

CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment Public
Hearing
August 28, 2022

1 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT CONGESTION PRICING PROGRAM

2 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PUBLIC HEARING

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4 VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

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6 DATE: AUGUST 28, 2022

7 TIME: 1:01 P.M.

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S:

2

3 Lou Oliva, Hearing Officer

4 Allison C. de Cerreño, MTA Deputy Chief Operating
5 Officer

6

6 Nichola Angel, Vice President, Triborough Bridge
7 and Tunnel Authority

7

8 Nicolas Choubah, Chief Engineer

9 William Ullom, Deputy Director of Traffic
10 Engineering and Planning

10

11 Rick Marquis, New York Division Administrator for
12 the Federal Highway Administration

12

13 Anna Price, Director for Office of Programs for
14 the Federal Highway Administration

14

15 Leah Flax, Moderator

16 Michael Wojnar, Moderator

17

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1 MR. OLIVA: Good afternoon. We
2 will now begin the hearing. Today is
3 Sunday, August 28, 2022, and the time
4 is 1:01 p.m. My name is Lou Oliva,
5 and I will be today's hearing officer.

6 This hearing is being
7 live-streamed and recorded and will be
8 available publicly on the MTA YouTube
9 channel and the Central Business
10 District Tolling Program project
11 website at mta.info/CBDTP.

12 Stenographers are present and will be
13 creating a written record of today's
14 hearing. By attending this virtual
15 hearing, you consent to be recorded.

16 Today's hearing will begin with
17 opening remarks, followed by a
18 presentation on the Central Business
19 District Tolling Program Environmental
20 Assessment, and then public comments.
21 There are 197 speakers signed up.
22 Speakers will be called in the order
23 they signed up.

24 After we get underway, through
25 the Q&A function, we will send each

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1 speaker present today your place in
2 the speaker list. Please give us a
3 little time as it will take some time
4 to get this message to each speaker in
5 attendance.

6 Throughout today, we will
7 regularly let everyone know where we
8 are in the list so you can gauge how
9 much longer you may need to wait to
10 speak.

11 If you've joined the Zoom under
12 a name that is different from the one
13 you used when you signed up to speak
14 or if you did not sign up to speak or
15 would like to speak, please identify
16 yourself in the Q&A function.

17 You may also request to speak
18 anonymously. If this is your
19 preference, please indicate this in
20 the Q&A function and we will give you
21 further instructions.

22 Please do not use the Q&A
23 function for comments you would like
24 to submit on Central Business District
25 Tolling Program. Comments can be

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1 submitted by visiting mta.info/CBDTP,
2 calling (646)252-7440, via mail to CBD
3 Tolling Program, 2 Broadway, 23rd
4 Floor, New York, New York 10004, or
5 via email at CBDTp@mtabt.org.

6 You may also submit comments
7 directly to the Federal Highway
8 Administration via email at
9 CBDTp@dot.gov or by mail at FHWA-New
10 York Division, Re: CBDTP, Leo W.
11 O'Brien Federal Building, 11A, Clinton
12 Avenue, Suite 719, Albany, New York
13 12207. Comments submitted by mail,
14 phone, e-mail, online or verbally at a
15 hearing will be considered equally and
16 carry the same weight.

17 In addition, and again in
18 recognition of the overwhelming
19 interest, we have added the ability to
20 submit personally-recorded video
21 comments. As with oral comments at
22 the hearing, video comments should be
23 limited to three minutes. Recorded
24 video comments may be submitted via
25 e-mail to CBDTp@mtabt.org. Such

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1 comments shall be considered equally
2 and carry the same weight as all other
3 methods for submitting comments.

4 CART Captioning and American
5 Sign Language interpreters are
6 available at today's hearing. To turn
7 on CART Captioning use the CC button
8 on the bottom of the screen. Sign
9 Language interpreters will appear on
10 screen for all attendees. To hear the
11 translated audio, use the
12 interpretation button on the bottom of
13 the screen.

14 We will now start with opening
15 remarks from Dr. Allison C. de
16 Cerreño, MTA's Deputy Chief Operating
17 Officer.

18 DR. C. DE CERRENO: Thank you.

19 And thank you all for joining us
20 today. We are excited to be here as
21 we continue our public outreach on
22 this historic project. I'd like to
23 thank you for taking the time to learn
24 more and share with us your thoughts
25 and comments.

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1 This afternoon, I am
2 representing the Triborough Bridge and
3 Tunnel Authority and MTA more broadly,
4 and am joined by Nichola Angel, Vice
5 President of Triborough Bridge and
6 Tunnel Authority and other members of
7 the agency, as well as other
8 colleagues from the other project
9 sponsors for this effort. Nicolas
10 Choubah, Chief Engineer for the New
11 York State Department of
12 Transportation, and William Ullom,
13 Deputy Director of Traffic Engineering
14 and Planning.

15 We also have with us this today,
16 Rick Marquis, New York Division
17 Administrator for the Federal Highway
18 Administration, the lead Federal
19 agency for the project. He will be
20 joined by Anna Price, Director for
21 Office of Programs.

22 Key personnel from all four of
23 our agencies are also in attendance
24 today, listening to what you have to
25 say; your comments will be recorded

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1 indexed and responded to as part of
2 the Environmental Assessment process.

3 Last year, we held ten
4 webinar-style public sessions, nine
5 similar sessions focused on
6 environmental justice communities, and
7 several meetings each of the
8 Environmental Justice Technical
9 Advisory Group and Environmental
10 Justice Stakeholder Working Group.

11 Since then, we have incorporated
12 comments heard during these sessions
13 into the technical analyses for the
14 Environmental Assessment, or EA.

15 I want to thank you all for your
16 earlier input; I believe you will see
17 firsthand how your comments affected
18 what we explored and how we addressed
19 concerns.

20 On August 10, 2022, we released
21 the Environment Assessment for public
22 review. If you have not yet had an
23 opportunity to read the entire
24 Environmental Assessment, the
25 Executive Summary, which has been

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1 translated into multiple languages, is
2 available on our website.

3 The rest of the document is also
4 on the website, and you can find a
5 hard copy of the entire EA at numerous
6 locations throughout 28 counties in
7 New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.
8 A complete list of locations is also
9 available on the Project website.

10 In a few moments, we will begin
11 with a presentation that provides a
12 summary review of the EA findings. It
13 is a bit longer than one might expect,
14 but there is a lot of important
15 information here and we want to ensure
16 that everyone has an opportunity to
17 hear about the areas in which they may
18 be interested.

19 After the presentation, we will
20 listen to those of you who would like
21 to provide oral public comments. The
22 formal comment period on the EA
23 continues through September 9th. For
24 those who prefer not to speak but
25 still want to submit comments, we will

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1 provide information on other ways to
2 do that again, later in the session.

3 Now, let's begin our
4 presentation.

5 [Taped presentation begins -
6 Narrated by Dr. C. de Cerreño.]

7 So what is the Central Business
8 District Tolling Program? In 2019,
9 New York State enacted the MTA Reform
10 and Traffic Mobility Act, which
11 authorized the Triborough Bridge and
12 Tunnel Authority or TBTA to design,
13 develop and implement a vehicular
14 tolling program to reduce traffic
15 congestion in the Manhattan Central
16 Business District.

17 As defined by the act, vehicles
18 entering or remaining in the Manhattan
19 Central Business District on or below
20 60th Street, which is shown in the map
21 in orange, would be tolled. The FDR
22 Drive, West Side Highway, Battery Park
23 Underpass and any surface roadway
24 portion of the Hugh L. Carey Tunnel
25 connecting to West Street. In

1 essence, the dark red line along the
2 edges of the orange area on the map to
3 the right, would be excluded from the
4 toll.

5 After covering the
6 project-related capital and operating
7 expenses, revenue collected would fund
8 MTA's 2020 to 2024 capital program and
9 successor capital programs.

10 By law, 80 percent of the net
11 revenues would be used for New York
12 City transit capital improvements, ten
13 percent would be used for Long Island
14 Rail Road and ten percent for
15 improvements for Metro-North Railroad.

16 With respect to how the
17 Manhattan CBD Tolling Program would
18 work, locations for infrastructure
19 would include detection points placed
20 at entrances and exits to the
21 Manhattan CBD. On the avenues, these
22 detection points would generally be
23 between 60th and 61st Streets and an
24 algorithm would be used so those who
25 stay on excluded roadways are not

1 tolled.

2 In essence, as someone is coming
3 down the roadway, the detection points
4 would detect their vehicle and
5 determine how long it should be before
6 they are seen at the next location.
7 Assuming they continue to be seen at
8 each location within the allotted
9 time, no toll would be charged.

10 If, however, the vehicle is not
11 seen and then not seen again, at some
12 point the system will determine that
13 they must have entered the Central
14 Business District and a toll would be
15 charged.

16 On the right, you can see an
17 example of what the infrastructure and
18 the tolling system equipment would
19 look like. It's predominantly poles,
20 as you see on the right, and mast
21 arms, as you see on the left.
22 Importantly, the tolling system
23 equipment will be clustered and housed
24 in a single-unit enclosure as shown on
25 the bottom.

1 The enclosures are purposely
2 designed to minimize the amount of
3 equipment on the poles and to reflect
4 light in a way that makes them less
5 visible to someone walking or driving.

6 With respect to how customers
7 would pay, it would be very similar to
8 what people experience today. They
9 would be able to pay with E-ZPass or
10 Tolls by Mail, or an image is taken of
11 the license plate and a bill is mailed
12 to the registered owner of the
13 vehicle. And we will also have the
14 capability for future third-party
15 providers. In essence, these are
16 companies that may use different types
17 of technology that can link into the
18 technology that the system would have.

19 The benefits of the program
20 would include reduced vehicular
21 traffic in and near the Manhattan
22 Central Business District, improved
23 travel times within the Manhattan
24 Central Business District, including
25 for buses and deliveries, and a new

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1 source of local recurring capital
2 funding for subways, trains and buses
3 as well as improved regional air
4 quality.

5 So why is an Environmental
6 Assessment or EA needed for this
7 project? Well, some roadways in the
8 Manhattan Central Business District
9 have received federal funds, so
10 approval for tolling is needed from
11 the Federal Highway Administration.

12 Before a federal agency makes a
13 decision, the National Environmental
14 Policy Act, or NEPA, requires the
15 federal agency to understand and
16 disclose the environmental effects of
17 the action. In this case, the
18 tolling. An EA is performed to ensure
19 federal agencies consider the
20 environmental impacts of their actions
21 in the decision-making process.

22 For a proposed action that is
23 not likely to have significant effects
24 or when the significance of the effect
25 is unknown, the EA aids in determining

1 the significance of the adverse
2 effects. Since the project could have
3 effects on environment justice
4 populations, Federal Highway
5 Administration and the project
6 sponsors incorporate an enhanced
7 public outreach and coordination with
8 federal and state resource agencies.

9 The project's purpose is to
10 reduce traffic congestion in the
11 Manhattan Central Business District in
12 a manner that would generate revenue
13 for future transportation improvements
14 pursuant to acceptance into Federal
15 Highway Administration's Value Pricing
16 Pilot Program, or VPPP.

17 The need is to reduce vehicle
18 congestion in the Manhattan Central
19 Business District and create a new
20 local recurring funding source for
21 MTA's capital projects. The purpose
22 and need are refined through four
23 objectives; to reduce daily vehicle
24 miles traveled, or VMT, within the
25 Manhattan Central Business District by

1 at least five percent, to reduce the
2 number of vehicles entering the
3 Manhattan Central Business District
4 daily by at least ten percent, to
5 create a funding source for capital
6 improvements and generate sufficient
7 annual net revenue to fund \$15 billion
8 for capital projects for the MTA
9 capital program, and to establish a
10 tolling program consistent with the
11 purposes underlying the New York State
12 legislation entitled the MTA Reform
13 and Traffic Mobility Act.

14 You may be asking why do we need
15 to toll the Manhattan Central Business
16 District. Well, traffic congestion
17 has been a problem in the Manhattan
18 Central Business District for many
19 years and one of the most challenging
20 policy problems for generations.

21 Many efforts have been made and
22 yet, congestion in New York City
23 consistently ranks among the worst in
24 the United States. Indeed, congestion
25 costs 102 hours of lost time, equating

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1 to almost \$1,600 per year per driver
2 in delay.

3 Between 2010 and 2019, travel
4 speeds fell 22 percent in Manhattan
5 Central Business District and local
6 bus speeds have declined 28 percent
7 since 2010. The average speed of
8 Select Bus Service, New York City's
9 bus rapid transit service routes in
10 the Manhattan CBD is 19 percent slower
11 than in the outer boroughs.

12 With respect to MTA's subway,
13 rail and bus systems, they need to be
14 repaired and modernized. Funding from
15 the project would support the 2020 to
16 2024 capital program and the successor
17 programs that prioritize investing to
18 improve reliability, committing to
19 environmental sustainability, building
20 an accessible transit system for all
21 New Yorkers easing congestion and
22 creating growth, and improving safety
23 and customer service through
24 technology.

