network. These redesigns offer  
8 an opportunity for streamlined routes and faster  
9 trips and a modernized bus system as well as a  
10 modernized bus system as a whole.

11           However, there are also potential  
12 negative consequences, such as relocated bus stops  
13 and increased transfers to riders that must also be  
14 considered and addressed. The Committee hopes to hear  
15 about how the MTA and DOT are navigating these issues  
16 and looks forward to hearing more about the status of  
17 each of the redesigned projects. In addition to the  
18 ongoing redesigns, the Committee is also interested  
19 in discussing other current efforts by the MTA and  
20 DOT to improve bus service and increase ridership,  
21 including through the Select Bus Service and bus  
22 priority projects. We also would like to hear about  
23 DOT's ongoing implementation of the Streets Plan,  
24 which includes several mandates to improve the City's  
25 bus system. Congestion pricing, which was finally

2 implemented earlier this year, is also very relevant  
3 to the future of the City's bus system. While  
4 congestion pricing already seems to be having  
5 positive impacts on bus ridership and performance in  
6 Manhattan, its effects are less clear in outer  
7 borough neighborhoods and transit deserts. We would  
8 like to hear more from the MTA and DOT regarding  
9 congestion pricing and how it is measuring its impact  
10 on bus service outside Manhattan.

11 We will also explore the affordability  
12 challenges facing bus riders in New York. Bus fares  
13 will rise again in January and transportation costs  
14 remain the second highest household expense in the  
15 metro region. This reality underscores why fare  
16 equity programs, including the expansion of the Fair  
17 Fares program, are more important than ever.

18 With these broader themes in mind,  
19 today's hearing will consider a package of  
20 legislation that addresses enforcement, fairness,  
21 transparency, public health, equitable mobility, and  
22 the everyday challenges riders face across the five  
23 boroughs. These include Intro. 339 by Council Member  
24 Narcisse in relation to prohibiting the issuance of  
25 multiple bus lane violation tickets for the same

2 infraction within a one-hour period; Intro. 647,  
3 Council Member Riley, in relation to bus lane  
4 restrictions; Intro. 1345 by myself in relation to  
5 providing notice to home and business owners  
6 regarding the creation or removal of bus stops; Reso.  
7 58, also sponsored by myself, calling on the MTA to  
8 adjust schedules for distant subway terminal lines to  
9 include more peak direction rush hour trains for  
10 commuters to travel to central economic hubs; Reso.  
11 61, sponsored by myself, calling upon the MTA to  
12 remediate any transportation structure primarily  
13 elevated train lines with extremely high levels of  
14 lead; Resolution 252, sponsored by Council Member  
15 Riley, calling on the New York State Legislature to  
16 pass and the New York State Governor to sign  
17 legislation which would create unlimited transfer  
18 within the two-hour period of paying the MTA subway  
19 or bus for pay-per-ride users; Reso. 498, sponsored  
20 by Majority Leader Farías, calling on the MTA to  
21 create a program that provides New York City's first  
22 responder agencies with real-time global positioning  
23 system data for all MTA buses; Reso 735, sponsored by  
24 myself, calling on the MTA to conduct longitudinal  
25 studies on the environmental, economic, and social

2 impacts of congestion pricing throughout New York  
3 City; Reso 773, sponsored by Majority Leader Farías,  
4 calling on the New York State Legislature to pass and  
5 the Governor to sign legislation that would require  
6 the MTA to provide free Express Bus fare to New York  
7 City students who take Express Buses to and from  
8 school; Reso 964, sponsored by myself, calling on the  
9 New York State Legislature to pass and the New York  
10 State Governor to sign Senate Bill 3887A, Assembly  
11 Bill 7316A, requiring that any individual who is  
12 eligible for the Fair Fares program in New York City  
13 and any person whose income is 200 percent of the  
14 federal poverty line receive a 50 percent discount on  
15 trips using the Long Island Railroad, Power Transit  
16 Services, New York City transit subways or buses, and  
17 the Metro North Railroad. I look forward to hearing  
18 from the MTA, DOT, and the advocates.

19 Before we begin, I would like to thank my  
20 Staff, Julian Martin, my Legislative Director and  
21 Deputy Chief-of-Staff; Renee Taylor, my Chief-of-  
22 Staff, and the Committee Staff, Mark Chen, Senior  
23 Legislative Counsel; Theodore Miller, Legislative  
24 Counsel; Kevin Kotowski, Senior Policy Analyst; John  
25 Basile, Senior Policy Analyst; Nell Compton,



2 Legislative Intern; and Adrian Drapal, Principal  
3 Financial Analyst for their hard work.

4 I will now allow Council Member Narcisse  
5 to speak on her bill.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you,  
7 Chair. Good morning, Colleagues. I introduced this  
8 bill because enforcement should definitely be firm,  
9 but it must also be fair. Right now, too many New  
10 Yorkers are opening their mailboxes to find multiple  
11 tickets all from a single stretch of roadway, simply  
12 because multiple cameras captured the same continuous  
13 bus lane violation. That is not how we build trust in  
14 our enforcement system. Intro. 339 does not weaken  
15 bus lanes or compromise transit priority. It simply  
16 ensures that penalties match the offense by limiting  
17 automated cameras to one ticket per hour for the same  
18 infraction. Drivers who break the rules will still be  
19 held accountable, but they won't be financially  
20 crushed by stacked fines. I believe this is fair and  
21 commonsense protection for our drivers, many of whom  
22 are struggling to make ends meet. I respectfully ask  
23 my Colleagues to support this bill so we can keep  
24 enforcement strong while keeping it fair, especially  
25 for those that are struggling in the climate right

2 now that we're living with. And I want to say, MTA,  
3 thank you for going my way in many ways, for making  
4 sure that our community have the MTA bus come to our  
5 community and provide their OMNY bus fare things,  
6 half fare, and it's an amazing program, by the way.  
7 It's always very crowded, so thank you for your  
8 leadership and thank you for supporting our  
9 community. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, and  
11 I'd like to acknowledge that we have been joined by  
12 Council Members Louis, Majority Leader Farías,  
13 Council Member Narcisse, Council Member Ariola, and  
14 Council Member Riley.

15 Next, I will allow Council Member Riley  
16 to speak on his bills.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you, Chair  
18 Brooks-Powers, for leading this important hearing and  
19 thank you to my Colleagues, our agencies, and  
20 everyone here today committed to make our transit  
21 system work better for the people we serve.

22 In the Bronx and especially in my  
23 District, the bus isn't just transportation, it's a  
24 lifeline. Folks rely on it every day to get to work,  
25 to school, to doctor's appointments, to pick up their

2 children, to buy groceries. When buses are late,  
3 overcrowded, or confusing to navigate, it's not just  
4 an inconvenience, it disrupts someone's entire day.  
5 Too often, communities like the Northeast Bronx,  
6 communities of color, feel those challenges the  
7 hardest. We deal with longer commutes, fewer subway  
8 options, and higher costs just to get where we need  
9 to go. And that's why today's hearing is so vital, to  
10 strengthen our transportation network for all New  
11 Yorkers, both commuters and drivers alike. Along with  
12 my Colleagues, I've introduced two bills being heard  
13 today. Intro. 647 requires DOT to post clear signage  
14 and publish online the specific days and hours when  
15 bus lane restrictions are in effect. This ensures  
16 consistency, reduces confusion, and keeps both riders  
17 and drivers informed, supporting smoother enforcement  
18 and faster, more reliable services. Resolution 252  
19 calls on the State to allow unlimited transfers  
20 within two hours of paying an MTA fare, building on  
21 legislation sponsored by Senator Leroy Comrie and  
22 Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz. For working  
23 families, especially in districts like mine, where  
24 commutes often span multiple bus lines, this is about  
25 fairness and affordability. No one should have to pay

2 more simply because they are where they live or how  
3 far they have to travel to reach opportunity, or even  
4 their basic needs.

5 Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers and my  
6 Colleagues, who joined me on this effort. These are  
7 small but meaningful changes that can make daily life  
8 a little easier for the people we serve. I look  
9 forward to hearing from the agencies and the public  
10 today as we continue working to build a transit  
11 system that truly reflects the realities of New  
12 Yorkers who ride it every day. Thank you, Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,  
14 Council Member.

15 Next, we will hear from Majority Leader  
16 Farías to speak on her resolutions.

17 MAJORITY LEADER FARÍAS: Thank you, Chair  
18 Brooks-Powers, for giving me time to speak on these  
19 Resolutions before the Committee. The first on the  
20 agenda is Reso. 498, which calls on the MTA to  
21 establish a program that provides New York City's  
22 first responder agencies with real-time GPS data for  
23 all MTA buses. This Resolution addresses a critical  
24 operation gap between the MTA and our emergency  
25 response agencies. Although every MTA bus is already

2 equipped with GPS tracking, that data is not shared  
3 directly with the NYPD, FDNY, or EMS in real time. As  
4 a result, when an emergency occurs on a moving bus,  
5 first responders must rely on information relayed  
6 through the MTA bus command center. That process adds  
7 unnecessary delay in situations where minutes and  
8 sometimes just seconds can determine whether help  
9 arrives in time. The urgency of this issue became  
10 much more clear following an incident I learned about  
11 in my District. One of my constituents from  
12 Parkchester was harassed on an MTA bus and did what  
13 anyone should in a situation like this. They called  
14 9-1-1. Because it was raining and visibility was  
15 poor, he was unable to identify his location and  
16 instead gave the dispatcher the bus number. But  
17 despite that effort, the bus could not be located by  
18 dispatched officers. To my surprise, this was because  
19 the MTA does not currently make its real-time GPS  
20 data accessible to first responders. Under the MTA's  
21 existing protocol, even when a bus operator reports  
22 an emergency, that information must first pass  
23 through the MTA command center before reaching NYPD  
24 or FDNY. Every additional step adds time and risk for  
25 both riders and transit employees. Resolution 498

2 calls for the MTA to close that gap. It calls to  
3 develop a secure real-time data sharing system with  
4 the City's emergency agencies using the GPS  
5 infrastructure that already exists. Other major  
6 transit systems, including those in Chicago and DC,  
7 already employ similar coordination and the results  
8 are proven, faster response times, stronger  
9 interagency communication, and greater public  
10 confidence. When someone experiences an emergency on  
11 an MTA bus, our first responders should never be  
12 searching for information that already exists. Real-  
13 time access is a necessity for a system that moves  
14 millions of New Yorkers every day.

15           The next piece of legislation of mine on  
16 the agenda is Resolution 773. The motivation behind  
17 this Resolution comes from a simple truth that too  
18 many families know firsthand getting to school  
19 shouldn't cost a fortune. Right now, the City's  
20 Office of Pupil Transportation gives students Metro  
21 Cards for subways and local buses, but not for MTA  
22 Express Buses. And that gap makes a huge difference  
23 for people, especially in neighborhoods with limited  
24 subway access. An Express Bus costs 7 dollars a ride,  
25 that's 14 dollars a day, nearly 70 dollars a week,

2 and close to 2,700 a year for a student who takes one  
3 to and from school. Families in the Bronx, Staten  
4 Island, and parts of Queens are areas where the  
5 Express Bus is often the only reliable option our  
6 families have and are paying that price every year  
7 just so their kids can get to class. Back in 2019,  
8 the MTA did the right thing when it upgraded all  
9 student Metro Cards from half fare to full fare, but  
10 that fix didn't reach everyone. Students who depend  
11 on Express Buses were left behind and the cost gap  
12 has only grown. By 2022, more than 2,000 parents and  
13 advocates had signed an online petition calling on  
14 the MTA to address the issue. That's what this  
15 Resolution does. It calls on the MTA and the State  
16 Legislature and the Governor to provide free Express  
17 Bus fares for New York City students who rely on  
18 those routes to travel to and from school. The  
19 infrastructure already exists through OMNY and the  
20 Student Metro Card system. What's missing is the  
21 policy alignment and the will to make it equitable.  
22 This idea actually started in our office, building on  
23 work we've done around student discounts for ferries  
24 and OMNY access. Providing free buses on the Express  
25 Bus for students is a responsible practical fix. It

2 reduces cost burdens for families who are already  
3 struggling and ensures that no student's education  
4 depends on whether or not they can pay for a bus that  
5 gets them to and from school. This is what equity in  
6 transit should look like using the tools we already  
7 have to make the system work better for everyone.