25 I'll now walk you through the

1 findings of the Environment
2 Assessment. There were two project
3 alternatives that are evaluated in the
4 Environmental Assessment. The
5 no-action alternative in which there
6 is no program to toll vehicles in the
7 Manhattan Central Business District,
8 no comprehensive plan to reduce
9 congestion, and no new annual
10 recurring funding for MTA capital
11 programs.

12 And there is the central
13 business tolling or action alternative
14 where we implement a tolling program
15 consistent with the Mobility Act to
16 toll the vehicles entering or
17 remaining in the Manhattan Central
18 Business District. We install tolling
19 infrastructure and tolling system
20 equipment and signage within and near
21 the Manhattan Central Business
22 District, and generate funds for MTA's
23 capital investments to subways, buses
24 and commuter railroads.

25 The Environmental Assessment

1 explores each of the topics in this
2 chart. The specific chapters that
3 address the analysis for each area are
4 identified here. As you can see, the
5 analysis shows that most of the areas
6 have beneficial effects or no adverse
7 effects, but there are few areas with
8 potential adverse effects. The slides
9 a bit later in the presentation will
10 address each of the areas and identify
11 any mitigation that is needed.

12 This slide has a lot of
13 information and it is in the executive
14 summary and in chapter two of the
15 Environmental Assessment for further
16 review. I am going to spend a few
17 moments reviewing and explaining it
18 here so everyone can understand its
19 importance.

20 As I said a moment ago, there
21 are two alternatives for this
22 Environment Assessment, the no-action
23 and the Central Business District
24 Tolling Alternative.

25 Within the Central Business

1 District Tolling Alternative, there
2 are a number of tolling scenarios that
3 vary in several ways. Modeling these
4 different scenarios helped us to
5 understand the full range of effects
6 of the Central Business District
7 Tolling Alternative since the decision
8 on the actual tolling scenario has not
9 yet been made.

10 For those of you who
11 participated in the early outreach,
12 you may notice that we now have seven
13 tolling scenarios when we originally
14 discussed six. That is because we
15 added a tolling scenario, which I will
16 get to shortly, as a result of
17 concerns raised during the early
18 public outreach.

19 So let me walk you through.

20 Along the top, are the tolling
21 scenarios. Tolling Scenario A we
22 referred to as the base plan. This is
23 the plan that is characterized in the
24 legislation. Tolling Scenario B has
25 that same base plan but starts to add

1 caps in the form of how many times a
2 vehicle can be tolled and certain
3 exemptions.

4 Tolling Scenario C adds what we
5 call low-crossing credits for vehicles
6 using tunnels to access the Central
7 Business District with some caps and
8 exemptions. Those crossing credits,
9 when they are low are roughly \$6.50.
10 When they are high, as you see in
11 tolling Scenarios D, E and F, the
12 credits are roughly \$13. And this was
13 used for modeling purposes.

14 In D, E and F, you see those
15 high-crossing credits. In D and E,
16 they are applied to the tunnels that
17 enter into the Central Business
18 District. And in F, vehicles using
19 all of the toll facilities that enter
20 Manhattan would be eligible for
21 crossing credits.

22 Moving down the left side, you
23 see the distinction on the items that
24 are varying. First, the potential
25 crossing credits. Again, these are

1 credits that would be applied toward
2 the Central Business District toll,
3 for tolls paid at facilities prior to
4 entering the Central Business
5 District.

6 As you move to the right, you
7 can see the nos and yeses which
8 determine whether or not that
9 potential crossing credit applies to
10 the facilities that are identified.

11 Moving to the next group, are
12 potential exemptions and discounts in
13 the form of caps on the number of
14 tolls per day. Importantly, by
15 legislation and in the modeling, and
16 in the program, passenger vehicles
17 would be charged only once per day.
18 But other vehicles could be charged
19 more than that.

20 And as you read across to the
21 right, you will see under each of the
22 different tolling scenarios how these
23 different types of vehicles were
24 treated with respect to caps or
25 exemptions.

1 Finally, as you move to the
2 bottom, we have the approximate toll
3 rate for autos, small trucks and large
4 trucks that resulted from the
5 modeling.

6 The one tolling scenario I'd
7 like to mention is tolling Scenario G,
8 all the way to the right. This
9 tolling scenario has a base plan with
10 the same tolls for all vehicle
11 classes. We'll talk about that a
12 little bit later in the presentation.
13 But importantly, as you see on the
14 bottom, the toll rate is set the same
15 for every type of vehicle.

16 So that was a lot of
17 information. And so, I'd like to
18 leave you with some key takeaways.

19 First and foremost, tolling the
20 Manhattan Central Business District in
21 all scenarios, reduce traffic entering
22 the Manhattan Central Business
23 District and results in a net benefit
24 in congestion reduction for the
25 region.

1 Discounts, crossing credits and
2 exemptions result in the need for
3 higher toll rates. Higher toll rates
4 lead to a greater degree of traffic
5 reduction in the Manhattan Central
6 Business District, but also lead to
7 increased traffic diversions,
8 including increases along the Cross
9 Bronx Expressway and the Staten Island
10 Expressway.

11 Crossing credits lead to more
12 parity in the total cost among
13 different routes that are taken by
14 vehicles entering the Manhattan
15 Central Business District, but those
16 same crossing credits change the
17 balance of effects on traffic.

18 It results in less effect
19 reducing traffic from Queens and much
20 less effect reducing traffic from New
21 Jersey. They result in greater
22 effects reducing traffic from north of
23 60th Street in Brooklyn and they
24 result in more traffic at the
25 Queens-Midtown tunnel, the Hugh L.

1 Carey Tunnel and the Long Island
2 Expressway.

3 Before we move on, I thought it
4 was helpful to give at least a sense
5 of where are the commuters actually
6 coming from into the Manhattan Central
7 Business District.

8 On the left, you can see the
9 28-county region. Again, this is all
10 in the Environmental Assessment for
11 further review. The colors on the map
12 denote the proportion of total
13 commuters to the Manhattan Central
14 Business District from each county in
15 the 28-county region.

16 The map also shows how many
17 commute by transit, car or some other
18 transportation mode to reach the
19 Manhattan Central Business District.
20 Not surprisingly, counties that are
21 further away tend to have fewer
22 commuters to the Manhattan Central
23 Business District.

24 For example, of all the
25 commuters to the Manhattan Central

1 Business District, fewer than one
2 percent come from counties like New
3 Haven and Dutchess. About one to three
4 percent come from counties like
5 Rockland, Morris and Richmond. And
6 roughly four to five percent come from
7 Bergen, Hudson and Westchester
8 counties.

9 Closer in, about six to ten
10 percent come from Nassau County and
11 the Bronx. While the remainder of the
12 New York City boroughs contribute 11
13 to 22 percent of the commuters to the
14 Manhattan Central Business District.

15 On the right in the figure, you
16 can see that of all the people
17 commuting to work in the Manhattan
18 Central Business District, the vast
19 majority, 85 percent, commute by
20 transit. Of the 11 percent who
21 commute by car, approximately eight
22 percent of them are from counties in
23 New York, roughly three percent in New
24 Jersey and less than one percent from
25 Connecticut.

1 Now we'll go through the effects
2 of each of the topic areas. On the
3 top right of each slide, you'll see
4 that we've identified whether effects
5 are beneficial, not adverse or
6 adverse. In this case, this is the
7 regional effects of transportation.
8 Broadly speaking, all tolling
9 scenarios reduce the number of vehicle
10 entries into the Manhattan Central
11 Business District and reduce vehicle
12 miles traveled in the Manhattan
13 Central Business District.

14 The table on the bottom left
15 provides the degree to which the
16 traffic is reduced. In this case,
17 there is a reduction of vehicles
18 entering the Manhattan CBD of nearly
19 20 percent to roughly 15 percent,
20 depending upon which tolling scenario
21 one is looking at.

22 On the right-hand side, you see
23 the increase or decrease in daily
24 vehicle miles traveled for each of the
25 areas throughout the 28 counties. And

1 as you can see, broadly speaking,
2 regionally again, there's largely a
3 benefit.

4 In the Manhattan Central
5 Business District, VMT decreases
6 anywhere from a little over nine
7 percent to about seven percent.
8 Throughout New York City, the
9 reduction is roughly 1.5 percent to
10 about 0.7 percent and so on down the
11 group.

12 With respect to highways, we
13 have beneficial effects and we do have
14 some adverse effects in a few
15 locations where mitigation will be
16 required. Some locations experience a
17 decrease in congestion, which is a
18 beneficial effect. There were three
19 highway segments, though, that would
20 experience adverse effects in the form
21 of increased delays at certain times.

22 As you can see here, it's the
23 Westbound Long Island Expressway near
24 the Queens-Midtown tunnel in the
25 mid-day, approaches to the Westbound

1 George Washington Bridge on I-95 also
2 in the mid-day, and in the evening,
3 the Southbound and Northbound FDR
4 Drive between East 10th Street and
5 Brooklyn Bridge.

6 For mitigation, the project
7 sponsors implement a monitoring plan
8 prior to the project beginning that
9 identifies thresholds for adverse
10 effects. If the thresholds are
11 reached, as a result of the project,
12 the project sponsors will institute
13 Transportation Demand Management
14 measures such as ramp metering,
15 motorist information or signage, at
16 identified highway locations with
17 adverse effects.

18 In addition,
19 post-implementation, the project
20 sponsors will monitor effects. And if
21 needed, Triborough Bridge and Tunnel
22 Authority, TBTA, will modify the toll
23 rates, crossing credits, exemptions
24 and/or discounts to reduce those
25 adverse effects.

1 Note the call-out in the upper
2 right and recall what I mentioned
3 regarding tolling Scenario G earlier.
4 During our early outreach in
5 conversations with environmental
6 justice communities we shared
7 information regarding changes in
8 traffic patterns. Here on the left,
9 you can see one of the maps that was
10 used for analysis related to traffic
11 and air quality effects. These are
12 areas with environmental justice
13 communities. Under this tolling
14 scenario, some of these communities
15 would experience reduced vehicle miles
16 traveled. Others would see some
17 increases as traffic diverts to avoid
18 the toll. As noted earlier, as the
19 toll goes up, these diversions
20 increase.

21 Participants raised concerns
22 about the increased traffic along the
23 Cross Bronx Expressway and asked what
24 that meant in terms of truck traffic,
25 as trucks are associated with

1 particulate matter and associated
2 health effects. The team reviewed the
3 initial six scenarios at a specific
4 location, Macombs Road and found the
5 daily increases in truck traffic in
6 the table to the right. During the
7 same outreach period, the trucking
8 associations also raised their
9 concerns that people can move to
10 transit to avoid the toll. But trucks
11 cannot do this.

12 Further, the tolled bridges
13 roadways and tunnels typically charge
14 higher tolls for trucks given the wear
15 and tear on the roadway. The purpose
16 of this project is to reduce
17 congestion.

18 The project team looked closer
19 at why trucks were diverting in the
20 modeling. We found that the extent of
21 the diversion was linked to the truck
22 toll and price differential in the
23 initial six tolling scenarios where
24 trucks are tolled at a higher price.
25 To test this, we created tolling

1 Scenario G, which prices all vehicle
2 types the same.

3 The results, as you can see,
4 reduced the diversions along with the
5 relative incremental number of trucks
6 on the Cross Bronx Expressway. Given
7 the concerns raised, the project team
8 decided to include this tolling
9 scenario formerly in the Environmental
10 Assessment.

11 With respect to local
12 intersections, again, there were
13 beneficial effects and adverse effects
14 where mitigation is required.
15 Specifically, most intersections would
16 experience decreases in delay.
17 Tolling Scenarios D, E and F, the
18 high-credit scenarios, have four out
19 of a 102 intersections that
20 experienced adverse effects in the
21 modeling in the form of increased
22 delay at certain times. And you can
23 see them here on the right.

24 Project sponsors will monitor
25 those intersections where adverse

1 effects are identified and implement
2 appropriate signal timing adjustments
3 to mitigate the effect for New York
4 City Department of Transportation's
5 normal practice.

6 In terms of transit, we found
7 beneficial effects and some adverse
8 effects where mitigation is required.
9 With respect to beneficial effects,
10 reduced roadway congestion would
11 result in reliable faster bus trips.
12 There is an increase in transit
13 ridership of one to two percent
14 system-wide for travel to and from the
15 Manhattan Central Business District,
16 but no adverse effects from increased
17 ridership on any lines or transit
18 stations.

19 We do see that in some scenarios
20 increased ridership could adversely
21 affect passenger flows at specific
22 stairs or escalators, what we refer to
23 as stationed elements.

24 With respect to mitigation, in
25 tolling Scenarios E and F, TBTA will

1 coordinate with New Jersey Transit and
2 the Port Authority of New York and New
3 Jersey to implement a monitoring plan
4 with specific thresholds for
5 pedestrian volumes on a specific
6 Station Stair in Hoboken Terminal.

7 If the thresholds are reached,
8 TBTA will coordinate with these
9 agencies to implement signage and
10 wayfinding. In all the tolling
11 scenarios, TBTA will coordinate with
12 MTA's New York City Transit to
13 implement monitoring plans with
14 specific thresholds at the locations
15 bulleted here.

16 At 42nd Street and Times Square,
17 there's a specific stair affected.
18 And if the threshold is reached, the
19 center handrail will be removed and
20 the riser will be adjusted. At Union
21 Square Subway Station and Flushing and
22 Main Street Station, there are two
23 escalators, one in each, that could be
24 affected. If the thresholds are
25 reached, we would increase escalator

1 speeds. And at Court Square, there's
2 a stair affected. If the threshold is
3 reached, we would construct a new
4 stair to increase capacity.

5 With respect to pedestrians and
6 bicycles, the EA found that increases
7 in passengers at transit hubs would
8 have no adverse effects. There would
9 be some increases in bicycle trips
10 overall and near the transit hubs, but
11 again, no adverse effects.

12 Outside the Manhattan Central
13 Business District, increased transit
14 usage at individual stations would not
15 adversely affect pedestrian conditions
16 on nearby sidewalks, crosswalks or
17 corners. But within the Manhattan
18 Central Business District, there are
19 two crosswalks and one sidewalk that
20 would be adversely affected.

21 You can see here, on the right
22 with the red lines that they occur on
23 8th Avenue near West 32nd Street and
24 7th Avenue and on West 34th Street and
25 Avenue of the Americas. For

1 mitigation, the project sponsors will
2 implement a monitoring plan with
3 threshold for action. If the
4 threshold is reached, pedestrian space
5 would be increased and obstructions
6 will be removed or relocated.

7 With respect to parking and to
8 social conditions, specifically
9 population characteristics and
10 neighborhood character, we found
11 either beneficial effects or no
12 adverse effects.

13 With respect to social
14 conditions, improvement in travel time
15 and safety, reduced vehicle operating
16 costs, and reduced emissions would
17 occur from the project. There would
18 be no adverse effects on neighborhood
19 character or access, travel to
20 employment within the Manhattan
21 Central Business District or reverse
22 commuting, traffic patterns on local
23 streets or community facilities and
24 services.

25 With respect to parking, the

1 study found a reduction in parking
2 demand within the Manhattan Central
3 Business District and increased
4 parking demand at subway and commuter
5 rail stations and park-and-ride
6 facilities outside of the Manhattan's
7 Central Business District. But the
8 increase at any individual location
9 would not be large enough to result in
10 an adverse effect from the project.

11 Economic conditions found
12 increased productivity as well as
13 safety improvements. There were no
14 adverse effects to any particular
15 industry or occupational category in
16 the Manhattan Central Business
17 District.

18 Depending on the tolling
19 scenario, the toll could reduce taxi
20 and for-hire vehicle revenues in the
21 Manhattan Central Business District.
22 While the industry would remain
23 economically viable overall,
24 individual drivers could be adversely
25 affected, and this is dealt with a

1 little bit later in the presentation.

2 In terms of energy and noise,
3 again, there are beneficial effects
4 and no adverse effects. With respect
5 to energy, the region would benefit
6 from reductions in regional energy
7 consumption as a result of reductions
8 in the vehicle miles traveled.

9 In terms of noise, 102
10 intersections were assessed and all
11 the crossings into the Manhattan
12 Central Business District. The study
13 found imperceptible increases or
14 decreases in noise levels resulting
15 from changes in traffic volumes.

16 With respect to air quality, the
17 Environmental Assessment found that
18 regionally, air pollutants would be
19 reduced including precursors to
20 greenhouse gases. There would be no
21 local exceedances of air quality
22 standards.

23 Recognizing that air quality is
24 of great concern to many constituents,
25 we have several enhancements though

1 there were no local exceedances of
2 those standards. New York City
3 Department of Transportation will
4 coordinate to expand the New York City
5 community air survey network of air
6 quality monitors. This will be
7 supplemented by a small number of
8 real-time monitors for particulate
9 matter.

10 Also, based on feedback during
11 outreach for the project, MTA will
12 prioritize Kingsbridge and Gun Hill
13 Bus Depots, both located in and
14 serving primarily environmental
15 justice communities in Upper Manhattan
16 and the Bronx, when electric buses are
17 received in MTA's next major
18 procurement of battery electric buses.

19 In terms of environmental
20 justice, the study did find adverse
21 effects where mitigation is required.
22 The map to the right shows the
23 communities that are environmental
24 justice communities throughout the
25 region. They are widespread and as

1 shown earlier in some cases, certain
2 EJ communities will benefit directly
3 from this project.

4 However, the project would have
5 the potential for disproportionately
6 high and adverse effects on low-income
7 drivers who do not have an alternative
8 transportation mode for reaching the
9 Manhattan Central Business District
10 and on taxi and for-hire vehicle
11 drivers in New York City, many of whom
12 identify as part of an environmental
13 justice population.

14 This adverse effect occurs
15 specifically in tolling scenarios that
16 toll their vehicles more than once per
17 day. We have a number of mitigation
18 for low-income drivers which you can
19 see here on the left.

20 There will be a tax credit for
21 Central Business District tolls paid
22 by residents of the Manhattan Central
23 Business District whose New York
24 adjusted gross income for the taxable
25 year is less than \$60,000. TBTA will

1 coordinate with New York State
2 Department of Taxation and Finance to
3 ensure availability of documentation
4 needed for drivers eligible for the
5 credit.

6 TBTA will also post information
7 related to the tax credit on the
8 project website with links to the New
9 York State Department of Taxation and
10 Finance website to guide eligible
11 drivers to information on claiming the
12 credit.

13 TBTA will also eliminate the \$10
14 refundable deposit required for
15 E-ZPass customers with no credit card
16 linked to their account. They will
17 increase promotion of existing E-ZPass
18 payment and plan options and will work
19 with MTA to increase outreach and
20 education on eligibility for existing
21 discounted transit fare products and
22 programs.

23 The project sponsors will
24 establish an environmental justice
25 community group that will meet on a

1 biannual basis with the first meeting
2 six months after project
3 implementation to share updated data
4 and analysis and hear about potential
5 concerns.

6 For effects on taxi and FHV
7 drivers, the project sponsors will
8 work with appropriate city and state
9 agencies so that when passengers are
10 present in the vehicles, the
11 passengers will pay the toll rather
12 than the driver.

13 Again, these mitigations would
14 be for New York City taxi and FHV
15 drivers if a tolling scenario is
16 implemented with tolls of more than
17 once per day for their vehicles.

18 TBTA will work with MTA New York
19 City Transit to institute an
20 employment resource coordination
21 program to connect drivers
22 experiencing job insecurity with a
23 direct pathway to licensing, training
24 and job placement with MTA or its
25 affiliated vendors at no cost to the

1 drivers.

2 For those who may not want a
3 commercial driver's license, TBTA will
4 coordinate with MTA New York City
5 Transit to submit a request to the
6 Federal Transit Administration for a
7 pilot program that will help increase
8 eligibility of taxi and FHV drivers to
9 use their vehicles to provide
10 paratransit trips and MTA's New York
11 City Transit will implement this
12 program if approved.

13 With respect to construction
14 effects, no adverse effects were
15 found. Construction would consist of
16 replacement of existing poles or
17 installation of new poles and mast
18 arms excavation and construction of
19 foundations, placement of new support
20 poles or structures attachment of
21 tolling system equipment, and
22 restoration of the roadway, sidewalk
23 or ground surface.

24 The construction would occur on
25 streets and sidewalks and take

1 approximately one to two weeks per
2 location. During this time, there
3 would be temporary disruptions to
4 traffic and pedestrian patterns and
5 temporary noise disruptions at nearby
6 land uses such as residences and
7 businesses. The project sponsors
8 would require the contractor to
9 develop and comply with plans and
10 procedures to minimize construction
11 effects.

12 With respect to visual
13 resources, there were also no adverse
14 effects. Infrastructure is similar in
15 form to street light poles, sign poles
16 or similar structures already in use
17 throughout New York City. Signage is
18 similar in size and character to signs
19 already present and the color would
20 match existing light pole colors.

21 On the bottom right, there's a
22 rendering of tolling system equipment
23 that would be placed on existing
24 infrastructure. Again, as noted
25 earlier, the tolling equipment is

1 clustered into those single enclosures
2 to reduce visual impact and cameras
3 would use infrared illumination at
4 night so there would be no visible
5 light needed. The project would have
6 a neutral effect on viewer groups and
7 no adverse effect on visual resources.

8 With respect to Section 4(f), a
9 de minimis impact is one that after
10 taking into account any measures to
11 minimize harm, results in either a
12 Section 106 finding of no adverse
13 effect or no historic properties
14 affected on a historic property, or a
15 determination that the project would
16 not adversely affect the activities,
17 features or attributes qualifying a
18 park, recreation area or refuge for
19 protection under Section 4(f).

20 Central Park and the High Line
21 have the potential for a de minimis
22 use. Federal Highway Administration
23 is soliciting input from the public on
24 the effects of installing equipment
25 and signs within and on these

1 properties. Signage and for
2 replacement poles with tolling
3 technology would be installed in
4 Central Park.

5 Tolling technology equipment
6 would be added to the underneath of
7 the existing structure of the High
8 Line. You can see some of the
9 renderings at the bottom here.

10 With respect to the findings,
11 the Central Business District Tolling
12 Alternative does not result in adverse
13 effects pursuant to Section 106 of the
14 National Historic Preservation Act.
15 And it does not adversely affect the
16 activities, features or attributes
17 that qualify the resource for
18 protection under Section 4(f).

19 Federal Highway Administration
20 has concurrence on a proposed finding
21 from officials with jurisdiction over
22 Central Park and the High Line and
23 will consider public input on its
24 proposed finding received during this
25 public review of the Environmental

1 Assessments.

2 There were two final additional
3 enhancements I would like to mention,
4 and again, they were in response to
5 outreach during the early outreach
6 period.

7 First, the project sponsors are
8 committed to ongoing data collection
9 and reporting on the potential effects
10 of the project. Data will be
11 collected in advance and after
12 implementation and a formal report
13 will be issued one year after
14 implementation and then every two
15 years thereafter.

16 The reporting website will make
17 data, analysis and visualizations
18 available in open data format to the
19 greatest extent possible with updates
20 provided on at least a biannual basis
21 as data becomes available and analysis
22 is completed.

23 Again, through our conversations
24 and public outreach and particularly
25 with environmental justice

1 communities, we are also committed to
2 prioritizing equity and bus service
3 improvements. New York City's buses
4 serve a greater share of low-income
5 minority households and other modes
6 including subways.

7 MTA developed a new approach
8 that combines considerations of equity
9 and air quality to identify equity
10 priority areas, which are then used to
11 target improvements and investments to
12 promote equity and access to
13 opportunities in transit-dependent,
14 historically marginalized and
15 underserved areas.

16 Information on our early public
17 outreach is here on the left. During
18 that period, we held ten virtual
19 public outreach meetings as well as
20 nine environmental justice outreach
21 meetings.

22 We had three meetings of the
23 Environmental Justice Technical
24 Advisory Group and two meetings of the
25 Environmental Justice Stakeholder

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1 Working Group. During the 19 public
2 outreach and EJ outreach meetings, we
3 had over a thousand participants
4 registered and nearly 400 speakers.

5 All of the sessions were left on
6 our project website and people could
7 access them through YouTube. To date,
8 we've had over 14,000 views and we
9 received over 7,300 comments. Our
10 current public outreach sessions will
11 include six public hearings starting
12 on Thursday, August 25th and running
13 through Wednesday, August 31st.

14 We will also have another
15 meeting of the Environmental Justice
16 Stakeholder Working Group and another
17 meeting of the Environmental Justice
18 Technical Advisory Group.

19 With respect to schedule, this
20 shows where we currently are. We did
21 our early public outreach in 2021. In
22 early 2022, we prepared the
23 Environmental Assessment, we've
24 notified agencies and organizations
25 and individuals of the Environmental

1 Assessment's availability and we're
2 now in the midst, in orange here, of
3 public review and comment on the
4 Environmental Assessment.

5 After the formal comment period
6 closes, there will be a determination
7 whether the action, in this case, the
8 tolling, will result in significant
9 effects.

10 Ultimately, we're expecting that
11 in early 2023, Federal Highway
12 Administration will issue a decision
13 document. If adverse effects are not
14 significant or can be mitigated below
15 significant levels, FHWA would issue a
16 FONSI, a Finding of No Significant
17 Impact. If there are significant
18 effects that cannot be mitigated, then
19 an Environmental Impact Statement or
20 EIS would be required.

21 As noted, our public comment
22 period is open until September 9,
23 2022. If you would like to submit
24 written comments, you may do so in the
25 following ways: Through our project

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1 website, by email, mail, phone or fax,
2 or to the Federal Highway
3 Administration by email or mail.