8           With that, I asked the Council to support  
9 the passage of both these Resolutions as a matter of  
10 safety, efficiency, and equity. I want to thank my  
11 Colleagues who co-sponsored this Reso. with me and  
12 thanks to the Chair and the Members of the Committee  
13 for the continued leadership, partnership, and  
14 building a transit system that truly reflects the  
15 needs of New Yorkers. And last but not least, I just  
16 want to thank my constituent, Peter Raymond Hamilton,  
17 for bringing these concerns that brought Reso. 498 to  
18 light. Thank you so much.

19           CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I  
20 will now ask Committee Counsel to swear in the first  
21 panel.

22           COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our first  
23 panel will be from the Metropolitan Transportation  
24 Authority. Demetrius Crichlow, President of New York  
25 City Transit; John McCarthy, Chief of Policy and



2 External Relations, and Shanifah Rieara, Chief  
3 Customer Officer.

4 I will now administer the oath. Please  
5 raise your right hands.

6 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
7 whole truth and nothing but the truth before this  
8 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member  
9 questions?

10 ADMINISTRATION: (INAUDIBLE RESPONSE)

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may  
12 begin when ready.

13 CHIEF MCCARTHY: Good morning, and thanks  
14 for having us, Chair and Members. I'm John McCarthy,  
15 Chief of Policy and External Relations at the MTA.  
16 Just want to introduce the fellow panelists who you  
17 know. New York City Transit president Demetrius  
18 Crichlow and Chief Customer Officer Shanifah Rieara.

19 It's not lost on us that we're here a  
20 week after the most transit-focused election in  
21 years. Buses especially were top of the agenda for  
22 Mayor-Elect Mamdani, and that makes sense. They are  
23 an underrated part of our transit system. They serve  
24 1.4 million paid customers per weekday. That's up 12  
25 percent from last year. And while customer

2 satisfaction is currently the highest it's been since  
3 spring 2023, we agree with everyone that we always  
4 look for ways to improve that service. Indeed, it's  
5 been one of our top strategic priorities for the last  
6 several years and we're making a ton of progress.

7 Frequencies have been increasing on routes across the  
8 city and that's not just on buses. This is important.

9 It's also on subways and commuter railroads

10 especially. Metro North and Long Island Railroad are  
11 making so many more stops within the city and serving  
12 a lot more customers especially with CityTicket.

13 We're doing an announcement just today out in St.

14 Albans on this increase, which is it's a really

15 amazing feat. A big reason we're able to add all this

16 service while other transit systems across the

17 country are making tough cuts and that's real, they

18 are real serious cuts being made, is because of our

19 partners in Albany. Big thank you to Governor Hochul

20 and to our partners in the State Legislature

21 including Mayor-Elect Mamdani who as an Assembly

22 Member and we worked with him pushed for action to

23 assist transit with the post-COVID fiscal cliff. With

24 our finances stabilized, we're able to focus more on

25 the future. There's plenty of new rolling stock on

2 the way as part of the MTA 68.4 billion '25 to '29  
3 Capital Plan, not to mention other important upgrades  
4 that are key to our ability to run strong service.  
5 We're happy to talk about those things, so there's a  
6 lot to look forward to.

7 I'm now going to hand it over to  
8 President Crichlow.

9 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: Thanks, John. As  
10 President of New York City Transit, providing safe  
11 and reliable service for New Yorkers will always be a  
12 top priority for me. Buses are how we keep  
13 neighborhoods connected and serve as a vital lifeline  
14 for some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers. So, over  
15 the past year we've made big investments in bettering  
16 our bus network which has translated into great  
17 strides in improving service for riders. The Queens  
18 Bus Network Redesign went live this summer after six  
19 years of back and forth with the community. We held  
20 over 300 events, which many of you attended. We  
21 incorporated more 18,000 comments, both in person and  
22 online, all in the interest of creating a better  
23 faster bus network, and that was for 800,000 riders.  
24 Our almost 35-million-dollar investment, which I'll  
25 point out is annual, is already paying off. We'll be

2 releasing a six-month update in the new year, but I  
3 can tell you now that the preliminary data is  
4 promising. On the new rush routes that we introduced,  
5 when redesigning the network, we took a look at where  
6 riders were located far from transfer points and  
7 business centers. We then made strategic changes  
8 creating rush routes to get them to these connections  
9 and destinations faster. That effort has paid off.  
10 We're seeing buses moving seven percent faster on  
11 average with some rush routes experiencing even  
12 greater increases like the Q111 which is moving 15  
13 percent faster.

14           Where we need your help is with traffic  
15 management on the streets. New buses are great, but  
16 it is no good for anyone if they're constantly stuck  
17 in gridlock. Luckily, we know what we need to do, and  
18 that is to build more bus lanes and busways. Look, we  
19 all know that there have been shortcomings on this  
20 front. The City's built out just a fraction of the  
21 miles required by law. We're hopeful that the  
22 incoming Mayor will turn that around because we know  
23 bus lanes and busways work. Just look at the busway  
24 on J street in Brooklyn where we've seen speed  
25 increases by 20 percent, on 14th street in Manhattan

2 with a 30 percent speed increase, or even on Archer  
3 Avenue in Queens which is a 48 percent increase in  
4 speeds. Busways make a real difference all over the  
5 city.

6 Now, we're also committed to expanding  
7 MTA's automated camera enforcement system as well as  
8 the use of transit signal priorities so our buses can  
9 communicate with traffic signals to keep them moving.  
10 We all know that double parking is a huge issue for  
11 the city but, with ACE, when private cars block our  
12 way we can snap a photo and quickly send out fines  
13 which we know are a powerful deterrent. When we  
14 implement ACE, drivers quickly learn that the fines  
15 add up. Once in effect for some time, only nine  
16 percent of drivers receive a second fine.

17 Now I know we're here today to talk about  
18 buses but, as the head of the City's entire transit  
19 system, I'd be remiss if I didn't take the  
20 opportunity to mention our subways and paratransit  
21 services. To build a robust comeback after the  
22 pandemic, we know we needed to deliver fast,  
23 reliable, and safe service. I'm proud to say we've  
24 done just that. Crime is at a historic low, down 4.6  
25 percent since this time last year, and it's thanks to

2 law enforcement partners and the investments made by  
3 Governor Hochul like cameras in every subway car and  
4 barriers on platforms in over 100 stations. Subway  
5 on-time performance is at record high with September  
6 achieving 85 percent on-time performance which  
7 represents the best September in modern history.  
8 We've even added service on 16 subway lines and most  
9 recently increased service earlier this month on the  
10 A and the L lines, which will improve service for  
11 100,000 weekday riders.

12 Paratransit also continues to deliver for  
13 riders. Last month, paratransit hit an all-time  
14 ridership record by completing 1 million trips in  
15 October, 1 million trips in October. That's larger  
16 than some transportation networks at large, all while  
17 maintaining impressive on-time performance.

18 While I'm a proud I am proud of these  
19 achievements I know there is still work to do. We  
20 appreciate our partnership with City Council and look  
21 forward to working together in the years to come to  
22 deliver even more to New Yorkers.

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

2 CHIEF RIEARA: Thank you, President  
3 Crichlow.

4 Before we get to your questions, I want  
5 to just take a moment to talk about the work my team  
6 has been doing around customer communication. As John  
7 mentioned earlier, we are seeing a continual rise in  
8 customer satisfaction across all agencies. For buses,  
9 we've seen an 11-point jump between fall of 2024 and  
10 spring of 2025, and we're working hard to drive those  
11 numbers up even higher particularly as we transition  
12 away from MetroCard. For Fair Fares, it's another  
13 priority. We've been on record of supporting the  
14 expansion of the eligibility requirements to up to  
15 200 percent of the AMI poverty level so more New  
16 Yorkers can benefit. It does not make any sense that  
17 a person working minimum wage makes too much to  
18 qualify, and I will say that again for the people in  
19 the back. It makes no sense that New Yorkers working  
20 minimum wage makes too much to qualify. Our team is  
21 ready to help you meet that demand. We are on track  
22 to open another 15 customer service centers by the  
23 end of this year bringing the system wide total to 30  
24 percent. Eligible New Yorkers can sign up for Fair  
25 Fares 24 hours a day, seven days a week within our

2 system. Station agents can help folks apply also for  
3 the reduced fare program and answer any questions  
4 they may have about switching over to Tap and Ride.

5 It is important that our riders have the resources in  
6 their communities in their neighborhoods. No one  
7 needs to come all the way down to 3 Stone Street  
8 anymore. We meet riders where they are. I know we all  
9 share the same goals of making the transit system run  
10 better for all New Yorkers so thank you again for  
11 having us here today, and we're happy to take your  
12 questions.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
14 that and just jump right into it.

15 I'm going to start with the bus redesigns  
16 of course. How is the MTA measuring success with  
17 respect to the Queens network redesign? What metrics  
18 are you monitoring and what do you hope to see going  
19 forward?

20 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: Sure. So, any bus  
21 redesign that we do across the city is founded on the  
22 people who are going to be using it, right, so it is  
23 what does it what do those folks need, how do we  
24 simplify the routes to get them to where they need to  
25 go, how do we improve reliability when we implement



2 it, how do we reduce travel times, taking into  
3 consideration those folks who are at distant parts  
4 and are looking to travel to the central business  
5 district, implementing rush routes as we did with  
6 Queens, and then essentially improving connectivity.  
7 As an example of Queens, we saw that it was still  
8 based upon old trolley lines. So how could we provide  
9 better and improve connectivity to the subway, to the  
10 railroad across the board? We look at all of those  
11 avenues when we're creating a network, but we're also  
12 looking at the demographics of the people. When you  
13 do a Title 6 survey, you look at the low-income areas  
14 as well as the minority populations, but we went  
15 beyond that. We looked at what we consider to be the  
16 concentrated networks which looks at not just the  
17 folks who have low income, it looks at race, it looks  
18 at age, it looks at those who are dependent on  
19 transportation, don't have vehicles to drive inside  
20 their family. It takes a look at those who have a  
21 disability and are relying on bus transportation that  
22 may need to have a lift or use Access-A-Ride. So, we  
23 are looking at overall how do we improve service for  
24 our customers.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
3 that. I will say my understanding is that some riders  
4 were surprised and frustrated to learn of the service  
5 changes when the redesign was fully launched, and I  
6 wanted to say and have like riders express concerns  
7 like these regarding the service changes caused by  
8 the redesign.

9 PRESIDENT CRICHLOW: So happy to discuss.  
10 I mean we started out with talking about how many  
11 community engagements we've done. The community and  
12 the representatives who support those communities  
13 were a big part of our decisions right. So 300  
14 engagements, six years' worth of comments, tens of  
15 thousands of comments that we fielded. So, I don't  
16 think surprise should be part of anyone's vocabulary  
17 when we talk about the Queens Bus Network redesign.  
18 There should be no surprise. We were very clear on  
19 intent. We showed everything and we also  
20 communicated. We are probably the most visible  
21 organization in terms of communicating and so we made  
22 sure that this bus network redesign what all of the  
23 information was available and visible to customers.