4 All of this information is also
5 available on our website and the
6 information on the project website
7 email, mail, phone and fax for MTA
8 bridges and tunnels is also in the
9 Environmental Assessment. In
10 addition, formal oral comments can be
11 made at the public hearings as many of
12 you are doing today. They will be
13 recorded by the stenographer.

14 Thank you again for attending
15 this public hearing to learn more
16 about the Environmental Assessment for
17 the Central Business District tolling
18 program. And now, we look forward to
19 hearing from you.

20 [Taped presentation ends.]

21 MR. OLIVA: We encourage anyone
22 joining via Zoom or livestream to take
23 a short survey using the QR code or
24 link currently being displayed. The
25 link can also be found in the chat

1 section of the Zoom.

2 We are gathering public comment
3 today on the Environmental Assessment
4 for the Central Business District
5 Tolling Program. Comments will be
6 recorded, indexed and responded to as
7 part of the Environmental Assessment
8 process.

9 There are 197 speakers signed up
10 to speak today. Each speaker is
11 limited to three minutes. At the
12 two-and-a-half-minute mark, the clock
13 will turn red and you will hear it
14 beep notifying you that you have 30
15 seconds remaining. We ask that
16 speakers keep their remarks to the
17 three-minute time frame out of respect
18 for all other speakers.

19 We will be calling speakers in
20 the order that they signed up, but
21 anyone who wishes to speak will have
22 an opportunity. Due to the volume of
23 speakers, there may be extended wait
24 times to speak. Comments submitted by
25 mail, phone, e-mail, online form, or

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1 verbally at a hearing will be
2 considered equally and carry the same
3 weight.

4 If you have joined the Zoom
5 under a name that is different from
6 the one you used when you signed up to
7 speak or if you did not sign up to
8 speak but would like to speak, please
9 identify yourself in the Q&A function.

10 You may also request to speak
11 anonymously. If this is your
12 preference, please indicate this in
13 the Q&A function and we will provide
14 you with further instructions.

15 Please note that comments on the
16 Central Business District Tolling
17 Program are not being received via the
18 Q&A function. And comments submitted
19 in that fashion will not be part of
20 the hearing record.

21 When you are called on to speak,
22 there will be a brief transition on
23 your screen before you will be able to
24 unmute and enable your camera. Please
25 make sure that once your screen

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1 updates, your camera and your
2 microphone are enabled before
3 beginning your remarks. If you do not
4 wish to use your camera, you do not
5 have to do so.

6 You will not be able to unmute
7 or enable your camera until it's your
8 turn to speak. Please remain patient
9 until then. In the event you miss
10 your name being called, we will call
11 you again after all other speakers in
12 attendance have been called a first
13 time.

14 As a reminder, this hearing is
15 being livestreamed and recorded and
16 will be available publicly on our
17 YouTube channel and on our project
18 website at mta.info/CBDTP.

19 Stenographers are present and will
20 create a written record of today's
21 hearing. By attending this virtual
22 hearing, you consent to be recorded.

23 MS. FLAX: We will now begin the
24 public comment portion of today's
25 hearing.

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1 Our first speaker is Philip
2 Papaelias, followed by Rita Simpson.

3 Our next speaker is Rita
4 Simpson, followed by Inocencio Lopez.

5 Our next speaker is Inocencio
6 Lopez, followed by Warren Ashenmil.

7 Our next speaker is Warren
8 Ashenmil followed by Diane Canino.

9 Our next speaker is Diane
10 Canino, followed by Michael Murray.

11 Our next speaker is Michael
12 Murray, followed by Jason Stahl.

13 Our next speaker is Jason Stahl,
14 followed by Diana Palermo.

15 Our next speaker is Diana
16 Palermo, followed by Thomas Huzij.

17 Our next speaker is Thomas
18 Huzij, followed by our tenth speaker
19 on the list, Robert Schulman.

20 THOMAS HUZIJ: Hello, everyone.
21 Thanks for letting me speak today.
22 I'd like to comment that I found the
23 Environmental Assessment to satisfy
24 all of the concerns that people might
25 have had about the program.

1 I feel that the program is going
2 to satisfy all of the goals set out by
3 the MTA Reform and Traffic Mobility
4 Act. The goals specifically are to
5 reduce vehicle miles traveled. It's
6 going to -- it should successfully do
7 that up to a nine percent reduction in
8 the MTA. Another goal is to reduce
9 the total number of vehicles entering
10 the CBD, it should do that up to a
11 20 percent reduction of vehicles,
12 which is fantastic.

13 And finally, it's going to
14 produce a great deal of money for the
15 MTA capital funds. Some of the
16 scenarios could do it up to 1.5
17 billion, which actually exceeds, by a
18 great deal, what the goal was. So I'm
19 satisfied by the findings of the
20 Environmental Assessment.

21 I think it's pretty obvious that
22 the tolling will not create adverse
23 effects for the New York City region,
24 and I believe that the Federal Highway
25 Administration should issue a finding

1 of no significant impact. I believe
2 the Traffic Mobility Review Board
3 should proceed expeditiously and
4 approve and implement one of the
5 tolling scenarios. Our city has been
6 plagued by car traffic, air quality
7 pollution, and traffic violence which
8 kills or maims my fellow New Yorkers
9 every day.

10 Having reviewed the scenarios, I
11 think Scenario D is the best one.
12 Scenario D creates no exemptions,
13 which I support, beyond those that are
14 defined by the Reform and Traffic
15 Mobility Act. There's no reason why
16 anyone should get an exemption. And
17 by creating any exemptions for anyone,
18 it will open the door for more and
19 more, which can only -- which will
20 only increase the cost for people who
21 are not exempt.

22 Scenario D has the third highest
23 reduction in daily trips with 24,000
24 vehicles -- or sorry, 24,000 trips;
25 which is, I think, perfectly

1 acceptable. And it's going to create
2 1.34 billion dollars in revenue for
3 the MTA, which it desperately needs
4 for its Capital Program.

5 So I'd like to just support the
6 program, and I'm looking forward to
7 the air quality improvements for our
8 region and the reduced number of
9 vehicle trips.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Robert
13 Schulman, followed by Cristian Ivan
14 Beard.

15 Robert, you may unmute yourself
16 and begin your remarks.

17 ROBERT SCHULMAN: Just the idea
18 that this -- first of all, your last
19 speaker used the word produce money.
20 It's not really producing money, it's
21 really a flatout taxation. And we
22 need to be clear about any of the
23 choices, it's just a matter of
24 extraction. And anybody who thinks
25 that it is not unfair to every

1 business and every human being that
2 lives south of 60th Street, is just
3 going through a dream sequence. We
4 have services and goods that need to
5 be delivered, and every resident
6 operating in there is going to pay
7 directly for it, whether they have a
8 car or not.

9 I'm not even going to address
10 the issue of people who live south of
11 60th Street that have a car because
12 that is -- not making an exemption for
13 them is inherently unfair. Nobody in
14 the world has to pay a tax to go home
15 except them.

16 But leaving that aside, because
17 that's not the biggest part of this.
18 Every commercial activity that has to
19 take place in that traffic zone will
20 continue to have to take place. If a
21 truck needs to make a delivery, it
22 still needs to make a delivery. And
23 when it makes that delivery, it's
24 going to add the cost of crossing 60th
25 Street or going over one of the

1 bridges to the expense associated with
2 the activity.

3 So the idea that this activity
4 is not paid for from anybody or comes
5 from somewhere is a fiction. The very
6 wealthy who work in Midtown will pay
7 it and it will just reduce the ability
8 for us to rent Midtown space because
9 it's more expensive to work there.

10 This idea that this somehow magically
11 does not hurt the city, you're taking
12 the guts of the city and the guts of
13 the revenue production in the city and
14 you're raising the taxes on it with
15 the assumption that it makes no
16 difference to anybody and somehow,
17 somehow magically, people are going to
18 take the train. Well, nobody is going
19 to be delivering food to supermarkets
20 on the train.

21 And you're really saying we're
22 going to tax the area underneath and
23 your not being -- you're being very
24 inflexible about it. If you said we
25 want to --

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1 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
2 remarks. Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Cristian
4 Ivan Beard, followed by Lesedi
5 Toussaint.

6 CRISTIAN IVAN BEARD: Hello?

7 MR. OLIVA: Cristian, you may
8 begin your remarks.

9 CRISTIAN IVAN BEARD: You guys
10 can see me?

11 MS. FLAX: Your camera is off.
12 You can turn it back on.

13 CRISTIAN IVAN BEARD: I'm
14 trying. I'm sorry.

15 MS. FLAX: There you go. We can
16 see you. Please begin your remarks.

17 CRISTIAN IVAN BEARD: Say it
18 again?

19 MS. FLAX: Please begin your
20 remarks.

21 CRISTIAN IVAN BEARD: Yeah. So
22 I want to say thank you, guys. I
23 appreciate you guys a lot.

24 Are you there? Hello?

25 MS. FLAX: Please continue your

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1 remarks.

2 CRISTIAN IVAN BEARD: I wanted
3 to ask you a question.

4 You ready? What I wanted to
5 know is like are cops and firefighters
6 going to be exempt?

7 You there? Did you hear what I
8 said?

9 Hello?

10 There you go.

11 Are cops and firefighters going
12 to be exempt? And you guys can hear
13 me, right?

14 MS. FLAX: Cristian, we can hear
15 you. Please continue your remarks.
16 You have a minute and a half left.

17 CRISTIAN IVAN BEARD: What's the
18 question I wanted to ask? Which
19 government agency is going to be
20 responsible with enforcing the
21 congestion pricing thing? And another
22 thing, when are you doing in-person
23 hearings again?

24 That's it. That's all I wanted
25 to know.

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1 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

2 MR. OLIVA: I would like to
3 remind the attendees today that this
4 hearing is an opportunity for the
5 members of the public to comment on
6 the Environmental Assessment for the
7 Central Business District Tolling
8 Program. Your comments will be
9 recorded, indexed, and responded to as
10 part of the Environmental Assessment
11 process. Responses will not be
12 provided during today's hearing.

13 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
14 Lesedi Toussaint, followed by Sharon
15 Jenkins.

16 Our next speaker is Sharon
17 Jenkins, followed by Tim Lau.

18 Sharon, you may unmute and begin
19 your remarks.

20 Sharon, if you could unmute
21 yourself.

22 SHARON JENKINS: Yes. Hello.
23 Can you hear me?

24 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

25 SHARON JENKINS: Okay. Hi.

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1 MTA, please understand that New
2 York is comprised of five boroughs,
3 not one-half of an island.
4 Implementing this program will create
5 an unfair dividing line. Please
6 see -- understand my point. There are
7 several specialized high schools in
8 Lower Manhattan with students from the
9 outer boroughs.

10 One example, the High School of
11 Art and Design. If you have a huge
12 art project too big to travel with on
13 a train and your parents drop you off,
14 there is a toll. Parent-teacher
15 conferences, there will be tolls for
16 all of those schools.

17 Most doctors are downtown, I
18 drive my mother to her doctor which is
19 near 33rd Street and Park Avenue. The
20 number six train where there are steep
21 stairs and no elevators, my mom is 84,
22 she cannot manage the stairs. Most of
23 the stations have no elevators, are
24 dangerous and filthy. The few
25 elevators that exist, are used as

1 bathrooms. No viable alternatives are
2 provided to help people who need to
3 travel downtown. Forcing people into
4 dangerous situations on the subways
5 will lead to lawsuits.

6 Entertainments like plays and
7 theaters and show are below 60th
8 Street. We're not on in high school
9 so we don't want to dress up and wear
10 our best on the dangerous trains to go
11 out. Neighbors will have a lot of
12 people parking from regions farther
13 out to take the train. This is true
14 no matter what your surveys say.

15 New Yorkers love to support our
16 local stores and restaurants, but with
17 the tolls, we will not be ordering
18 from the vendors who will put their
19 prices to -- at additional to the food
20 or goods that we order.

21 If the tolls are \$23, it'll be
22 cheaper to go to Jersey, Yonkers or
23 Connecticut to shop and eat. With the
24 toll, does that make parking under
25 60th Street free? If not, what's the

1 incentive? You're crushing the
2 working people again. Once we leave,
3 you'll definitely have a problem with
4 goods and services being provided.

5 MTA received millions during the
6 pandemic. What was the money used
7 for? If you don't want people from
8 uptown downtown, then cut our tax
9 dollars. Train services are not
10 consistent. We don't drive and sit in
11 traffic because we like to; we have
12 things that we have to do, running
13 errands, and specific chores that we
14 have to do.

15 Please reconsider this
16 thoughtless and imposing toll, it
17 hurts the average New Yorker. I'm a
18 South Bronx resident and life-long New
19 Yorker and it doesn't make sense for
20 you to continue to tax us on top of
21 taxes, we pay a high amount of taxes
22 now.