24 CHIEF MCCARTHY: Can I just, I'm sorry,  
25 Chair, just one thing. One of the things that we're

2 really hearing about is the ability to get to our  
3 railroad stations. We have something like more than  
4 20 railroad stations in this city proper that before  
5 this crew at the MTA and for years and thanks to  
6 everybody here's help, like you guys really pushed on  
7 CityTicket and more stations being stopped at by  
8 Metro North and Long Island Railroad. What we're  
9 hearing from our customers, they're taking the bus  
10 and now those new routes are going directly to those  
11 railroad stations. They're making use of it. We see  
12 CityTicket, it's up 11 plus percent, ridership is up,  
13 and we're meeting them where they are by having more  
14 service on those stations so that's where we're  
15 really seeing satisfaction.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
17 that.

18 And will the MTA make any changes to the  
19 redesigned network in Queens in light of feedback  
20 because I know we've shared some feedback from  
21 members of the community in terms of sitings, for  
22 example, of bus stops or some that may impact like a  
23 vulnerable population like the seniors or anything  
24 like that. So, as we learn more as folks are using  
25 this redesign, will the MTA be nimble in the sense

2 that there are opportunities that there could be some  
3 shifts and changes as necessary?

4 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: I think because  
5 everyone thinks of the redesign, the redesign is the  
6 redesign. It was changing how we see, how we  
7 envision, how we supply service to customers. As part  
8 of our normal process, four times a year we evaluate  
9 service that we provide to different neighborhoods  
10 and make different changes based upon what we see  
11 needs to be changed so that's just part of our normal  
12 process. There are absolutely without question  
13 opportunities for changing what we see in our  
14 service, but that is not part of the redesign that  
15 took place. It is part of our normal process of  
16 looking at scheduled service.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
18 that.

19 And I know some of this answer but I just  
20 want to ask it on the record in terms of equity and  
21 accessibility. What outreach has been done to riders  
22 in transit deserts and outer borough areas and how  
23 are you ensuring their voices are incorporated in to  
24 what we said like making sure that if there are any  
25 necessary changes that that can happen as well?

2 CHIEF RIEARA: As President Crichlow

3 mentioned, I mean ahead of the implementation of  
4 Phase One and Phase Two, those countless 300  
5 community engagement and as we went to the  
6 implementation, I mean again, we did not stop and,  
7 you know, and give the impression that people  
8 understood the change that was coming. So, I mean  
9 there has been a robust approach and you know a sort  
10 of all-hands-on deck taking lots of MTA employees and  
11 deploying them into the field and educating our  
12 customers and informing our customers and engaging  
13 our riders of the change that was to be coming and  
14 would to be implemented. You know coupled with lots  
15 of customer comms. I mean everyone has seen the  
16 yellow and black creative assets that are running,  
17 you know, within the bus network, outside of the bus  
18 network, on social media. If you rode the bus whether  
19 you're in Queens or in another borough hearing the  
20 audio announcement so I mean we have left no stone  
21 unturned, you know, with the customer engagement and  
22 of course with our GCR team going out to whether it's  
23 the community board, non-profit organizations, senior  
24 centers and lots of other groups as well as, you

2 know, faith-based organizations letting them know of  
3 the changes and getting feedback.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
5 that. In terms of fare evasion enforcement, how is  
6 fare evasion handled on the city buses?

7 PRESIDENT CRICHLOW: So you know one of  
8 the things that we handle... (CROSS-TALK)

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: (INAUDIBLE)

10 PRESIDENT CRICHLOW: One of the things  
11 that we started tackling when I first took over as  
12 President was looking at fare evasion both on subways  
13 and buses. At the time, fare evasion was around the  
14 50 percent mark and so we implemented a couple  
15 changes to how we do what we do with our EAGLE teams  
16 to tackle fare evasion. Some were by uniformed  
17 officers, some with undercover officers, and that  
18 effort is done in in concert with NYPD. We are at  
19 several locations. However, there are 15,000 bus  
20 stops throughout the city, and it is a lot easier on  
21 the subway side to implement infrastructure changes  
22 that can impact fare evasion. But that said, even  
23 with the changes that we've made, we're seeing  
24 already a 12 percent reduction from that 50 percent  
25 to 46 percent in fare evasion based upon the efforts

2 that we've targeted in specific locations, specific  
3 areas where fare evasion has been a problem. So,  
4 look, this is a larger issue. It is a cultural issue.  
5 There are individuals who aren't able to pay for a  
6 fare which, again, we point towards Fair Fares but  
7 there are individuals who are choosing and electing  
8 not to pay the fare. They will spend the money on  
9 other areas and they will then just walk past the bus  
10 operator and so that is not something that we are  
11 supportive of. I will say that I am looking forward  
12 to the Tap and Tide when we will start doing a form  
13 of, you know, we would change the form in which we  
14 are checking for fares, and I think we're going to  
15 have even more progress made at that point.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
17 that.

18 Road dispatchers and bus command center  
19 functioning. I've heard that road dispatchers are  
20 being reassigned to the bus command center from their  
21 field posts, and I'd like to understand the reasoning  
22 behind the reassignment of these road dispatchers,  
23 like what specific analysis or operational review led  
24 to the decision to reassign road dispatchers from  
25 field posts to the BCC.

2 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: Sure. So, so I'll  
3 start by saying I have staked my career in making  
4 changes that improve service and safety for our  
5 customers and for our employees. That's what my whole  
6 career has been staked on. I've worked at three  
7 command centers, more than probably anyone else in  
8 transit. Three command centers. True New York City  
9 Transit in order to make change which the  
10 organization does not like, the organization does not  
11 like change. It's hard to make change but in order  
12 for you to improve service you have to make the hard  
13 decisions and you have to make the tough calls when  
14 it comes to moving service. The reality is having a  
15 structure that handles incident response at one  
16 location and handles service management spread out  
17 amongst the city does not make sense. That's the  
18 reality. When we centralized control of both incident  
19 management and service management in the rail control  
20 centers as they are doing around the country, you get  
21 a better handle of not only what's going on in  
22 dispatching people for managing the incidents but  
23 you're also reviewing service overall, not just for  
24 that particular route but for that whole region, that  
25 whole corridor of bus services that you're doing. So,



2 we centralized service in the control center. We're  
3 still in the process of centralizing service inside  
4 the B division which is your lettered lines, but it  
5 is the way of the future. The bus system is no  
6 different. Having bus dispatchers spread out amongst  
7 the city responsible for a specific, standing on a  
8 specific corner, not managing service for the region  
9 does not make sense. What you need to have is have  
10 the person sitting right next to the person who's  
11 managing the incident. If my bus goes down, I want to  
12 be able to have someone who's able to handle  
13 coordination for buses, who's able to reroute  
14 service, who's able to look at how do I need to  
15 supplement service for other routes that are in the  
16 same area or in different areas. You need to have a  
17 comprehensive overview of what service is. When you  
18 look at service, you do not look at service for one  
19 location, one stop, or one route. You look at service  
20 end-to-end and you look at routes, you look at  
21 regions. That's what centralized service gives you.  
22 And so listen, again, I stake my reputation on making  
23 the hard decisions that change how we operate  
24 service. And for bus service there is no question  
25 there is nothing that can be done better than

2 centralizing service and management of that service  
3 to the control center.

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Did the MTA  
5 consider hiring new staff for BCC consoles rather  
6 than eliminating the dispatcher role? And I ask that  
7 because I hear what you said and I think that in an  
8 instance that has validity from your perspective but,  
9 from mine and I'm a lay person, but in the field  
10 being able to be on the ground and actually seeing  
11 what's happening and having that line of  
12 communication from the field I feel would be  
13 invaluable type of information, so I wanted to know  
14 if the MTA had explored maybe hiring people to do  
15 just what you said to do while still keeping the  
16 dispatchers in the field.

17 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: So, there will still  
18 be dispatchers in the field. This is not to eliminate  
19 all the dispatchers in the field. Again, you have to  
20 think of not only...

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Well, I'm  
22 hearing like 26 roles are impacted, and I think a lot  
23 of them are coming from Queens.

24 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: I can't speak to the  
25 specific number but, like I said, you have

2 individuals that respond specifically to the  
3 incident. That's not going to change. Those  
4 individual supervisors who be in respond to the  
5 incident but managing the service, making the calls  
6 on what buses are going to be rerouted, making that  
7 call from a street corner does not benefit our  
8 riders.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So have you  
10 looked at hiring people to do that function at the  
11 BCC?

12 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: Our current process  
13 is to look at what resources we have and evaluate how  
14 we can make best use of it. I can't rule that out in  
15 the future. Right now, we're like taking a look at  
16 our existing resources.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Were the road  
18 dispatcher, bus operators, unions, or borough  
19 operation managers consulted before the shift?

20 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: All of the unions  
21 were notified about the change prior to making it.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Notified or  
23 were they given the opportunity to be consulted and  
24 give their feedback?

2 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: I think we're saying  
3 the same thing, notifying them, giving them an  
4 opportunity.. (CROSS-TALK)

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: (INAUDIBLE)  
6 telling.

7 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: Giving an opportunity  
8 for them to provide comment, but the reality is this  
9 is decision that needs to be made for New Yorkers.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So were they  
11 able to give feedback?

12 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: They were able to  
13 provide feedback, yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. And with  
15 that feedback, what was MTA's posture with the  
16 feedback?

17 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: So just to be  
18 transparent, the position is that we should not make  
19 any change. That has been the position of the unions.  
20 Don't move people off their street corner. Right? My  
21 job, my job is to provide the best service that we  
22 can for New Yorkers. That's my job. That's my sole  
23 function. Provide the best service we can while  
24 utilizing the resources that we have to do so and  
25 that's what I'm doing.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And MTA is  
3 very good at using, I would say data to try and  
4 determine the direction to go so has the MTA  
5 collected any data that demonstrates that removing  
6 road dispatchers will improve service quality rather  
7 than degrade it? And I'm talking about data specific  
8 to the buses and not the trains because I look at  
9 them very differently with the train system being a  
10 bit more contained in a sense as opposed to the buses  
11 that are out on the roadway, so is there any data  
12 that the MTA had looked at when making this decision?

13 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: So right now, yes, we  
14 looked at data. There's no question. But as I talked  
15 about, the focus has been on how do you improve upon  
16 what exists. We have data that talks about how do we  
17 run our service. We have data that suggests exactly  
18 how many reroutes a bus dispatcher is making from  
19 their current location. We have data that shows that  
20 buses are operating 20 to 30 minutes late. We have  
21 buses that demonstrate that buses are bunched up at  
22 locations again that we have dispatchers who are  
23 currently sitting. We have all of that data. The  
24 reality is what I'm moving toward is eliminating  
25 those things. How do I improve service? And it's

2 making changes with the resources that I have,  
3 putting them in a place where they not only see  
4 what's happening on their corner but are making  
5 decisions that affect everyone along the entire  
6 corridor that looks beyond just their route.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How many  
8 console positions at the BCC are unfilled today?

9 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: I don't have that  
10 number. I'm sorry.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Can someone  
12 find the number while we're here?

13 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: Sure.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. How  
15 does the MTA quantify the current contribution of  
16 road dispatchers to schedule adherence in real time  
17 incident management?

18 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: I didn't hear you.  
19 I'm sorry.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How does the  
21 MTA quantify the current contribution of road  
22 dispatchers to schedule adherence in real time  
23 incident management?

24 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: So, look, a  
25 dispatcher is an invaluable resource, right? Having

2 been a dispatcher myself, I recognize the importance  
3 of being able to have an individual who is able to  
4 dispatch and handle service. However, being a  
5 dispatcher myself, working from a field location,  
6 from a tower location, and then moving to a control  
7 center, I also understand the value of being able to  
8 centralize your control of operations. So they are an  
9 integral part in providing the service that we run,  
10 but they're going to have an even more integral part  
11 and be able to handle the service that we provide  
12 from a centralized location.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. In terms  
14 of the BCC radio system, is it accurate that the  
15 system experiences a 47 percent failure rate for  
16 calls and transmissions?

17 PRESIDENT CRICLOW: I don't know that to  
18 be accurate.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: What are the  
20 root causes from your perspective of these system  
21 failures?