23 We love this city, we stayed
24 here throughout the pandemic, and this
25 is the thanks we get? This is the

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1 straw that may break the camel's back.
2 We've been here, we've hung in here
3 with this city, and now we're being
4 taxed again. We're not here because
5 it's cheap, we're here because we love
6 the city. But you're pushing your
7 working people away.

8 Please reconsider and no
9 exemptions for anyone if you're going
10 to do this.

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Tim Lau,
13 followed by our 15th speaker on the
14 list, Annie Jung.

15 Our next speaker is Annie Jung,
16 followed by Mariel Felix.

17 Our next speaker is Mariel
18 Felix, followed by Susan Lazor.

19 As a reminder, if you have
20 joined the Zoom under a name that is
21 different from the one you used when
22 you signed up to speak, or if you did
23 not sign up to speak but would like to
24 speak, please identify yourself in the
25 Q&A function.

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1 Our next speaker is Susan Lazor,
2 followed by Ilan Cardenas-Silverstein.

3 Our next speaker is Ilan
4 Cardenas-Silverstein, followed by Paul
5 Campione.

6 Our next speaker is Paul
7 Campione, followed by Elizabeth
8 Fennimore.

9 Our next speaker is Elizabeth
10 Fennimore, followed by Judi Edwards.

11 Our next speaker is Judi Edwards
12 followed by, Danielle Quinn.

13 Our next speaker is Danielle
14 Quinn, followed by Brian Seminario.

15 Our next speaker is Brian
16 Seminario, followed by Nisan
17 Cornibert.

18 Our next speaker is Nisan
19 Cornibert, followed by our 25th
20 speaker to sign up, Eugene Weston.

21 Our next speaker is Eugene
22 Weston, followed by Gerald Adames.

23 Our next speaker is Gerald
24 Adames, followed by Mary Di Gregorio.

25 Gerald, you may begin your

1 remarks.

2 GERALD ADAMES: I want to thank
3 you for all of the work that your
4 entire panel and your entire team has
5 put into doing the Environmental
6 Assessment, the mindful consideration
7 for the different exemptions, and
8 making a spread of tolling charges
9 depending on the vehicle size, and so
10 many other variables as well.

11 What I would like to address
12 here is that part of this initiative
13 is to create a positive environmental
14 impact. With that being said, I feel
15 it would be useful if your team would
16 consider any sort of discounts for
17 those who are operating electric
18 vehicles, and I mean full electric
19 vehicles.

20 And how this could work is in
21 the E-ZPass when you register your
22 vehicle, you would have to provide
23 your VIN along with your information
24 as you normally would, and New York
25 would be able to determine if you have

1 a full electric vehicle. I think it
2 would be a fair assessment to make
3 that an electric vehicle below the
4 60th -- you know, the tolling zone,
5 would have a zero environmental impact
6 on A, noise, because electric vehicles
7 make no noise at all. B, CO2
8 emissions, zero emissions from an
9 electric vehicle. I think this is
10 noteworthy and should be up for
11 consideration.

12 Last but not least, I hope that this
13 assessment took into consideration one
14 major piece, and that's -- that the
15 hypothesis is that this will lower
16 vehicle traffic into the tolling zone.
17 And as a skeptic I want to say that
18 that's not going to change, it's not
19 going to reduce the total number of
20 vehicles going into the zone in a
21 meaningful capacity. I do think that
22 this is going to raise money for --
23 you know, for meaningful purposes.
24 But I don't think it's actually going
25 to reduce the total number of

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1 vehicles.

2 With that being said, if it
3 doesn't reduce the total number of
4 vehicles, I hope there's consideration
5 given to what -- you know, what some
6 next steps could be to create that
7 positive environmental effect which
8 you're seeking.

9 Thank you so much.

10 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

11 Our next speaker is Mary Di
12 Gregorio, followed by Malki Sinensky.

13 Our next speaker is Malki
14 Sinensky, followed by Andy Pollack.

15 Our next speaker is Andy
16 Pollack, followed by Edgar Carmona.

17 Our next speaker is Edgar
18 Carmona, followed by Carlos Castell
19 Croke.

20 Our next speaker is Carlos
21 Castell Croke, followed by Bruce
22 White.

23 Our next speaker is Bruce White,
24 followed by Jack Kaplan.

25 Our next speaker is Jack Kaplan,

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1 followed by Isaac Gottesman.

2 Our next speaker is Isaac
3 Gottesman, followed by Robert Sidbury.

4 Our next speaker is Robert
5 Sidbury, followed by Thomas Miller.

6 Robert, you may unmute yourself
7 and begin your remarks.

8 ROBERT SIDBURY: Hello. Yes, I
9 just want to speak in regards to this
10 congestion pricing. I grew up in
11 Brooklyn, New York and moved to
12 Riverdale in the Bronx, and met my
13 wife in Yonkers. And due to pricing
14 in New York City, we were forced to
15 look at other avenues of where to
16 live. And we moved in New Jersey back
17 in 2007 just due to the cost of
18 pricing and everything.

19 We commute into work. I work in
20 Midtown West as well as the Upper West
21 Side. My wife is an early childhood
22 therapist who works in the Upper West
23 Side. And our kids go to private
24 school in the city. Now, for us
25 coming into the city, there's no way

1 when we leave the house at 5:30 in the
2 morning to get into the city to do our
3 jobs and also for our kids to go to
4 school is for us to drive in through
5 the Lincoln Tunnel.

6 And by us coming through the
7 Lincoln Tunnel, our -- our son goes to
8 the upper school, which is the Barry
9 school which is on 52nd Street, we
10 drive in, we stop at a deli right
11 around the corner, pick up food for
12 them. They eat their food in the car
13 right in front of their school, he's
14 dropped off at school.

15 And then from there, she
16 proceeds to go to the upper school
17 which is on 70th Street between
18 Broadway and Columbus to drop off our
19 younger son. There's no means to do a
20 mass transportation, you know, realm
21 of this process and everything.

22 After them being dropped off
23 there, they then -- she drops the car
24 off at the garage and we start our day
25 working. All this is being done to

1 just try to make the ends meet and to
2 do what's best for our children to
3 give them a successful education as
4 well as being where we work within New
5 York City.

6 And by -- you know, one of the
7 first people who said about there
8 should be exemptions, there should be
9 exemptions because people are being
10 pushed out of the city due to the
11 costs of it to live in the city and
12 we're looking to mitigate congestion.

13 But by putting more of these
14 charges and things on people, it's
15 only going to affect the people who
16 are in the lower and middle-class.
17 It's not affecting anyone in the upper
18 or any other realms of people who live
19 in the city or within the lower parts
20 of the -- under 60th Street.

21 So I just want to know that if
22 this is going to come into place,
23 there should be -- definitely be
24 exemptions put into place and a means
25 where we know if our kids go to school

1 how they will be allowed to do things
2 like this. Because we're talking
3 about five different points in this
4 zone by dropping our son at the upper
5 school and then going to the lower
6 school, and at the end of the day, the
7 same thing again before we then head
8 back home.

9 And how we're going be able to
10 do this and be able to afford it since
11 our income never goes up, but there's
12 always extended charges. And my
13 ten-year-old had a good point, who's
14 only ten, and his point is why can't
15 there be a 50 or 100-dollar tax that's
16 put onto the eight million people that
17 live in the city and also outside the
18 city than doing this a kind of a
19 congestion pricing.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker will be Thomas
23 Miller, followed by Isaac Gottesman.

24 Our next speaker is Isaac
25 Gottesman, followed by Vincent Purdy.

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1 Our next speaker is Isaac
2 Gottesman.

3 Isaac, you may unmute yourself
4 and begin your remarks.

5 ISAAC GOTTESMAN: Can you hear
6 me now?

7 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

8 ISAAC GOTTESMAN: Thank you for
9 this opportunity. One second. Do you
10 see my video or no?

11 MS. FLAX: Now we do.

12 ISAAC GOTTESMAN: Okay. So
13 thank you all for this opportunity,
14 again. I have an appliance repair
15 business which services Manhattan. We
16 don't have the option to use mass
17 transit due to the tools and the parts
18 that we are required to bring along to
19 do repairs.

20 We go there daily, more or less.
21 I drive the smallest vehicle possible
22 to help keep my impact on traffic and
23 carbon emissions to a minimum. With
24 this congestion pricing, we'll have no
25 choice but to charge it forward to our

1 customers every time we come out to
2 them in the city, even if we have to
3 come out multiple times for a unit
4 which has multiple issues. This will
5 increase the cost of repairs and will
6 most likely probably also increase the
7 amount of appliances that are being
8 thrown out due to extra costs in
9 repairing them.

10 As it is, the wait time to
11 replace many of these appliances can
12 be a few months due to the decrease of
13 availability of new appliances at this
14 time due to COVID. This will greatly
15 hurt the customers monetarily, many of
16 whom cannot afford to pay more for
17 every trip we make out to them and
18 cannot afford to replace those
19 appliances. Almost all buildings
20 require that we do repairs within the
21 hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., which is
22 well within the congestion times, and
23 will not let anyone in before or
24 afterwards to do repairs.

25 What may help reduce the traffic

1 is implementing congestion pricing on
2 the large trucks that double park on
3 the streets blocking traffic during
4 the days, that they may be
5 incentivized to deliver at night or at
6 off-peak hours reducing the traffic
7 congestion greatly during the peak
8 hours.

9 Also, I'd like to state that the
10 for-hire vehicles, Uber, Lyft, et
11 cetera, they don't -- I drive every
12 day, so I see this personally. They
13 don't pull over, they just stand in
14 the middle of the street, traffic
15 piling behind them. They could pull
16 over at a pump to let somebody out and
17 then pull out. They are in their car,
18 they can pull out. They don't.

19 And when I drive, I see all
20 around me every single plate,
21 sometimes five cars surrounding me are
22 all Ubers or TLC plates. It helps,
23 but if they don't -- if they can't
24 drive the right way, you know, it
25 makes traffic more congested and

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1 therefore, it's a problem for
2 everybody.

3 Thank you very much.

4 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Vincent
6 Purdy, followed by Thomas Lepri.

7 Our next speaker is Thomas
8 Lepri, followed by Nina Sabghir.

9 Our next speaker is Nina
10 Sabghir, followed by our 40th speaker
11 to sign up, Emily Criste.

12 Our next speaker is Emily
13 Criste, followed by Adrian Camacho.

14 Our next speaker is Adrian
15 Camacho, followed by Ari Teitelbaum.

16 Our next speaker is Ari
17 Teitelbaum, followed by Manuel
18 Valerio.

19 Our next speaker is Manuel
20 Valerio, followed by Menachem
21 Hornbacher.

22 Our next speaker is Menachem
23 Hornbacher, followed by Margaret
24 Curry.

25 Our next speaker is Margaret

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1 Curry, followed by Phil Wong.

2 Margaret, you may unmute
3 yourself and begin your remarks.

4 MARGARET CURRY: Hello?

5 MS. FLAX: We can hear you.

6 MARGARET CURRY: Hi. I would
7 just like to say that I've been
8 commuting to Queens for the past 40
9 years on a daily basis for my job.
10 And I have to travel by car because
11 I'm not physically capable of
12 traveling by public transportation. I
13 have a handicap parking placard, a
14 parking space by my home, and a
15 handicap sticker. And there's just no
16 way possible that I would be able to
17 take public transportation.

18 I'm not really sure how this
19 pricing applies to someone who is
20 coming through from New Jersey into
21 the Lincoln Tunnel and going across
22 Lower Manhattan to the Williamsburg
23 Bridge or to the Manhattan Bridge.
24 But I think it's very unfair to be
25 tolling in this manner and that there

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1 should be some exemptions allowed,
2 especially for people with a lower
3 income, as myself.

4 Because if this is implemented,
5 I would have to quit my job. I would
6 not be able to pay it and go to work
7 every day. So I think this should be
8 a very being consideration.

9 And I thank you for your time.

10 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

11 Our next speaker is Phil Wong,
12 followed by Jennfier Schiano.

13 Our next speaker is Jennfier
14 Schiano, followed by Tish Losure.

15 Our next speaker is Tish Losure,
16 followed by Carlos Aleman.

17 Our next speaker is Carlos
18 Aleman, followed by Jorge Zapata.

19 Our next speaker is Jorge
20 Zapata, followed by Melissa Gajarsa.

21 Our next speaker is Melissa
22 Gajarsa, followed by Jessii Parham.

23 Our next speaker is Jessii
24 Parham, followed by Kathryn Cunney.

25 Jessii Parham.

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1 As a reminder, there will be a
2 brief transition after you're called
3 to speak. Please make sure that once
4 your screen updates, your camera, if
5 desired, and microphone are enabled
6 before you begin your remarks.

7 Our next speaker is Kathryn
8 Cunney, followed by Henry Ward.

9 Our next speaker is Henry Ward,
10 followed by our 55th speaker to sign
11 up, Enrique Jimenez.

12 Our next speaker is Enrique
13 Jimenez, followed by Alexander
14 Vasilescu.

15 Our next speaker is Alexander
16 Vasilescu, followed by Sharon Deese.

17 Our next speaker is Sharon
18 Deese, followed by Marty Rowland.

19 Sharon, you may unmute yourself
20 and begin your remarks.

21 SHARON DEESE: Hi. My name is
22 Sharon Deese. And what I am wondering
23 is that MTA has always, always, always
24 gotten money and they don't account
25 for it. Like the 2nd Avenue subway

1 was a big money grab. Now this tax
2 here, we're going to be taxed coming
3 in to East 60th.

4 We're from the outer boroughs
5 and a lot of the specialists, the
6 doctor specialists, are in Manhattan,
7 like you have Sloane Kettering. Does
8 that mean that we have to pay every
9 time we go to Sloane Kettering or NYU
10 that is in Lower Manhattan or the
11 specialist doctors that we have to
12 visit every month, twice, three times
13 a month? We should not have to pay
14 that tax. This is another scam tax.

15 It's like we're living in a
16 city, barely making it. We pay high
17 property taxes, and now you're going
18 to give us another tax to move on. I
19 don't understand how the city could
20 ever recover from the pandemic.

21 Now there should have been an
22 audit on -- now I'm not talking about
23 the environmental, because I think you
24 could sell anything that you want.
25 But there should have been an audit on

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1 transit because they always get money
2 and they always overspend, and they
3 now come up and say we have no more
4 money. They just want the money for
5 what they want it for.

6 And then there's these planters
7 that they put in that's stifling
8 traffic, I don't understand why they
9 put all those planters in to stifle
10 traffic. And then you have
11 construction that sometimes you go
12 down the streets, there's two -- I
13 don't know who licensed two sides of
14 the street to have the equipment on
15 the streets. If you don't think that
16 stops traffic, I don't know what to
17 think.

18 And those are my comments.

19 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Marty
21 Roland, followed by Lissette
22 Inshanally.

23 Marty, you may unmute yourself
24 and begin your remarks.

25 MARTY ROLAND: Thank you. Okay.

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1 Let me turn this thing down.

2 My name is Marty Roland and I'm
3 a citizen of Queens. As a public
4 servant, I believe that the people of
5 the MTA work hard for our interests
6 and the citizens of New York,
7 providing transit service with a
8 reasonable and equitable price with
9 the knowledge that no successful
10 world-class city depends on the fare
11 box for even 50 percent of its capital
12 and operating funds.

13 As MTA looks for revenues, we
14 can't forget about those property
15 owners who contemporaneously benefit
16 with higher property sales prices from
17 the proximity to your transit
18 stations, but underpay their
19 obligation for its operation.

20 For example, land speculators
21 and tenants with 30-year property tax
22 abatements and those with vacant lots
23 and empty buildings waiting for the
24 market to ripen at everybody else's
25 expense.

1 Thank God that 421A and J51
2 property tax abatement laws have
3 expired. Let's hope that they aren't
4 replaced by bigger poisons. So MTA,
5 don't leave money on the table as you
6 scramble to pay your looming
7 2.6 billion-dollar debt that is
8 expected to hit by 2025.

9 And land values along your
10 subway or rail road lines exceed what
11 the city taxes are based on, based on
12 the underassessments. If you go to
13 the Henry George School of Social
14 Science's website, www.HGSSS.org, and
15 open up the land value calculator,
16 you'll see how one billion dollars per
17 year can be raised in a quick way.

18 Tax land value in Manhattan for
19 all of the -- all of us served in some
20 way by MTA transit at 0.89 percent --
21 there are 21,613 acres in Manhattan at
22 a valuation of 5.2 million dollars per
23 acre or so. At a tax rate of 0.89,
24 MTA would generate over a billion
25 dollars.

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1 So I'd like to end by saying the
2 land value tax is an ideal method to
3 raise funds as it draws from the value
4 our society gives to land. This tax
5 does not punish productive earning
6 profit. When profit from other labor
7 incorporations is taxed as --

8 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
9 remarks.

10 MARTY ROLAND: -- income tax is
11 productivity is punished, land value
12 is not generated by productive means.

13 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

14 MARTY ROLAND: The owner will --

15 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
16 Lisette Inshanally, followed by
17 Youssef Makki.

18 Our next speaker, and 60th to
19 sign up, is Youssef Makki, followed by
20 Howard Stokar.

21 Youssef, you may unmute yourself
22 and begin your remarks.

23 YOUSSEF MAKKI: So I think over
24 the last few decade, we've turned a
25 blind eye to a very commonly hated

1 thing, and that is taxes. Taxes are
2 hated because our earned money is
3 collected by an entity in which we're
4 supposed to trust. The process of
5 filing taxes remains, as said by
6 behavioral scientists, comically
7 difficult.

8 Despite this, the entity we're
9 supposed to trust continues to
10 consider options that impose burden to
11 our people. According to taxrates.org
12 the New York State income tax rate is
13 between four percent and eight
14 percent.

15 The population of New York City,
16 according to New York City's consensus
17 on April 2020, is 8.8 million. The
18 mean income per person, according to
19 several sources, is between \$70,000
20 and \$100,00 per individual. A very
21 gross summary of payment is around
22 \$5,000 for taxes per person in New
23 York State.

24 My comparison, the MTA gives me
25 the impression of a huge corporate

1 entity. The rideship daily, according
2 to MTA.info, is between two million
3 and four million people. Whereas, the
4 bridges and tunnels are used on a
5 yearly basis of 329 million vehicles.

6 In total, New York State gets,
7 according to NewYorkState.gov, 80
8 billion dollars. And the Department
9 of Transportation, which helps
10 maintain the bridges, spends
11 approximately 15 billion dollars. The
12 Capital Program that we have enacted
13 at the moment, according to MTA.info
14 as well, is 54 billion dollars.

15 This is supposed to upgrade
16 stations and keep bridges and tunnels
17 in good condition. Yet, the MTA
18 remains one of the most infamous
19 places for pollution, service and
20 crime; pollution meaning garbage, just
21 to distinction. Not just buses and
22 bridges, but on subways. Remember
23 once upon a time, we used to consider
24 some of these tolls as temporary.

25 But now we apparently have

1 removed cash and so now we're doing
2 cashless tolling. Instead of trying
3 to add more taxes and expenses to our
4 people, we should instead attempt to
5 reach solutions that are enforceable
6 and less morally questionable. The
7 single biggest cause of traffic is
8 lane merging; whether it be Long
9 Island Expressway's parking lot due to
10 crashes, the Queens-Midtown Tunnel
11 entrance from Queens, the Lincoln
12 Tunnel entrance in Manhattan for
13 construction.

14 In Manhattan, we have a
15 long-lasting issue of illegal parking;
16 passenger cars illegally park in
17 commercial vehicle parking areas,
18 people double park on streets for long
19 periods of times and commercial
20 vehicles don't make use of commercial
21 vehicle parking.

22 Bus lanes remains one of the
23 most misused roadways; whether in
24 Jamaica where they're used as parking
25 lots, into Manhattan when people often

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1 use them for turning, and all over
2 they're used as means of skipping
3 traffic.

4 Inspiration should be -- by
5 education, conditioning,
6 enforcement -- last sentence -- and
7 Manhattan should remain what it is, a
8 place that shines its beauty and
9 accessible to all who wish to drive in
10 the concrete jungle.

11 Thank you.

12 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Howard
14 Stoker, followed by Lisa Chase.

15 Our next speaker is Lisa Chase,
16 followed by Marianne Ward.

17 LISA CHASE: Hi. My name is
18 Lisa Chase. I'm from the East Midtown
19 Coalition. We represent 38 buildings
20 on the East Side.

21 We're here to ask for an
22 exemption for residents below 60th
23 Street or a significant discount the
24 way London actually gives a 90 percent
25 discount to the residents. We have a

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1 lot of concerns. One of them was to
2 recapture this funding which was
3 estimated by Ms. Krueger's office at
4 60 million dollars if we give
5 residents an exemption.

6 So we proposed one of several
7 ways you can recapture this revenue;
8 one is to mandate bicycle licenses and
9 charge for both the application as
10 well as the license. Another is
11 flexible subway pricing which would do
12 different prices for different zones
13 on the subway.

14 Another is you can add 3 to \$5
15 per every parking ticket in Manhattan.
16 You could also just reinstate the
17 commuter tax fairly, as we had to
18 cancel it before. You could also toll
19 one of the free bridges that are
20 happening over in Brooklyn.

21 And we're really not
22 understanding why the city's budget
23 has bloomed to 101 billion dollars,
24 find one billion dollars per year over
25 the next 15 years to recapture the

1 money you're looking for at the MTA.

2 Our concerns are as follows:
3 The valuation of properties is going
4 to drop below 60th Street. If you
5 don't give us a discount, no one is
6 going to want to live here and
7 everyone is going to move out. Small
8 businesses and cabbies are going to be
9 hurt. The cost of living is going to
10 be elevated because of deliveries and
11 every other cost associated to this.

12 Vision Zero was the original
13 problem that slowed all of this
14 traffic down. It created all of this
15 congestion or a lot of it. And now
16 we're creating another program that's
17 going to cost residents more money and
18 commuters more money.

19 Crime on the subway has not been
20 addressed at all, it is very
21 dangerous. There is not a lot of
22 accessibility for the disabled. And
23 we expect that that would at least be
24 a safe way to ride if you're trying to
25 divert drivers into the subways.

1 There has not been a concrete plan
2 proposed for us t make the subways
3 safe so that people can feel better
4 about not driving.

5 The budget, again, is
6 101 billion dollars for New York City.
7 Find one billion dollars a year and
8 cancel this program. Because like
9 London, the funds are always going to
10 be spent, they're always going to run
11 out. And the people that live in the
12 70s and 80s, you're not going to be
13 exempt because they're going to have
14 to keep extending the congestion zone
15 to be higher and higher and higher.

16 Thank you for your time. This
17 was in existence for 17 years already
18 in London. We were told this was
19 going to be a temporary program, and
20 London's program was a complete and
21 utter failure and this is what we're
22 modeling it after. The real way to do
23 this is just to lift the toll around
24 all the bridges and tunnels, and let
25 it be that.

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1 Thank you. I represent the East
2 Midtown Coalition along with Joan
3 Brothers, Dr. Glenn Kaufman, Ralph
4 Sutton, and Jerry Rosenfram
5 (phonetic).

6 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Marianne
8 Ward, followed by Daniel Solow.

9 Marianne, you may unmute
10 yourself and proceed with your
11 remarks.

12 MARIANNE WARD: Yes. Hi,
13 everyone. Do you hear me?

14 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

15 MARIANNE WARD: Okay. I hope
16 you reconsider this plan that you are
17 doing. I have my mother and my
18 father, one 86 years old, one 81 years
19 old. We always go to NYU hospital.
20 It's very hard for them to walk, I
21 drive them there. And I work in the
22 city. I'm from Brooklyn. I pay a lot
23 of tax, plus the gas, plus the parking
24 for my car. And now I think the toll
25 is going to be very hard for me to

1 work.

2 If this happen, I have to move
3 from this place. I would reconsider
4 other city or other place to live
5 because it's out of way to use the
6 subway. The subway is filthy, crime,
7 virus. If you go to 14th Street, the
8 people standing on the platform is
9 already packed. Imagine the subway
10 how it is when the train comes, it's
11 no place to stand. I took it several
12 times, I regret it.

13 I thought, I came to this
14 country, I come from the Middle East
15 to be free, choosing the
16 transportation I want to go to work as
17 I want. I wanted first to ride the
18 subway, the bus is very far from my
19 work and from my house.

20 I hope you reconsider this.
21 Enough with paying high tax and you're
22 not benefiting anything. Give me
23 plenty of time to reconsider this and
24 move out of the state.

25 Thank you have much. I hope you

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1 reconsider this.

2 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Daniel
4 Solow, followed by our 65th speaker to
5 sign up, Carolyn Robinson.

6 DANIEL SOLOW: Can you hear me?

7 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

8 DANIEL SOLOW: All right.

9 There's -- there's something wrong
10 with my camera, you just have to
11 imagine how I look by my voice.

12 Good afternoon, everyone. Thank
13 you for hosting this panel and thank
14 you for the opportunity offering
15 several days for people to voice their
16 concerns.

17 I'm definitely in favor of the
18 Central Business Tolling Program. I
19 think that we're looking at maybe the
20 short-term and not looking at the
21 long-term in terms of our benefits, in
22 terms of increased -- shortened
23 delivery times.

24 You know, you hear complaints
25 that grandma can't get to the doctor

1 on time or it's going to be an issue,
2 but with less traffic, there won't be
3 as many people fighting for parking
4 spaces near the doctor's office
5 under south of 60th Street. So I
6 think that's a win.

7 And I think we've heard enough
8 of the alarm bells go off across the
9 world and also here in the city that
10 reducing congestion and also reducing
11 our carbon footprint is a net positive
12 for everyone. I hope that the city
13 continues -- I mean the state
14 continues with what it's doing. It's
15 doing a great job.