22 PRESIDENT CRICLOW: I don't know that to  
23 be accurate.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No. I said  
3 what are the root causes? What are some of the root  
4 causes?

5 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: Right, but that  
6 assumes that that there are failures at 47 percent,  
7 right? I don't have any... (CROSS-TALK)

8 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No. I'm just  
9 saying broadly speaking.

10 CHIEF MCCARTHY: I can jump in on a little  
11 bit of that, Chair. So failures in dispatch, and I'm  
12 just going to take a step back. Demetrius is dealing  
13 with transit but this is across the MTA. How do we  
14 deal with our communications? And broadly speaking,  
15 what we've done is move people so they are near each  
16 other. We're taking advantage of modern technology  
17 which is that our buses, our subways, our railroads,  
18 our police are able to communicate with each other  
19 via modern technology and by putting people together  
20 in a room, decisions are made more quickly and we're  
21 nimble. So Shanifah has a team, right, customer  
22 people, who are the public information officers. They  
23 used to be spread out. We have them in the RCC. You  
24 know who else is right next to them, the NYPD, the  
25 FDNY, train dispatchers. We're able to communicate in



2 real time and get the job done. It's working really,  
3 really well. It's what the Fire Department does. It's  
4 what the NYPD does. It makes sense. It's taking  
5 advantage of modern technology to make sure we're  
6 communicating and we're not talking over each other  
7 or beyond each other. We're in the same place, and  
8 it's working really well, so I'm not aware of  
9 failures of a communication system.

10 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Are you saying  
11 the radio system never fails?

12 CHIEF MCCARTHY: I'm not saying anything  
13 never fails. I'm certainly an example of failure at  
14 times.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Does MTA  
16 measure how much it fails?

17 CHIEF MCCARTHY: Of course. We track these  
18 things.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So what's that  
20 measurement?

21 CHIEF MCCARTHY: I don't know the specific  
22 number of any one radio, but what I do know is the  
23 success rate from customers are that they appreciate  
24 and get information about their buses, about their  
25 subways and it's moving more quickly. It's getting

2 into their hands. People are making decisions with  
3 their phone, right. They're walking around and  
4 they're able to see when their bus is coming, when  
5 their subway is coming. It's working really well. I'm  
6 old enough to remember where it was guesswork. So,  
7 we're really leaning in on technology. It's the right  
8 thing to do and we're working with our teams, and  
9 what we've seen in the past, and Shanifah you can  
10 speak to it with your public information officers,  
11 they get in there, they work together, they  
12 understand it and they improve and everybody  
13 improves.

14 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: It would be  
15 good to have an idea in terms of what the data shows  
16 in terms of the failures because I would like to  
17 understand if the BCC technology cannot reliably  
18 track buses, how will the central dispatchers  
19 effectively manage the headway delays and  
20 intervention without the field support that's there?

21 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: So again, this is  
22 something that we do on a daily basis, and it's  
23 interesting that some can just throw stuff at the  
24 wall and see what sticks, right. The radio system  
25 which is very different than tracking the location of

2 buses, very different than routing of buses, very  
3 different than seeing buses, right, understanding  
4 what buses are bunching. So, we have a complete  
5 system that does that, that has the visibility. We  
6 have a relatively new bus system, bus radio system  
7 which is in place. We are modernizing how we do what  
8 we do to support the best bus service that we can  
9 provide for our customers. That's all we're about.  
10 Now, anytime you are looking to provide change that  
11 will be better for our customers, better for our  
12 employees, there is going to be resistance. But  
13 again, it is our goal to provide the best bus service  
14 that we can for our customers and this is the means  
15 of doing it.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
17 that.

18 I'm going to pause on my question and  
19 allow Council Member Louis to ask hers, and I have  
20 some additional questions.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Chair.  
22 Good morning.

23 The Chair briefly asked the question but  
24 I wanted to know if I could get a more robust  
25 response. The MTA's draft plan for the Brooklyn Bus

2 Redesign states a goal of right-sizing the distance  
3 between bus stops and simplifying route geometry. So,  
4 I wanted to know in the review of the redesign in  
5 Brooklyn, how many new bus stop removals or  
6 relocations have been made in the redesign in  
7 sensitive siting zones such as senior center zones,  
8 senior housing areas? So that's the first question.

9 PRESIDENT CRICLOW: So I don't have that  
10 information for you. The plan is that within the next  
11 six months we will be issuing some data on the Queens  
12 Bus Network redesign, which includes how we've done,  
13 what changes we've made, what changes have been made.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: You're using that  
15 as a model? You would use that as a model?

16 PRESIDENT CRICLOW: I'm sorry?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: The six-month  
18 report that you're mentioning would be utilized as a  
19 model to use, right?

20 PRESIDENT CRICLOW: Yeah, sure.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: He's shaking his  
22 head yes, so okay, got it.

23 PRESIDENT CRICLOW: But just to be clear,  
24 it's a feedback, we're always taking feedback for  
25 customers. So that change, a change could happen next

2 week, a change can happen the next pick. It doesn't  
3 have to be part of the actual network redesign. It  
4 could happen at any point that we determine that it  
5 will be better affecting our customers.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Okay. In my  
7 District, residents report bus stops being removed.  
8 This goes to your response, but if you could  
9 elaborate for my constituents who are watching, bus  
10 stops being removed on the B82 route without advanced  
11 community notification or input, especially impacting  
12 other older adults who rely on nearby buses. So I  
13 wanted to know what safeguards does the MTA have in  
14 place to ensure community feedback is meaningful and  
15 incorporated before stops are removed? An example  
16 (TIMER CHIME) of that, Chair, if I may continue. An  
17 example of that, NEWS 12 covered a story about a bus  
18 stop that was removed along Kings Highway, and I have  
19 the report here with me, which I'll add to the  
20 record, but no notification was provided to the  
21 community. The last community input that the  
22 community had from MTA was 2022. The bus stop was  
23 removed in 2025. So that gap in time is a long gap.  
24 So, I wanted to know if you guys could talk about  
25 that a little bit. What safeguards does MTA have in

2 place to ensure community feedback is meaningful  
3 before stops are removed?

4 CHIEF MCCARTHY: So just quickly, the  
5 proposed plan is still in development so everyone  
6 will get outreach on that and we will collaborate.  
7 This is the Queens one. It's a big telephone book  
8 size document so there's no stone unturned type  
9 situation here. So, what you're discussing when it  
10 comes to the, I think you're talking about the B82,  
11 there's a big project there, DOT, DDC, so that's  
12 construction related so I would defer to them on  
13 that, but that's something..

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: But you guys are  
15 coordinating, right?

16 CHIEF MCCARTHY: We are coordinating, but  
17 that is a temporary construction related and it's not  
18 a permanent or a bus redesign feature just so your  
19 constituents and you are assured..

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: But it would be  
21 good if they got a response back, because I know that  
22 they didn't get a response.

23 And I don't have much time, but I have  
24 one more question regarding the ACE program. So the  
25 ACE program along bus routes intends to improve bus

2 speeds and reduce illegal use of bus ways, bus lanes.  
3 For example, constituents along the B41 corridor from  
4 Cadman Plaza to King's Plaza report new enforcement  
5 that has unintended consequences. People unloading in  
6 front of their businesses, in front of their  
7 buildings to bring in products, market, parishioners  
8 and weekend parishioners parking near by bus stops,  
9 but not at the bus stops nor on the bus lanes. What  
10 mechanisms does the MTA have in coordination with DOT  
11 to place or monitor or assess and respond to such  
12 unintended equity impacts, particularly on places of  
13 worship and community institutions after the ACE  
14 deployment?

15 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: So, I'll just say the  
16 ACE deployment is specifically affecting our bus  
17 routes, bus lanes, and double parked vehicles when a  
18 person is breaking the law to be in those locations.  
19 The ACE program only enforces what the law is. And  
20 the specific locations are just that. Not only do you  
21 have the identified locations for the program itself,  
22 each of these bus stops, each of these bus lanes,  
23 specific locations, there is a manual person that  
24 looks through the actual footage and determines that  
25 it is and verifies that that ticket is appropriately

2 given to the individual. So, I'm happy to look at the  
3 specific scenario that you have, but we have a pretty  
4 robust relationship with DOT who administers the  
5 ticketing that are issued as a result of it, and we  
6 firmly believe that the locations that have been  
7 specified are locations that are the right locations  
8 to have. And it is our position that in order to  
9 promote the best bus network that we have to, this is  
10 what we need to do. We need to remove the  
11 individuals, the instances where people are parking  
12 in locations that a bus should be operating. That's  
13 what we all should be supportive of. How do we  
14 improve bus service? And it is by getting vehicles  
15 out of the bus lanes. How do we promote an accessible  
16 bus network? It is by getting vehicles out of the bus  
17 stops that the buses should be stopping at. It's  
18 getting vehicles out of there. That's what we should  
19 be doing.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: I'm sorry, Chair.

21 So just in response to what you're sharing, because  
22 what we've shared with your team is there are  
23 parishioners, faith-based institutions that are  
24 exempt from getting tickets on Flatbush Avenue, which  
25 they share the lane with the B41. Folks have gotten



2 up to 2,000 dollars in tickets. So, I know that you  
3 said you have somebody that monitors the behavior or  
4 instances. It has taken quite some time to get a  
5 response in regards to the multiple people who have  
6 received tickets so I understand what you're saying.  
7 We should take a look at it. Maybe an implementation  
8 of a grace period for folks that are unloading cars  
9 or unloading family members or seniors, because  
10 they've received tickets for those things. Maybe they  
11 double parked to unload the car to bring someone  
12 maybe to the door, and they've received tickets along  
13 those routes. We've shared this with your team, and  
14 we'll add the letter to the record that the  
15 Assemblymember and the Senator has provided in April  
16 to the MTA, but it still hasn't been addressed. So,  
17 if there is a point of contact that could look at  
18 footage and information and address this, it would be  
19 really helpful. But I do agree that there's a  
20 behavior that needs to definitely be addressed.

21 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: So, I think the  
22 specific scenario of an exemption from following the  
23 law, that just doesn't, to my knowledge, doesn't  
24 exist.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Even if we have  
3 those documents from NYPD and from the Commissioner?

4 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: The current law is  
5 what we've been enforcing. We talked to both DOT and  
6 NYPD. The current law is what the ACE system is  
7 driven by. I totally get what you're saying. There  
8 may have been one police commissioner that I have no  
9 knowledge of who granted some type of permission, but  
10 the reality is the current system is based upon the  
11 law. There's no exemptions on the law.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: It would be good to  
13 get the information about the law. If it's State law,  
14 City law, that states whatever the implementation is,  
15 what's restricted, what's not, it would be good to  
16 get that information.

17 CHIEF MCCARTHY: Council Member, it's a  
18 State law, and we'll look at any specific situation,  
19 but I just don't want folks to think there's some  
20 sort of exemption for bus lanes in certain locations.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Even though for  
22 years they've been exempt.

23 CHIEF MCCARTHY: Yeah. I'm not aware. No.  
24 Well, the law hasn't always been in place, so I don't  
25 know... I think what's happening here is some

2 conflating between previous sort of exemptions that  
3 maybe locally were granted and now a State law that's  
4 in place. We'll take a look, but what's important is  
5 that we have in place grace periods so that if  
6 somebody is parked in a bus lane, there's a period of  
7 time in order for that enforcement to take place. So  
8 the scenario that you were describing, Council  
9 Member, where somebody is dropping someone off, I  
10 don't know that they would be subject to a ticket so  
11 it's something that is a longer.. (CROSS-TALK)

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: They have received  
13 a ticket, but this is something you said you'll take  
14 a look at.

15 CHIEF MCCARTHY: And look, just so you  
16 understand, and I think you do understand this, we'll  
17 get hit on the other side, which is like, why is my  
18 bus not getting through...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Right.