16 But I do want to just voice my
17 concern, I'm concerned about the
18 delivery -- the people who are cab
19 drivers, Uber drivers, you know, these
20 are hard-working people who are going
21 to definitely be affected by this. I
22 really hope that any career transition
23 program you have in place or you have
24 in mind, that's very -- don't take
25 that lightly, please.

1 Consider that these are people
2 who are putting food on the tables for
3 their families. And I really -- I
4 feel for them. But at the same time,
5 I think that in 2022 -- you know, this
6 program was signed into law in 2019,
7 it should have already been -- it
8 should have already happened before
9 the pandemic. So just keep that in
10 mind.

11 And also, I think that -- yes,
12 please keep doing what you're doing.
13 That's all I have to say for now.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Carolyn
17 Robinson, followed by James Matroni.

18 Our next speaker is James
19 Matroni, followed by Mohammed Akber.

20 Our next speaker is Mohammed
21 Akber, followed by Moreno DiMarco.

22 Our next speaker is Moreno
23 DiMarco, followed by Lydie Kane.

24 Our next speaker is Lydie Kane,
25 followed by Robert Kelman.

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1 Our next speaker is Robert
2 Kelman, followed by Lewis Anderson.

3 Our next speaker is Lewis
4 Anderson, followed by Michael Golz.

5 LEWIS ANDERSON: Can you guys
6 hear me?

7 MS. FLAX: Yes.

8 LEWIS ANDERSON: Cool. So I
9 just want to say thank you for all the
10 work that's gone into the
11 Environmental Assessment. So I'm a
12 graduate student at Pratt and I live
13 in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, so I live
14 and work in Brooklyn.

15 But like most other people in
16 the city, I regularly travel to
17 Manhattan, either by bike, foot or
18 subway. And I've lost count of the
19 number of times I've almost had a near
20 hit by a car because of traffic and
21 also because of street space
22 allocation. There's far too much
23 street space allocated to the minority
24 of people who drive, and far too
25 little space allocated for

1 pedestrians.

2 So I support and agree with all
3 of the findings in the Environmental
4 Assessment that congestion in the CBD
5 will be reduced. I think that it's
6 important when we're looking at all
7 the benefits and potential adverse
8 affects of certain areas and people.
9 I think it's important to take a stock
10 of what our current situation is,
11 which is a vast majority of New
12 Yorkers who don't drive into the CBD
13 are currently losing out in a number
14 of areas.

15 That street space allocation,
16 like I said earlier, the majority of
17 the street in Manhattan and across the
18 city is disproportionately allocated to
19 a minority of people who drive. And
20 we're also losing out on safety
21 because of this. If there was more
22 space in the street allocated to
23 pedestrians, there would be least
24 chance of a crash. And also money and
25 time because currently, especially if

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1 you're traveling to New Jersey, you
2 may have to wait up to a half an hour
3 or more if you're traveling off-peak
4 and the fares can be very high.

5 And so the proposed tolling
6 program will help in all of these
7 areas, as explained by the Environment
8 Assessment by reducing congestion and
9 traffic in the CBD and providing
10 much-needed revenue for transit. In
11 terms of the scenarios layed out in
12 the EA, I would support those with
13 minimal exemptions for my reasons
14 explained. I believe that's the D.
15 So that's the area I would support.
16 And yes, that's all for me.

17 Thank you for your time.

18 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Michael
20 Golz, followed by Mukul Biswas.

21 Our next speaker is Mukul
22 Biswas, followed by Michael Riley.

23 Our next speaker is Michael
24 Riley, followed by William Meehan.

25 Our next speaker, and 75th to

1 sign up, is William Meehan, followed
2 by Mary Garvey.

3 WILLIAM MEEHAN: Hello. My name
4 is William Meehan. I am a member of
5 the Effective Transit Alliance, a
6 technically-oriented transit advocacy
7 group and of Transportation
8 Alternatives, a group which fights for
9 safer streets and for low-emission
10 alternatives to car traffic.

11 I live in Brooklyn and work in
12 the Central Business District. I
13 would like to celebrate the
14 Environmental Assessment for
15 confirming what other cities, like
16 London, Milan, and Singapore, have
17 known for years. Reducing congestion
18 through pricing has huge positive
19 outcomes, including faster trips for
20 bus riders, improved air quality,
21 lower emissions, and increased
22 economic productivity.

23 The Federal Highway
24 Administration should clearly reach a
25 finding of no significant impact. I

1 personally support tolling option D
2 for reasons I will now provide.

3 In order to receive maximal
4 congestion reduction for our bus
5 riders, we should not offer exemptions
6 beyond those layed out in the Traffic
7 Mobility Act. Each exemption raises
8 costs for others and makes it harder
9 to reduce the number of drives
10 entering the CBD. Studies over the
11 last decade show that the growth in
12 ride hail trips has come primarily at
13 the expense of transit trips, so taxis
14 and for-hire vehicles should not be
15 exempt.

16 The MTA should prioritize plans
17 that raise more than the state's
18 mandated one billion dollars per year.
19 This would provide more direct capital
20 dollars and greater bonding ability,
21 which would allow the MTA to make the
22 subway more accessible, perform
23 necessary repairs and improvements to
24 track and signals, and to purchase new
25 rolling stock.

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1 The MTA should also use this
2 opportunity to reduce congestion
3 outside of the zone where possible.
4 To reduce toll-shopping behavior on
5 the BQE and Queens Plaza, the MTA
6 should equalize tolls by providing
7 credits to drivers using MTA tunnels.
8 It is also essential that the vehicles
9 with the greatest impact on our roads,
10 mainly trucks, pay a higher charge to
11 reflect their larger size, greater
12 pollution impact and increased harm
13 that they do to pedestrians and
14 cyclists.

15 I greatly look forward to the
16 benefits of implementation of
17 congestion pricing.

18 Thank you for your time.

19 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Mary Garvey,
21 followed by Richard Sonenberg.

22 Mary, you may unmute and begin
23 your remarks.

24 MARY GARVEY: Okay. Hi. My
25 name is Mary Garvey and I live within

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1 the toll zone. And I want to say that
2 I'm an enthusiastic supporter of this
3 program.

4 So I feel very strongly that I
5 have to speak for the people in my
6 community who do not drive. We are
7 walking through our streets, riding
8 the subway, riding bicycles and we are
9 unsafe because of the streets filled
10 with cars.

11 I am really a bit shocked by the
12 number of people calling in who are
13 talking about their own individual
14 situations as drivers and they have to
15 go to doctor's appointments all the
16 time. I have come to believe after
17 hearing this testimony that we have to
18 have no exemptions. I can't
19 understand why people don't think of a
20 bigger city issue with pollution and
21 transportation and how much better we
22 would be with fewer cars on our
23 streets.

24 The subways are far safer than
25 people think. I'm not certain if it's

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1 just the news, but it's really
2 important for us to understand that
3 the news, if it bleeds, it leads. So
4 people are watching the news and
5 thinking the subways are dangerous. I
6 go out, I take the subway -- and I
7 want to let one person know, I dress
8 fabulously when I go to the opera and
9 I take the subway back and forth.

10 The war on cars started really
11 with the war that Robert Moses
12 perpetuated in the city, and we have
13 to win back our city to move forward,
14 to reduce pollution, reduce traffic
15 violence. In July, 11 people were
16 killed by cars. And yet, people think
17 the subways are dangerous.

18 We also have a problem with
19 pollution in the city because of
20 idling cars. So many people are
21 driving into the city behaving as they
22 are turtles carrying their private
23 space around with them. And in my
24 neighborhood, they are parked all
25 along the streets, sleeping, eating

1 watching movies, doing work, with
2 their engines running.

3 We have to reduce private cars
4 in the city. We have to start
5 thinking about alternatives, such as
6 light rails to get into the city. And
7 what I do like is the thought that has
8 gone into this plan, certainly things
9 like paratransit using cabbies,
10 medallion cabs Ubers for paratransit.
11 Those people who need to go into the
12 city for doctor's appointments, then
13 they should be able to use that as an
14 alternative.

15 I want to say I support anything
16 that reduces cars, I support expanding
17 congestion pricing. I want people to
18 look at the streets and see how many
19 cars drive around with just one driver
20 in them or an Uber with just one
21 passenger.

22 We have to change this, and I
23 thank you for your work in doing this.
24 I really hope this moves forward and
25 get expanded and makes us think about

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1 transportation more.

2 Okay. Thank you.

3 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Richard
5 Sonenberg followed by Diane Battista.

6 Our next speaker is Diane
7 Battista followed by John Pohl.

8 Our next speaker is John Pohl,
9 followed by Sonia Jackson.

10 Our next speaker is Sonia
11 Jackson, followed by Israel Acevedo.

12 SONIA JACKSON: Hello?

13 MR. WOJNAR: Hi, Sonia. We can
14 hear you.

15 SONIA JACKSON: Hi. I'm here to
16 speak about the service and the health
17 care workers. For two and a half
18 years as a health care worker, we have
19 supported this city. Your previous
20 caller, she's very blessed and very
21 privileged to live in Manhattan. I
22 travel from Queens, I have to as a
23 health care worker. I leave work at
24 midnight, I cannot afford to risk my
25 life taking the subway.

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1 I pay \$400 a month for parking.
2 If I have to pay \$23 a day, that's 115
3 a week, it comes out to about 460 for
4 the months that have four weeks. And
5 for the months that have five weeks,
6 it's 575. As a health care worker, no
7 one is giving me that additional
8 money. If this plan goes through, a
9 lot of health care workers will leave
10 the health care system. That means
11 that when you go to the hospital,
12 you'll wait longer.

13 We cannot afford to kick out any
14 more money. Have they considered
15 express buses from hospitals to park
16 and ride in the outer boroughs?
17 They're talking about greenhouse
18 effects, well, the Bronx, Long Island,
19 and Staten Island, with you own
20 reports say that those boroughs are
21 going to have more greenhouse effects.

22 You told us to buy electric
23 cars, we've done so. How do we then
24 get penalized for spending money on
25 electric cars but yet, we're now

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1 having to pay \$23 a day. That's a lot
2 of money. It is nice to be
3 privileged, but look at the people
4 that are supporting the plan, they are
5 not black and they are not brown.
6 This plan is for the privileged and
7 the wealthy; as a health care worker,
8 we are neither. We supported the city
9 for two and half years.

10 Sometimes we don't always get
11 out of work on time, now you want to
12 push us into a subway system that's
13 dangerous. The cops themselves are
14 getting assaulted in the subway system
15 -- how can we as women, most of us are
16 women, defend ourselves? You don't
17 take care of your mentally ill, you
18 don't take care of your homeless, and
19 those are the people in the subways
20 defecating, pushing you, hurting you.

21 This city has had plenty of
22 money to take care of the subway
23 system. So what makes us this that
24 this money that they are charging the
25 poor is going to support the system?

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1 Thank you.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Israel
4 Acevedo, followed by Thomas Bachant.

5 ISRAEL ACEVEDO: Hello?

6 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

7 ISRAEL ACEVEDO: Okay. Cool.

8 Good afternoon. My name is
9 Israel Acevedo. I'm a 46-year-old
10 native New Yorker, born and raised in
11 Brooklyn. I am a professionally
12 licensed New York City taxi and
13 limousine driver working in the
14 for-hire sector for seven years and
15 three months.

16 Anyone that works or uses taxis,
17 green cabs or for-hire service should
18 be exempt from paying an additional
19 congestion toll. If this toll is
20 imposed on our industry, ridership
21 will decline, affecting driver
22 earnings and leading to mass
23 employment loss. We rely on this
24 industry to pay our bills and provide
25 for our families. We are hard-working

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1 tax-paying New Yorkers that move our
2 fellow New Yorkers from the five
3 boroughs through the five boroughs.
4 Crazy.

5 We are a valuable part of the
6 transportation industry. You said you
7 would waive the MTA bus exam fee for
8 drivers who lose their employment,
9 what a slap in the face. Drivers are
10 not losing their employment, you are
11 forcing loss of employment on us with
12 this harmful congestion toll.

13 The riding public that uses
14 taxis, green cabs or for-hire services
15 have been contributing a congestion
16 surcharge to the MTA since 2019.
17 Riders should have the right to choose
18 whether they ride public
19 transportation or use taxis or
20 for-hire services. No one should be
21 forced to ride the public
22 transportation because they cannot
23 afford an additional congestion toll
24 that has been forced on them.

25 Thank you for your time.

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1 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Thomas
3 Bachant, followed by Patrick Johnson.

4 THOMAS BACHANT: All right.

5 Thanks, everyone. And great
6 pronunciation of my last name, almost
7 no one gets it right the first, so
8 great job there.

9 So I'm Tom, I a resident of the
10 Lower East Side. I live near Houston
11 Street. A street where people like
12 myself, families, young kids, walk
13 every day; and a street where one of
14 my neighbors was recently murdered in
15 a hit-and-run by a car.