20 CHIEF MCCARTHY: And why are your bus... We  
21 were at a thing earlier this week where advocates  
22 were like, oh, you guys are... the bus is so slow,  
23 shame on you, and it's like, yeah, you know what?  
24 Cars park in front of the bus, and that's a problem.  
25 The State Legislators are trying to deal with that.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Right.

3 CHIEF MCCARTHY: The City's trying to deal  
4 with that. I know you're trying to deal with that.  
5 We're trying to deal with it in a way that also takes  
6 into consideration folks and their needs. So, we'll  
7 take a look at it. But to be clear, there's no  
8 exemption, and there is a process for that ticketing  
9 that really is if somebody's parked there.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: No. Understood.

11 We'll take a look at it together. Understood.

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,  
13 Council Member.

14 Another question that I have is from a  
15 constituent regarding the Long Island Railroad  
16 Rosedale Station, and the indoor waiting area needs  
17 to be reopened for riders soon. I'm not sure what the  
18 timeline is for that, but I think there's a gap in  
19 communication with the riders in terms of how long  
20 the waiting area will be, I guess, closed due to  
21 whatever service is happening at Rosedale. And then  
22 also, there needs to be some illumination because  
23 there's poor lighting around that station. I'm not  
24 sure what the process is for the MTA to be able to  
25 add additional lighting in the area.

2 CHIEF MCCARTHY: Chair, I'll take a look  
3 at that. I'll talk to Rob Free, the President of the  
4 Railroad. He's doing a lot of work in station  
5 improvements, particularly things like lighting and  
6 those station houses. And as I mentioned before,  
7 because of the boom in popularity in those city  
8 stations, we know you're hearing from constituents  
9 because there's more of them using the railroad, I  
10 think. And that's all good. So let me check on that.  
11 We'll get back to you. But Rob Free's doing a lot of  
12 work in that area.

13 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay.

14 CHIEF MCCARTHY: We just wrapped up St.  
15 Albans, like I said, today.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Today, I know.

17 CHIEF MCCARTHY: So it's cool. Like, you  
18 know, new elevator.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I got an  
20 invite from Chair Comrie. I should say that.

21 CHIEF MCCARTHY: Okay. I think Senator  
22 Comrie's out there so, but look, there's more to come  
23 so we'll make sure that Rob Free's on it.

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. And then  
25 on behalf of Council Member Narcisse, she said the

2 Brooklyn Bus Redesign has seen multiple edits. Can  
3 you explain the criteria used to determine which  
4 routes are improved, which are cut, and how you weigh  
5 community feedback in the process? And she also would  
6 like to get an update on the future of the B2 and the  
7 B76 Avenue L?

8 PRESIDENT CRICLOW: So, you know, the  
9 process for improving our bus network is pretty much  
10 consistent. We talked about it a little earlier. How  
11 do we improve service for customers? How do we  
12 improve connectivity? How do we improve, you know,  
13 bus speeds? How do you take into consideration the  
14 neighborhoods, the specifics? We talked a little bit  
15 about that. And, you know, the biggest piece, as we  
16 did with Queens, was involving, you know, our  
17 community and the decisions surrounding them. So  
18 taking their feedback, feedback, feedback from our  
19 customers and making sure that that's part of the  
20 solution. I mean that's what we've done in Queens,  
21 which we believe was a success, and that's what we  
22 intend to do for Brooklyn.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. And then  
24 the updates on the two bus routes?

2 CHIEF MCCARTHY: Yeah. And we've heard  
3 from the Council Member on the B2. You know, any  
4 decisions will be done, we'll work with her and  
5 others that's on Kings Highway so we'll...

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And then the  
7 B76.

8 CHIEF MCCARTHY: And the B76. I'll check  
9 on that as well. Butas, Demetrius said, you know,  
10 this is all going to be part of the drafts that come  
11 out. And, look, I think what's important is the  
12 Queens redesign, as we learn more about the benefits  
13 and where the biggest benefits are coming, I think  
14 it's going to help inform anything we do in Brooklyn  
15 so that we're always, you know, making improvements  
16 and not creating a situation that's less attractive.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. And I  
18 know Council Member Louis had wanted followup on the  
19 letter from her, Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte  
20 Hermelyn and Senator Kevin Parker, but she mentioned  
21 that, so I won't repeat it.

22 But in terms of legislation, I just have  
23 two final areas, well, four final areas, a question  
24 for each of the pieces of legislation, and then I'll  
25 be done with this segment.

2 The first is the Intro Number 1345,  
3 notice for bus stop changes. We've had conversations  
4 already, like there have been some constituents that  
5 have been upset, either because a bus stop has been  
6 erected in front of their home or taken away, and  
7 wanted to understand what notice do residents and  
8 businesses receive when the bus stops are created and  
9 removed today?

10 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: You know, when we  
11 talked about the Queens Bus Redesign, we were very,  
12 very clear, out in over 300 instances where we're  
13 talking to the community, not just, you know,  
14 globally, we literally went to locations where we met  
15 the people where they were, you know, and community  
16 centers, you know, the locations where employees  
17 come.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: But are you  
19 knocking on the door where they are going to be at?  
20 Like, so if it's coming in front of, like, your  
21 house, is MTA coming and knocking on your door to say  
22 we're putting up a stop here or sending you a letter,  
23 or?

24 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: No. We do not do  
25 that, but we do, again, work with the Council and



2 Assembly Members and literally all the  
3 Representatives for those Districts, have a ton of  
4 meetings with them, virtually and in person, to be  
5 able to talk through all of the specific changes. But  
6 again, this goes back to how do we provide the best  
7 bus system for New Yorkers, and, you know, whether a  
8 bus stop is removed in order in favor of providing a  
9 bus, a faster bus system, or a bus stop in some  
10 instances, which is placed because we're adding  
11 additional service or adding routes that currently  
12 don't exist, servicing communities that currently  
13 don't have service, and we add bus stops in order to  
14 do that. You know, we are doing it in providing great  
15 service to our customers. That's the goal.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: No, and I can  
17 appreciate that, and I think you guys have really  
18 done a great job in the outreach and in partnership,  
19 I know, with my office and my Colleagues in Queens,  
20 but also still understanding that, you know, there  
21 are sometimes moments where things fall through the  
22 cracks. So, particularly, I have a constituent that  
23 is a disabled senior and now has a bus stop in front  
24 of their home, and it creates some challenges, as you  
25 can imagine.

2 I'd like to know if you feel, again I'm a  
3 layperson, so if you feel that this bill can be  
4 implemented with existing resources, and why or why  
5 not?

6 CHIEF MCCARTHY: Yeah. I mean, I'll just  
7 say, look, I mean just to go back to the Queens Bus  
8 Redesign, you know, that was robust work. Folks were  
9 out there for years making sure everyone understood  
10 what was being considered, what should be considered,  
11 what changes should be made to the draft, and even up  
12 to the very end, we had teams out there on the street  
13 at bus stops that were pre-existing, making sure that  
14 people understood that in a period of time, those bus  
15 stops might be changed, and we had people at new bus  
16 stops. I think there was something like, you know,  
17 less than a couple of dozen new stops. So, that  
18 communication was made with folks. We met them where  
19 they were, and the feedback we've been getting has  
20 been pretty good. I understand there's going to be  
21 some people that have, it sounds like some people  
22 have reached out to you with a different a different  
23 narrative, but this is a huge borough, and this is a  
24 huge bus system, and considering all the changes that

2 took place, I just want to compliment the team. They  
3 really did the work that was needed... (CROSS-TALK)

4 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: The team was  
5 definitely phenomenal, and I won't take that from  
6 them. I just wanted to understand from your  
7 perspective, like, I'll ask DOT also their thoughts  
8 on that later on, but I wanted to get from the MTA's  
9 perspective if, you know, you think this is something  
10 that could be implemented. It would obviously require  
11 coordination with the Department as well.

12 CHIEF MCCARTHY: Yeah. I think, look, it  
13 requires coordination. Just an example, the B82, the  
14 Council Member was talking about that, was a change  
15 by City DOT. I believe it was communicated, but we  
16 always want to make sure folks, and that is a  
17 permanent change, I was corrected, we always want to  
18 make sure everybody knows what's happening. Just to  
19 kind of put it in context, we're swapping, you know,  
20 the President of New York City Transit is responsible  
21 for this, you know, implementing, but we're swapping  
22 the F and M to improve service, so we're out there  
23 constantly, and these are, you know, two train lines  
24 coming in from Queens, so what's different now,  
25 though, is we can communicate with our riders more

2 easily. We're texting them. We're updating their app.  
3 We're letting them know these changes. We have a lot  
4 more ways, so just, I think, you know, any  
5 legislation, we're always going to be careful of,  
6 like, adding a new layer, and we really have to  
7 wonder, like, is it actually improving it, is there a  
8 way that we can just tweak what we're already doing,  
9 you know, layering things, sometimes it just, it  
10 doesn't hit people, but we're always looking for new  
11 ways to reach our customers. I think we're doing a  
12 good job, but we'll always look for new ways.  
13 Mandating it is always, you know, it can become  
14 outdated pretty quickly. You know, you put something  
15 on paper, it's like, next thing you know, you're  
16 taking an ad in the Queens Chronicle about a bus stop  
17 change that happened three weeks earlier, so we're,  
18 we're really trying to be modern and get to people,  
19 meet them where they are, and I think we're doing a  
20 good job, and, and the lady over there, Shanifah, is  
21 responsible for a lot of it so kudos to her.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So, I'm going  
23 to ask my last three questions, and then we'll be  
24 done with the section.

2 Next is about Reso Number 58, the subway  
3 rush hour service. If bus redesigns funnel more  
4 riders to terminal subway stations, what is your plan  
5 to prevent overcrowding during rush hours, and would  
6 the MTA consider pilot programs for increased service  
7 at select stations on specific days?

8 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: So, when we looked at  
9 the Queens Bus Network Redesign, one of the things  
10 that we looked at, not only is adding the bus service  
11 to be able to get to the subway, but whether or not  
12 that subway has capacity to accept the riders, and we  
13 will continue to do that. You know, we do that on a  
14 bi-yearly basis for subways, four times for buses a  
15 year, two times.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: We need more  
17 A-train service.

18 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: Based upon ridership.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: On the record.

20 PRESIDENT CRICHLow: Based upon ridership,  
21 we review what the actual need is, and so we'll  
22 continue to do so. Our goal is to be able to provide  
23 service to customers, so as we've shown over the last  
24 year or so, we've increased service where we needed  
25 it, we adjusted service when we saw that the patterns

2 were going toward the end of the rush hour periods,  
3 we added service towards the off-peak areas in order  
4 to support it. When we realized that there was  
5 additional service coming around the weekends, we  
6 added additional service on the weekends. So, we've  
7 shown our ability to be able to supply customers with  
8 the service that we need, 16, I think it's 16 routes,  
9 16 instances where we provided additional service, so  
10 we're prepared to provide the service to customers.

11 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And I'm glad  
12 to hear that, and I know I did a recent  
13 Transportation and Infrastructure tour in Council  
14 Member Shahana Hanif's District, and she has, like, a  
15 lot of development coming, I think it's along the  
16 Columbia waterfront, and so we did a joint letter to  
17 the MTA requesting, you know, looking at how we can  
18 increase their access to transportation, similarly to  
19 Edgemere and Rockaway, which we were able to do  
20 during the outage of the A train with the stop in  
21 Edgemere, which did not have a stop before for the  
22 Express Bus route, for example. Just looking at, and  
23 I do believe that when we look at development and  
24 housing, there needs to be a close partnership with  
25 the MTA to make sure that as we're bringing new

2 communities into places that they did not exist, that  
3 we're being visionary, okay, like, what access to  
4 transportation are we going to have as well. So, I  
5 haven't seen a response to that letter yet, but I'm  
6 hopeful it'll be a positive response.

7 CHIEF MCCARTHY: Chair, I'll look into  
8 that response. And just to add on, you know, we're  
9 hitting new records coming out of COVID, 4.6 million  
10 on the subways, but we're still below what we were  
11 moving in 2019, so there's capacity, but we're always  
12 looking for opportunities to add service where it's  
13 appropriate, and we'll continue to do so, and the  
14 same with buses, like, you know, changes of bus  
15 stops. We change bus stops every year for things like  
16 changes in commuting patterns or businesses, and so  
17 we will always communicate with you and the public on  
18 any change like that, and what I mentioned earlier,  
19 I've just been corrected, the 20 new stops, when I  
20 said that, that was in the residential territory  
21 areas that you're talking about, where somebody walks  
22 outside the door and they might see a bus stop, so  
23 there weren't a ton of those in the bus redesign, but  
24 of course we will continue to communicate.

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for  
3 that. And particularly I'm more concerned about,  
4 because we did get a couple of them, and I know I  
5 communicated them, the one I'm particularly concerned  
6 about is the senior that is disabled, so if, like, we  
7 shift that a little bit, that'd be great, because we  
8 don't want to impede on her access to whatever  
9 services that they need to get in and out of the  
10 house.

11 Reso. 61, lead in transit structures,  
12 this is another one that came as a result of one of  
13 the Transportation and Infrastructure tours that I  
14 did, this one was in Council Member Sandy Nurse's  
15 District, where their outdoor train had some concerns  
16 of lead, and so I wanted to know what recent testing  
17 has been done to measure lead levels at elevated  
18 trains, and I'll ask the follow-up question of DOT  
19 later for that, but I know initially in response to  
20 the letter that we did, I believe MTA had went to  
21 test that particular site, but I just want to know  
22 what recent testing has been done to measure the  
23 levels on the elevated trains.

24 CHIEF MCCARTHY: So in, you know, you know  
25 this, we have so many elevated trains, and those are



2 trains that were painted, you know, decades ago,  
3 sometimes the last time they were painted, so any  
4 changes, we're very aware of making sure there's no  
5 issues that we have to deal with, so what we do is we  
6 wrap those, you know, projects, right, so it's not,  
7 you know, public facing, and we go in there and  
8 follow all the regulatory guidelines in terms of  
9 removal of old paint and the like. I will check as  
10 far as if there are any tests available that I can  
11 share with you, but, you know, as the President said,  
12 we put safety first, and that's not just in our  
13 running of the train system and the bus system, but  
14 it's in how we do our construction, and we have a lot  
15 of people out there doing that work who we make sure  
16 are protected, and the neighborhoods they're working  
17 in are protected.

18 Thank you. And my last question is around  
19 congestion pricing, the study, Reso. 735. How has  
20 congestion pricing affected bus speeds and ridership,  
21 and what type of analysis does MTA and DOT do to  
22 monitor the effect of congestion pricing?

23 CHIEF MCCARTHY: So we're regularly  
24 reporting out. We have a dashboard online. We've  
25 really made strides with transparency on all our

2 issues, and we're very proud of that. We sort of try  
3 to talk about it a lot because it's not always easy  
4 internally or externally to sort of, you know, open  
5 the curtains, and this is how, you know, so people  
6 dive in, and we're seeing a lot of reporters,  
7 actually, they're doing their work, they're diving  
8 in, looking at the numbers, reporting out on those  
9 numbers, and telling the story of congestion pricing,  
10 so we'll have more of that coming out, particularly  
11 with the one-year anniversary coming up, and you'll  
12 see reports on bus speeds, and all the benefits that  
13 are coming from congestion pricing. We continue to  
14 see double-digit reductions in traffic. We see  
15 improvements in other areas as well, in terms of  
16 noise and safety. So, we'll be reporting out on that,  
17 but that data is available online as well, but we'll  
18 work with our partners at the City to make sure that  
19 at the end of the conclusion of the one year, you'll  
20 have a big report out on that.

21 PRESIDENT CRICLOW: I'm sorry. I just  
22 wanted to add one thing to John. I mean, so just on  
23 the data specifically. Vehicle entries are down 12  
24 percent year over year, with 87,000 fewer vehicles  
25 entering daily. Where you really see the success is

2 in going across the major crossings of bridges,  
3 Highland Tunnel 36 percent faster, Williamsburg  
4 Bridge 23 percent faster, Queensborough Bridge 21  
5 percent faster, Hugh L. Carey Tunnel 16 percent  
6 faster, and where are all these folks going? Subway  
7 ridership is up 9 percent, bus ridership is up 13  
8 percent. Success story.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. I  
10 mean, I feel like my lived experience may be a little  
11 bit different, because Hugh Cary Tunnel, I still feel  
12 a lot of congestion there, but I have noticed it in  
13 some places, but there are some areas that I still  
14 see the congestion.

15 So, I'd like to thank the MTA for your  
16 participation today, and for your constant  
17 partnership and communication. I really appreciate  
18 you all, and we'll next call up the Department of  
19 Transportation.

20 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Our  
21 next panel will be from the Department of  
22 Transportation. Diniece Mendez, Assistant  
23 Commissioner for Transit Development, and Rick  
24 Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner of  
25 Intergovernmental and Community Affairs.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. I will now  
3 administer the oaths. Please raise your right hands.

4 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
5 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before the  
6 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member  
7 questions?

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: Yes.

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may  
11 begin when ready.

12 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: Can you  
13 hear me? Perfect. All right. Good afternoon,  
14 everyone, Chair and Members online, and those in the  
15 audience as well, Members of the Committee on  
16 Transportation and Infrastructure. I am Diniece  
17 Mendez, Assistant Commissioner for Transit  
18 Development here at New York City DOT. With me today  
19 is Rick Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner for  
20 Intergovernmental and Community Affairs. Thank you so  
21 much for the opportunity to testify on behalf of  
22 Mayor Adams and Commissioner Rodriguez on the  
23 Administration's work on the New York City bus  
24 system.

2 We know that buses are a lifeline for New  
3 Yorkers in making New York City possible. DOT  
4 continues to work collaboratively and creatively with  
5 the MTA to improve the bus rider experience citywide,  
6 ensuring that New Yorkers have bus service that they  
7 can depend on at any time of the day. We achieved  
8 historic street safety and accessibility improvements  
9 under the Administration, including record-breaking  
10 measures to protect cyclists, safeguard pedestrians,  
11 enhance intersections, and make it easier for people  
12 with low vision to use our streets, improve bus  
13 service, and augment bus stop amenities to ensure  
14 that the customer experience is improved and  
15 enhanced. Our recently completed or in construction  
16 transformative bus priority and accessibility  
17 projects will improve commutes for nearly 400,000  
18 daily bus riders along 5.2 miles of new and 4.6 miles  
19 of improved bus lanes. This builds on our success in  
20 2024, having delivered close to 18 miles of new,  
21 upgraded, or newly protected bus lane miles, the  
22 highest annual mileage for the protected bus lanes  
23 ever.

24 We continue to improve buses citywide  
25 through our Better Buses Action Plan and New York

2 City Streets Plan, focusing on bus priority  
3 corridors. In September, we announced a plan to begin  
4 installing new bus lanes on Flatbush Avenue this  
5 fall, which includes advancing a plan for center-  
6 running bus lanes between Livingston Street and Grand  
7 Army Plaza. Thanks to our previous investments, like  
8 the 1.5-million-dollar investment from the Fiscal  
9 Year '26 adopted budget, we can make transformative  
10 upgrades to the pedestrian and transit rider  
11 experience and the broader public realm for nearly  
12 30,000 bus riders.

13 Our most recently completed project on  
14 Hillside Avenue in Queens includes nearly eight miles  
15 of new and improved bus lanes, one of the longest bus  
16 priority corridors and projects in history,  
17 delivering faster and more reliable bus service for  
18 over 215,000 daily riders on 22 bus routes along the  
19 corridor. Other recent projects include the expansion  
20 of bus mounted cameras enforcement on 96th Street in  
21 Manhattan, 2nd Avenue, as well as Allen, Pike, and  
22 Madison Streets, as well as construction on 1.4 miles  
23 of bus lanes on 3rd Avenue between 96th Street and  
24 128th Street in Manhattan. Now we're not finished  
25 yet. We're in the home stretch of our building

2 season, and we're hoping to provide updates, final  
3 updates in February for our streets plan update.

4 Making buses faster and more accessible  
5 is a top priority. We continue this work through  
6 adding transit signal priority to better optimize how  
7 buses move, speed up the buses, expand bus lane  
8 camera enforcement, and support the MTA's network  
9 redesign efforts. We do this through their borough-  
10 based priority plans as well, and thus far in 2025,  
11 we have studied transit signal priority across 10 bus  
12 routes throughout the city. Last year, DOT also  
13 upgraded dozens of bus stops to be physically  
14 accessible and expanded our accessible pedestrian  
15 signals, all part of our five-year accessibility  
16 plan. We enthusiastically say that there's certainly  
17 much more things to come for New York City bus  
18 riders, and you know, we're excited to continue  
19 working to improve the daily lives of everyone.

20 Turning to the legislation before the  
21 Council today, first, Intro. 339, sponsored by  
22 Council Member Narcisse. This bill would ensure that  
23 drivers are not receiving multiple summonses for the  
24 same violation of driving in a designated bus lane.  
25 DOT already ensures that drivers do not receive

2 multiple tickets for the same violation through our  
3 back-office process. We look forward to working with  
4 the Council and support this bill.

5           Next, on to Intro. 647, sponsored by  
6 Council Member Riley. This bill would require DOT to  
7 post signs on each block of any street subject to bus  
8 lane restrictions. The bill also proposes publishing  
9 the days and hours during which bus lane restrictions  
10 are in effect for all streets and that are subject to  
11 any such restrictions also on our website. And so in  
12 accordance with the MUTCD, the Manual on Uniform  
13 Traffic Control Devices, their guidance, we already  
14 install at least one bus lane sign per block subject  
15 to bus lane restrictions. Additionally, we already  
16 publish the bus lane restrictions data set on DOT's  
17 data feeds webpage, as well as New York City Open  
18 Data. We support the goals of the bill and look  
19 forward to working with the Council.

20           Finally, Intro. 1345, sponsored by Chair  
21 Brooks-Powers. This bill would require DOT to provide  
22 notice as practicable to owners of homes and  
23 businesses when new bus stops are designated to be  
24 placed within 50 feet of such homes and businesses,  
25 or when existing bus stops within 50 feet of such



2 homes and businesses are designated to be removed.

3 DOT conducts substantial outreach to businesses and

4 communities wherever the agency implements changes to

5 the local transportation network. Importantly, this

6 outreach is an iterative process, working with

7 elected officials, community boards, various

8 stakeholders to inform communities of our planning

9 and design of projects from the inception all the way

10 through implementation. On average, DOT installs,

11 removes, and maintains nearly 4,000 bus stops, no

12 standing signs, as well as up to 12,000 bus stop

13 route destination panels each year. By way of

14 illustration, nearly 12,000 bus stop panels were

15 installed, removed, and maintained as part of the

16 Queens Network redesign. Although DOT supports the

17 intent of this bill to increase awareness of any

18 changes to bus stops, the legislation presents

19 challenges that are beyond our limited staff

20 capacity, and would delay implementation of critical

21 safety, accessibility, and service reliability

22 improvements. We enthusiastically commit to working

23 with you to identify strategic and more tailored

24 outreach plans in relation to bus stops.

25

2 And so in closing, I would like to thank  
3 the Council for the opportunity to testify before you  
4 today. We'd now be happy to answer any questions.  
5 Thank you for that.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I will start  
7 with the bus redesign. What is DOT's role in MTA's  
8 bus redesign process?

9 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: Thank you  
10 for the question, Chair. So as I said in my  
11 testimony, we have a very close sort of partnership  
12 to really be able to deliver this service to New  
13 Yorkers. We support MTA's borough-based network  
14 redesigns through a number of ways. We give special  
15 consideration to how our bus priority projects, such  
16 as bus lanes, can be complementary to MTA service  
17 plans and adjustments. And as an example, our recent  
18 bus lane project on Hillside Avenue coincided with  
19 the implementation of the rush lane, rush routes on  
20 Hillside, and the buses have been able to benefit  
21 from that bus priority improvement. Queens riders,  
22 again, will really help to benefit from the  
23 reliability of the bus priority improvements and  
24 really building on those service enhancements that  
25 were made early in the summer.

2 Secondly, we make adjustments to the  
3 street network where possible to accommodate new  
4 routing changes, and that can also help to improve  
5 the operations for safe movement of buses as well.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And does DOT  
7 also conduct community outreach? I know MTA does, but  
8 in terms of the function of the Department as it  
9 pertains to the redesign, do you all do any degree of  
10 community outreach?

11 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: We work  
12 closely with the MTA for that process, and so we may  
13 join in their outreach and engagement activities.  
14 We've also participated in the customer ambassador  
15 outreach that happened earlier this summer to ensure  
16 that New Yorkers were aware of those changes. But we  
17 do not conduct outreach separate from the MTA as it  
18 relates to the redesign.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.  
20 Streets plan implementation. Why has DOT failed to  
21 meet the legal mandates of Local Law 195, also known  
22 as the Streets Plan, with respect to installation of  
23 protected bus lanes? And how many miles of protected  
24 bus lanes has DOT installed in Calendar 2025, year to  
25 date?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Just  
3 taking the first part of the question, I think one of  
4 the things that we've certainly learned in this  
5 Administration is, to the point of your earlier line  
6 of questioning about community engagement, there are  
7 a lot of stakeholders that have a lot to say about  
8 how they want to redesign those streets. And we have  
9 often found that we have benefited from taking more  
10 time for those projects, understanding there is this  
11 balance of this very clear and sincere requirement  
12 that we have to meet.

13 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: And so  
14 again, we're in the home stretch of the building  
15 season and we're really delighted to provide an  
16 update in our Streets Plan update here in February.

17 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Do you think  
18 you're going to make the 30-mile goal for this year?

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: We're  
20 still working through our projects, and we'll have a  
21 better sense for the February update.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: How many is  
23 done to date so far?

24

25

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: We've done  
3 approximately, and as I said in testimony, about 5.2  
4 new miles and 4.6 upgraded miles.

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So it's not  
6 likely to get 30 by the end of the season then.

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I  
8 wouldn't characterize it as likely in the way that  
9 you're suggesting we might not meet it. We may, we  
10 may not, but the point is that this is the home  
11 stretch. Our main focus is completing what we have in  
12 front of us and we'll give a fulsome update in  
13 February about how we did and will be held to  
14 account.

15 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Enforcement.  
16 How many miles of bus lanes currently have the  
17 automated camera enforcement and how many still rely  
18 on in-person NYPD enforcement?

19 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: So, we  
20 have about approximately 155 bus lane miles that are  
21 currently covered by the ACE camera enforcement.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And how does  
23 DOT decide where to expand automated enforcement  
24 cameras? Are decisions based solely on ridership  
25 volume or also on equity concerns in transit deserts?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: I'm sorry.  
3 Could you repeat the question? How do we decide on  
4 where?

5 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Yes.

6 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: And so we  
7 have both stationary as well as the cameras that are  
8 mounted on buses. They do different things, but they  
9 are complementary to each other. We work to locate  
10 the bus enforcement cameras where we install new bus  
11 lanes, resources permitting. We also communicate  
12 directly with NYPD to have more regular touch points  
13 and ensure we can recommend enforcement locations  
14 where there aren't cameras or if there are more  
15 particular acute issues that are more of an  
16 enforcement concern for us. The MTA prioritizes bus  
17 routes for bus mounted cameras based on high  
18 frequency and high ridership routes.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.  
20 McDonald Avenue redesign proposal. I know that DOT  
21 has proposed a project to redesign McDonald Avenue  
22 between 20th Street and Fort Hamilton Parkway, which  
23 would involve removing one lane of traffic in each  
24 direction to install a two-way protected bike lane.  
25 McDonald Avenue is a major truck corridor and a busy

2 MTA bus route. There are also multiple schools that  
3 would be directly impacted by the project. What work  
4 has DOT done in the community with respect to this  
5 proposed project and what additional efforts is DOT  
6 planning to take to get community feedback regarding  
7 this proposal?

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: On the  
9 specifics of McDonald, I actually will need to come  
10 back to you on that, but I mean we do this... (CROSS-  
11 TALK)

12 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: (INAUDIBLE)

13 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: On the  
14 specifics for McDonald, I'd have to come back to you  
15 because I'm not familiar with those outreach  
16 strategies, but I think again we would be in  
17 partnership with the MTA on communicating changes on  
18 the route.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And how does  
20 DOT view this proposal in light of Local Law 171 of  
21 2023, which requires DOT to redesign the truck routes  
22 in a way that reduces congestion and enhances safety?  
23 Did DOT consult with trucking stakeholders when  
24 developing this proposal?

2 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Once  
3 again, I'd have to consult with our team back at DOT  
4 because I'm unfamiliar with the specifics on McDonald  
5 Avenue.

6 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. So, can  
7 DOT get back to me by Monday on this?

8 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: Sure.

9 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

10 Just in terms of the legislation, Intro.  
11 1345, notice of bus stop changes, I saw you responded  
12 to that in your testimony. But just for clarity, does  
13 DOT already have staff responsible for sending out  
14 notices about other works in progress?

15 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: Yes. It  
16 covers sort of existing needs. There are sort of  
17 additional stipulations that are based in this bill  
18 that will require additional capacity.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: In terms of  
20 the Reso. 0735, congestion pricing study, what role  
21 would DOT play in data collection and publishing  
22 results for such a large longitudinal study?

23 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: On  
24 congestion pricing, we just don't have the right  
25 people here today. I'm happy to make arrangements for



2 a meeting with our congestion pricing team. I know  
3 we've worked very closely for a very long time on  
4 monitoring and establishing that program so I think  
5 we would have a lot that we would be happy to share  
6 with you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Is there a  
8 reason no one's here to be able to answer about  
9 congestion pricing? Only because the Staff had  
10 notified the Department that we would be asking a  
11 question on that, so when you say that the  
12 appropriate people are not here?

13 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I'm  
14 unaware of the congestion pricing being flagged  
15 specifically. I know we've tried to be prepared for,  
16 again, that partnership and we are prepared to answer  
17 those things. I'm unaware of congestion pricing  
18 questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. Those  
20 are all the questions that I have in this panel. It's  
21 free to go. Thank you.

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDEZ: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I now open the  
24 hearing for public testimony. I remind members of the  
25 public that this is a government proceeding and the

2 decorum shall be observed at all times. As such,  
3 members of the public shall remain silent at all  
4 times.

5 The witness table is reserved for people  
6 who wish to testify. No video recording or  
7 photography is allowed from the witness table.  
8 Furthermore, members of the public may not present  
9 audio or video recordings as testimony, but may  
10 submit transcripts of such recordings to the  
11 Sergeant-at-Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

12 If you wish to speak at today's hearing,  
13 please fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant-  
14 at-Arms and wait to be recognized. When recognized,  
15 you will have two minutes to speak on today's hearing  
16 topics, oversight, New York City's bus system,  
17 network operations, equity and redesign; Intro.  
18 Number 339, a local law to amend the Administrative  
19 Code of the City of New York in relation to  
20 prohibiting the issuance of multiple bus lane  
21 violation tickets for the same infraction within a  
22 one-hour period; Intro. Number 647, a local law to  
23 amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York  
24 in relation to bus lane restrictions; Intro. Number  
25 1345, a local law to amend the Administrative Code of

2 the City of New York in relation to providing notice  
3 to home and business owners regarding the creation or  
4 removal of bus stops; Reso. Number 58, a resolution  
5 calling on MTA to adjust schedules for distant subway  
6 terminal lines to include more peak direction rush  
7 hour trains for commuters to travel to central  
8 economic hubs; Reso. Number 61, a resolution calling  
9 upon MTA to remediate any transportation structure,  
10 primarily elevated train lines, with extremely high  
11 levels of lead; Reso. 252, a resolution calling on  
12 the New York State Legislature to pass and the New  
13 York State Governor to sign legislation which would  
14 create unlimited transfers within a two-hour period  
15 of paying the MTA subway or bus fare for pay-per-ride  
16 users; Reso. Number 498, a resolution calling on MTA  
17 to create a program that provides New York City's  
18 first responder agencies with real time GPS data for  
19 all MTA buses; Reso. Number 735, a resolution calling  
20 on MTA to conduct longitudinal studies on the  
21 environmental, economic, and social impacts of  
22 congestion pricing throughout New York City; Reso.  
23 Number 773, a resolution calling on New York State  
24 Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign  
25 legislation that would require the MTA to provide

2 free Express Bus fare to New York City students who  
3 take Express Buses to and from school; Reso. Number  
4 964, a resolution calling on the New York State  
5 Legislature to pass and the New York State Governor  
6 to sign, Senate Bill 3887A and the Assembly Accompany  
7 Bill 7316A requiring that any individual who is  
8 eligible for the Fair Fares New York City program and  
9 any person whose income is 200 percent of the federal  
10 poverty level receive a 50 percent discount on trips  
11 using the Long Island Railroad, paratransit services,  
12 New York City transit, subways or buses, and the  
13 Metro North Railroad.

14           If you have a written statement or  
15 additional written testimony you wish to submit for  
16 the record, please provide a copy of that testimony  
17 to the Sergeant-at-Arms. You may also email written  
18 testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov) within 72  
19 hours of this hearing. Audio and video recordings  
20 will not be accepted.

21           We will now call the first panel. That  
22 panel will include Jean Ryan, Philip Valenz  
23 (phonetic), Jose DeJesus, Charlton D'Souza, the first  
24 name starts with a B, the last name is Fritsch, and  
25 Katelyn Villatoro.

2 You may begin when you're ready and  
3 please adhere to the two-minute limit.

4 JEAN RYAN: Hello. I'm Jean Ryan,  
5 President of Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New  
6 York, DIA for short. Three big bus issues concern us  
7 in DIA. The inaccessibility of Express Buses, the  
8 failure of all NYCT buses to pull up to the curb for  
9 passengers, and the drive to eliminate bus stops.

10 Express Bus inaccessibility. Express  
11 Buses go from the outer boroughs to and from  
12 Manhattan, all have lifts for people with mobility  
13 disabilities, but the drivers are poorly trained,  
14 especially on buses on weekends, holidays, in the  
15 evenings, and on weekends when untrained fill-in  
16 drivers often work. As I have testified before, it  
17 leads to boarding times up to an hour or being left  
18 at the curb or the FDNY getting us off the buses. Of  
19 course, that's not good. All drivers should be  
20 regularly trained or they should not be driving  
21 Express Buses.

22 Failure of buses to pull up to the curb.  
23 There is an epidemic of bus drivers who do not pull  
24 their buses up to the curb, and that makes it  
25 difficult to impossible for many riders to get on or

2 off the bus. There's little supervision or  
3 enforcement of the rule to pull up to the curb, and  
4 it's not safe for the bus to be out in the street.  
5 Sometimes e-bikers drive in that space when someone  
6 is trying to exit or get on the bus.

7 Removal of bus stops. On 14th street,  
8 many bus stops were removed, and people continue to  
9 suggest that as a solution to slow buses to speed  
10 them up, but studies removed the bus stops, but  
11 studies showed that it hardly had any effect on bus  
12 speeds. It does, however, have a huge impact on the  
13 inability of ambulatory people with disabilities to  
14 take the bus at all. What really impacted was  
15 removing the traffic.

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

19 I do have one more thing about the DOT,  
20 but my time is up. Could I just say two sentences?

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Did you submit  
22 the longer one?

23 JEAN RYAN: What?

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I know you  
3 normally submit a longer testimony. Did you submit a  
4 longer one?

5 JEAN RYAN: No. That's the same thing that  
6 I'm saying today, but when I heard them talking about  
7 drivers being ticketed, I thought that Access-A-Ride  
8 had an exemption in the bus stops to drop off and  
9 pick up people because where are we supposed to go? I  
10 mean, we got to get out in some kind of way, and DOT  
11 had said for years that Access-A-Ride wouldn't be  
12 ticketed, but now especially broker drivers who  
13 aren't driving the big blue and yellow or blue and  
14 white vans are being ticketed for dropping us off and  
15 picking us up.

16 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: That's a good  
17 flag. Thank you for that, Jean.

18 JEAN RYAN: And they say that the  
19 individual people who look at the tickets from the  
20 cameras, they say that they're not ticketing the  
21 drivers, but they are.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. We'll  
23 look into that.

24 JEAN RYAN: Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

2 Next.

3 BRIAN FRITSCH: Good afternoon. I'm Brian  
4 Fritsch, Associate Director of the Permanent Citizens  
5 Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. Thank you, Chair  
6 Brooks-Powers, for the opportunity to testify today.  
7 Sorry about my penmanship.

8 On Monday, we stood with NYPIRG  
9 Straphanger's campaign to announce the winners of the  
10 18th Annual Pokey and Schleppe Awards, given to the  
11 city's slowest, the M42, and least reliable, the Q8,  
12 high ridership bus routes. We do this to highlight  
13 the need for more investment from not only the MTA,  
14 but also NYC DOT. We also, for the first time this  
15 year, offered a new Mazel Award for the most improved  
16 service to the M79 and the SIM32 Express Bus, which  
17 jumped by more than two miles per hour from 2024 to  
18 2025. Neither of these improvements would have been  
19 possible without congestion pricing.

20 In short, riders are seeing some  
21 progress, but we can only continue to do so with a  
22 city and especially a mayor willing to properly  
23 enforce busways and their priority, invest in signal  
24 priority technology, and we sincerely hope finally  
25 follow the NYC Streets Plan. We also would be deeply



2 appreciative of a mayoral administration that  
3 promises to keep affordability a priority and partner  
4 with this Council to expand the Fair Fares program.  
5 Currently, Fair Fares only enrolls about a third of  
6 eligible New Yorkers, which is dismal. We would love  
7 to see automatic enrollment in the future so that  
8 low-income residents who are already getting other  
9 benefits and clearly qualify for Fair Fares don't  
10 have to jump through additional hoops. Additionally,  
11 expanding Fair Fares over 200 percent of the federal  
12 poverty level would finally expand eligibility to  
13 minimum-wage New Yorkers who are incredibly likely to  
14 be transit-dependent. Coupled with other improvements  
15 like fully free fares for the lowest-income New  
16 Yorkers, an expansion to the commuter railroads and  
17 Express Buses in New York City could take this  
18 program from a good idea to one that transforms how  
19 people move around the city. As a Council, you have  
20 been steadfast in your commitment to riders. Let's  
21 get on board with making bus service and Fair Fares  
22 even better. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

24 KATELYN VILLATORO: Good afternoon. My  
25 name is Katelyn Villatoro, and I'm the New York City

2 Policy Fellow at the New York League of Conservation  
3 Voters. Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers and Members of  
4 the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,  
5 for the opportunity to testify.

6 Public transportation is the cornerstone  
7 of an accessible city. As such, New Yorkers deserve  
8 to have their buses be efficient, sustainable, and  
9 most importantly, reliable. I'm here today to  
10 highlight some areas for growth in our bus systems  
11 and to underscore the need for support from City  
12 Hall. This year, the NYC Comptroller's Office  
13 reported that one-third of buses fail to show up on  
14 time and fail to reach stops at their scheduled time  
15 30 percent of the time. This is unacceptable from a  
16 major method of public transport. It's also a  
17 working-class issue. Those who feel these effects the  
18 hardest are marginalized communities living in outer  
19 borough neighborhoods without subway access.  
20 Moreover, we strongly encourage getting back on track  
21 with the milestones of the NYC Streets Plan and  
22 restarting long-stalled projects such as the Fordham  
23 Road Busway and Flatbush Ave Bus Lane. We also stand  
24 with advocates urging the Administration to expand  
25 Fair Fares to those living at 200 percent of the

2 federal poverty level. The Fair Fares Program needs  
3 greater investment to expand eligibility and fund  
4 outreach to ensure those who qualify use the program.

5 Beyond this, we need transformational  
6 change and urge the next Administration to prioritize  
7 bus rapid transit, which provides frequent high-  
8 capacity bus service. BRT quality compares to rail  
9 and subway systems at a fraction of the cost.

10 Finally, we support Resolution 61, which  
11 calls upon the MTA to remediate transportation  
12 structures with extremely high levels of lead. As a  
13 member of the NYC Coalition to End Lead Poisoning, we  
14 join in calling for the elimination of lead poisoning  
15 in our city. New Yorkers should not be concerned for  
16 their health when they step on public transit. As we  
17 approach a new Mayoral Administration and new City  
18 Council session, it's imperative we invest more in  
19 our city's bus system. Thank you for the opportunity  
20 to comment.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

22 CHARLTON D'SOUZA: All right. Good  
23 afternoon. So my name is Charlton D'Souza. I'm the  
24 President and Founder of Passengers United. We're a  
25 501c3 non-profit. So this morning we were here, we

2 were all in this room, and we had to listen to the  
3 MTA yet again mislead everyone in this room. I can  
4 tell you the first day of the Queens Bus Redesign,  
5 our organization did all the work on the Queens Bus  
6 Redesign. We had meetings, we were the only non-  
7 profit. On the day off and the week off, we were out  
8 there, I had things thrown at me, we were trying to  
9 help people, there were no MTA personnel to be found.  
10 And I live in Belmont Park by the Q82 route. The  
11 Queens Bus Redesign is not a redesign. It's glorified  
12 budget cuts on steroids. And for going to work in the  
13 morning, we literally have to wait 25 to 30 minutes  
14 for a bus to come. In the evening, we're waiting 40  
15 minutes for a bus to come, only for two buses. So the  
16 problem is you have bus bunching. When you call the  
17 bus command center, the superintendents, they are  
18 short-staffed. So if there's an accident, you could  
19 be waiting 50 minutes to an hour for a person to get  
20 to you. The bus operators are being assaulted,  
21 they're being spit at, they're being cursed at  
22 because everyone's angry with them. And then the  
23 situation is many buses are being canceled with the  
24 bus redesign, which is making the situation far more  
25 worse. So if you're asking someone to walk now nine

2 blocks to a bus stop, only for them to have to wait  
3 30 minutes, you think not there's going to be  
4 frustration when they get on that bus. I have seen so  
5 many things happen. And like I said, we were  
6 volunteers. We had things thrown at us. People  
7 thought we worked for the MTA, and I had explained we  
8 didn't work for the MTA. But I can tell you the  
9 community affairs and the way our non-profit was  
10 treated by the MTA is disgusting. Right now, we have  
11 12 plaintiffs who are getting ready to sue the MT.  
12 And one thing that you didn't talk about was bus  
13 shelters and bus pads, which (TIMER CHIME) cost the  
14 City a lot of money, which have been eliminated. And  
15 so we're doing a comprehensive study of every bus  
16 stop in Queens. My colleague, Jack Nirenberg and I,  
17 we got the DOT data, and we would love to have a  
18 meeting with you because there were some things that  
19 all of us wanted to bring up that we couldn't bring  
20 up because the MTA left. That's not fair to us as a  
21 non-profit.

22 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So in the  
23 future, what I suggest that you do is if you have  
24 questions that you'd like on the record from the  
25 agency, send them in advance to me.

2 CHARLTON D'SOUZA: Okay.

3 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: And we'll do  
4 our best to be able to ask some of the agency.

5 And in terms of scheduled meeting, you  
6 could connect with Julian afterwards from my office  
7 and we can find some time.

8 CHARLTON D'SOUZA: Okay. Right. And the  
9 MTA told us, they had asked us to do a report on the  
10 Queens bus redesign because of all the concerns  
11 coming in, so we've gotten so many phone calls and so  
12 many concerns. They put a bus stop in front of a  
13 McDonald's drive-through. How do you do that? And  
14 that's the thing. So many nice bus stops that the  
15 City paid for that cost thousands of dollars. They  
16 eliminated those bus stops and they're putting bus  
17 stops in driveways. Make it make sense. It's a mess.

18 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: So we'll  
19 follow up. Thank you.

20 CHARLTON D'SOUZA: Thank you.

21 JOSE DEJESUS: Well, good afternoon, Chair  
22 Brooks-Powers. My name is Jose DeJesus. I'm the  
23 General Recording Secretary for Local 106 and the TWU  
24 New York State Conference Chair covering the 70,000  
25 members under the TW New York State.

2 I'm here today to testify about the  
3 recent decision to remove bus dispatchers from the  
4 street and reassign them to the bus command center  
5 and to explain how this change impacts both transit  
6 workers and the riding public. As bus dispatchers, we  
7 are the eyes and ears of the transit system. We are  
8 out there in real time, monitoring services,  
9 responding to emergencies and helping riders when  
10 things don't go as planned. When a bus breaks down,  
11 when there's an accident or when a route gets delayed  
12 because of traffic or weather, it's the dispatcher on  
13 the street who steps in to keep service moving and to  
14 keep people safe. By removing 26 dispatchers from the  
15 field and moving them into the command center, the  
16 MTA is creating a dangerous gap in service oversight.  
17 No one sitting behind a computer screen can replace  
18 the first-hand judgment of a dispatcher who knows the  
19 streets, the routes, and the communities we serve. To  
20 make matters worse, the new 294-million radio system  
21 that the Transit Authority uses has been a total  
22 disaster. We experience dropped calls, system  
23 outages, and overlapping transmissions that cut one  
24 communication off as another begins. In emergencies,  
25 those second matter. When a bus operator can't get

2 through or a dispatcher can't be heard, that's not  
3 just an inconvenience, it's a serious safety risk.  
4 The new radio system is the dirty secret the Transit  
5 Authority doesn't want anyone talking about, but it's  
6 failing and it's dangerous. Without dispatchers on  
7 the street to provide direct coordination, riders,  
8 workers are left more vulnerable than ever. This  
9 change doesn't just hurt workers, it hurts riders.  
10 Without dispatchers on the street, buses run later,  
11 routes become less reliable, and passengers may be  
12 left waiting in unsafe conditions. Many of our riders  
13 are seniors, students, and essential workers who  
14 depend on us every day. We're not here just to resist  
15 change, we're here to make sure any change  
16 strengthens the system rather than weakens it. We  
17 want to work with the MTA to improve service, but  
18 that starts with respecting the work that dispatchers  
19 do every day and recognizing the critical role we  
20 play in keeping New York moving safely. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

22 This panel is dismissed. Thank you.

23 JEAN RYAN: (INAUDIBLE)

24 CHAIRPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: Good to know.

25 Thank you, Jean.



2 If we have inadvertently missed anyone  
3 that has registered to testify today and has yet to  
4 have been called, please use the Zoom hand function  
5 if you are testifying remotely and you will be called  
6 in that order that your hand has been raised. If you  
7 are testifying in person, please come to the dais.

8 With that being said, I'd like to thank  
9 everyone who took part in today's hearing on the  
10 state of our bus network, recognizing that how  
11 critical this form of transportation is to  
12 communities, particularly in the outer boroughs and  
13 those that are under-resourced in terms of transit  
14 options, and I look forward to continuing this  
15 conversation.

16 And with that, this meeting is now  
17 adjourned. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date November 30, 2025