16 So I took a look at the
17 Environmental Impact Report and it
18 makes it clear that New York City has
19 the option of going down two paths as
20 a city. One path is where we focus on
21 liveability for its residents, where
22 you can walk around without pollution
23 or risk of injury, people can
24 effectively take public transit, walk
25 and bike to get around.

1 Other option is becoming a city
2 that's beholden to cars. Today 40,000
3 people die a year in car accidents.
4 Cars are responsible for ten percent
5 of all CO2 emissions, and car crashes
6 are the number one killer of young
7 children. If we embrace car
8 dependency any further, the amount of
9 space needed for everyone in New York
10 City to own a car is bigger than the
11 total square footage of New York City
12 in general. This is not a sustainable
13 option.

14 I've heard some of the
15 drawbacks, both of the impact report
16 and from some of the people who have
17 dialed in on these calls. A pretty
18 clear one is people think it's too
19 expensive for the car owners of this
20 city. The truth is this is the
21 ultimate opportunity for economic
22 mobility for poor disadvantaged New
23 Yorkers.

24 Owning a car in New York City
25 averages more than \$10,000 a year to

1 own and operate and drive through the
2 city. If we focus on public transit,
3 we reduce that cost to \$1,000 a year,
4 reduce that by 90 percent and allow
5 these citizens to move freely
6 throughout the city. We need to make
7 it easier for people to migrate to
8 those programs, which this congestion
9 pricing toll will help to fund.

10 Another comment I've seen is
11 that it's potentially ableist against
12 people who need wheelchair accessible
13 vehicles. But again, the funds of
14 this program can support our already
15 wheelchair-accessible bus system, fund
16 our underfunded paratransit and
17 Access-A-Ride programs to make it
18 easier for those folks to move around
19 too.

20 The people who are listed as
21 impacted negatively by the impact
22 report, which by the way, obviously
23 far fewer people negatively impacted,
24 but of those that do, those are folks
25 who choose to take their polluting and

1 dangerous car and drive it into a city
2 of residents who don't want them
3 there. They make this choice, they
4 could take public transit, they choose
5 to take their car. I don't see that
6 as a serious disadvantage for those
7 folks.

8 So this impact report makes it
9 clear that this is a major opportunity
10 to increase the quality of life for
11 our citizens, and I wholeheartedly
12 support it.

13 And thank you all for all the
14 work that you are doing.

15 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Patrick
17 Johnson, followed by Constance
18 Stellas.

19 PATRICK JOHNSON: How you doing,
20 back again.

21 So, you know, let's talk about
22 New York City spending who knows how
23 much money to turn the world's largest
24 land fill into New York City's biggest
25 park, and you mean to tell the 500,000

1 Staten Island residents that they are
2 going to see an increase if congestion
3 price -- an increase in particular
4 matter pollution in Staten Island if
5 congestion pricing is enacted.

6 500,000 people you're going to tell.
7 Imagine if 500,000 people decided to
8 close the three bridges that come into
9 Staten Island from New Jersey, then
10 what are you going to do, imagine
11 that. Okay.

12 Let's talk about Mary Garvey and
13 Tom Bachant who just came on talk
14 about the privileged. Okay. The
15 woman was a health care worker, she
16 said it, it's going to be \$400-plus
17 extra out of her pocket a month if
18 congestion pricing is -- who's taking
19 care of these people. The health care
20 workers are very important. You know,
21 we're talking about exemptions here --
22 I wrote some other stuff down here.
23 But this -- this one is crazy. This
24 whole thing is nuts.

25 Let's talk Vision Zero. Vision

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1 Zero started in 2014, right, the goal
2 was to have zero traffic, deaths and
3 serious injuries by 2024. This
4 message is for New York City DOT
5 specifically. William, I hope you're
6 listening, bring this to Ydanis, bring
7 this to the mayor.

8 It started in 2014, it's 2022.
9 2024, you wanted zero deaths. Now
10 we're at July, 2022 had the highest
11 deaths on record since 2024 -- since
12 the program started in 2014. By
13 solely focusing on -- cameras. Here's
14 a cell phone, you let 100,000 Ubers
15 come into the traffic in New York City
16 with a cell phone on their windshield,
17 like this, right in front of their
18 face.

19 They can't see; they can't see
20 the street signs, they can't see the
21 pedestrians. New York City drivers
22 are doing this all over. When you get
23 in your car today and you drive
24 around, tomorrow when you get in your
25 car, take a look at people's car and

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1 their windshields, look at their
2 windshields. Vision Zero is a
3 failure, a total failure. So many
4 people should be fired over this
5 Vision Zero.

6 And I know Polly Trottenberg is
7 second in command over there at the
8 United States Department of
9 Transportation. And look at what they
10 just came out with a story last week,
11 that the deaths in the whole country
12 have gone up like crazy. This is not
13 because of aggressive and speeding.
14 This is because of distracted driving,
15 which causes congestion because of
16 accidents and investigations.

17 I know I'm being shocking right
18 now, but how shocking is it when a
19 police officer's knocking on my door 3
20 o'clock in the morning to tell me
21 somebody I love is dead? How shocking
22 is that?

23 I'm going to be at the next few
24 meetings. You know, I don't mean to
25 go after you people like this, I know

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1 you're respectable and doing your
2 jobs, don't take it that way, please.
3 I'm a good person, I'm not like that.
4 I'll see you at the next meeting.
5 Enjoy your day.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

8 Our next speaker is Constance
9 Stellas, followed by 85th person to
10 sign up, Steven Namm.

11 Our next speaker is Steven Namm,
12 followed by Alec Soybel.

13 Our next speaker is Alec Soybel,
14 followed by Todd Thurston.

15 Alec, if you unmute, you can
16 begin your remarks.

17 ALEC SOYBEL: Okay. Thank you.
18 Thank you very much.

19 I would like to address the
20 problem with yellow taxis in New York
21 City. Yellow taxis did their business
22 in Central Business District for 85
23 years. And in addition, we get our
24 customers, but people hail yellow
25 taxis. So basically, you cannot do

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1 our business and other areas because
2 people usually take taxi in Central
3 Business District.

4 I would also like to address
5 another problem. Yellow taxis
6 collected MTA's taxes from 2009. And
7 from 2009 to 2018, you collected
8 750 million dollars for MTA by taking
9 50 cents from each fare. From 2019 to
10 the current time, you take \$3 from
11 each fare, they increase MTA taxes and
12 we pay one billion dollars to this day
13 from 2019.

14 I would also like to say that to
15 drive in Manhattan instead of business
16 district, I need to buy my taxi
17 medallion for \$690,000 and they take a
18 taxi loan. I need to pay my interest
19 to the bank each month, \$1,700 each
20 month. So basically, if you're
21 enforcing me to pay additional taxes
22 to MTA, I will not be able to do it
23 because I don't have no money for
24 living.

25 In addition, I'd like to address

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1 another problem. You have 96,000 Uber
2 and Lyft in Manhattan right now. I'm
3 okay with them, but the main point is
4 they collect -- when a customer ask
5 for group rate, he pay 75 cents
6 instead of \$2.75 -- so they take
7 advantage and give one person -- given
8 you ask for group rate and you will be
9 alone and you pay 75 cents, not the
10 2.75 that go to MTA.

11 And the yellow taxi is \$3 each
12 time, for any ride, to MTA. So Uber
13 and Lyft, 96,000 riders take advantage
14 by not paying enough money to MTA.
15 And this makes me feel not
16 comfortable. In addition, I would
17 like to say that right now, taxi
18 industry in bad condition because TLC
19 inflated price of taxi medallion, and
20 a lot of taxi medallion right now out
21 of work in the --

22 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
23 your remarks.

24 ALEC SOYBEL: My main idea is
25 that, yes, this --

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1 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Todd
3 Thurston, followed by Deborah Gilbert.

4 TODD THURSTON: Hello. Thank
5 you for the chance to speak here.

6 Let me get my video on here.

7 I'd like to begin by suggesting
8 that for accuracy, the MTA consider
9 renaming this proposal from the
10 Central Business District Tolling
11 Program to the Central Business and
12 Residential District Tolling Program,
13 since we all know that Manhattan below
14 60th Street isn't just a business
15 district.

16 This area is home to roughly
17 three-quarters of million people and
18 I'm one of them. I've lived in Hell's
19 Kitchen for 43 years and in spite of
20 the plea I'm about to make, I want to
21 be very clear. I have always been a
22 strong component of any plan that
23 might reduce the traffic noise and
24 congestion in my neighborhood thus
25 making it easier and safer for me to

1 walk, bike and otherwise pursue my
2 local daily errands and activities
3 without fear of injury at every turn.

4 I don't believe this current
5 plan is the answer. As in my opinion,
6 it's a blunt-force solution to a very
7 nuance problem. It's utterly
8 unfocused, will be mostly ineffective
9 and in many cases, it's simply unfair.

10 In late 2019, in a selfish and
11 brazen act of want over need, I bought
12 the first car of my adult life.
13 Having reached my 60s, I thought it'd
14 be nice to play golf on the course
15 under the Van Cortlandt in the Bronx,
16 as well as to finally visit various
17 regional sites and cities that have
18 always been inaccessible to me.

19 In hindsight, it's been a great
20 decision. I and my family have really
21 enjoyed driving again. I don't drive
22 the car much. Most days it's garaged
23 in the building where I live, near the
24 Lincoln Tunnel and the West Side
25 Highway.

1 My argument today, as I believe
2 would be for the vast majority of car
3 owners living below 60th Street, is
4 this, the only time I ever get into my
5 car is when I'm driving out of
6 Manhattan. The last thing I ever want
7 to do, and I almost never do, is drive
8 in the city.

9 So if the real point of
10 congestion pricing is to reduce
11 congestion, then I and most of the
12 other car owners in this district are
13 not the problem. And yet, after
14 having driven our vehicles elsewhere,
15 this plan would require us to pay a
16 huge toll simply to return to our
17 homes.

18 If there's a real intention with
19 this plan to reduce congestion then it
20 needs to focus on those doing the
21 congestion, non-residents of this
22 district, who choose, for whatever
23 reason, to drive into the city.

24 Look, I have no choice but to
25 enter the district. It's where I live

1 and it's where I park my car. This
2 plan must therefore provide an
3 exemption or at the very least a
4 significant discount to car owners
5 living inside the district who must
6 briefly drive through it simply to
7 come and go from their homes.

8 The London congestion plan
9 provides a 90 percent discount to car
10 owners in that central district. This
11 plan must follow that example of
12 fairness and do the same. This
13 discount should not be income based,
14 which would focus benefits to the
15 wrong people. In fairness to all, it
16 should depend on residency only.

17 I sincerely hope some sort of
18 plan is implemented and actually
19 works. Please make it fair, don't
20 punish the car owners who live here
21 just because a few hundred thousand
22 other people choose everyday to drive
23 in our neighborhoods.

24 Thank you for your time.

25 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

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1 Our next person is DG, followed
2 by Bernardo Celerino.

3 DG: Hello.

4 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can hear
5 you. Please proceed.

6 DG: Okay. I live in Downtown
7 Manhattan in the congestion tax zone
8 and I'm completely against the new
9 arbitrary congestion tax.

10 I second what the gentleman
11 before me said. And also commenting
12 about people before who are afraid of
13 cars and about what they call traffic
14 violence, which is very Orwellian,
15 they're traffic accidents.

16 I'm a pedestrian. I fear
17 out-of-control bikes running red
18 lights more than -- way more than
19 cars. I have to dodge them every day.
20 But regarding congestion taxes, it's
21 easy for MTA executives getting six
22 figure salaries to make pronouncements
23 about how people with cars can afford
24 this new tax of yours. You're out of
25 touch with working people like me and

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1 no one is voicing what this congestion
2 tax will do to people like me.

3 Make no mistake the cost of this
4 arbitrary congestion tax will push me
5 out of my home and it will be entirely
6 because of the greed, prejudice and
7 short-sightedness of the people
8 implementing this new tax.

9 I read a quote from some MTA
10 executives that this was about equity,
11 that people who own cars have more
12 money than people who ride subways and
13 that should pay this new tax. I don't
14 know what world that is. Just because
15 someone has a car, that doesn't mean
16 they have more money. It just means
17 they spend what they do have
18 differently.

19 There are plenty of people
20 without cars who have plenty more
21 money than me. There are people using
22 buses and subways who spend their
23 money on designer clothes and shoes
24 and multi-thousand-dollar handbags and
25 expensive nights out. I don't.

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1 You're passing judgment that
2 because I've spent my money on a car,
3 a necessary tool for me, that I should
4 pay extra taxes than those who spent
5 their money on frivolous items. I'm
6 64 years-old. I started having
7 mobility issues. And by the way, the
8 main reason I have mobility issues is
9 because one of those damn restaurant
10 sheds caused me to trip and fall,
11 tearing my Achilles tendon and
12 injuring my back over a year ago and
13 I'm still in pain everyday. But --
14 and they cause congestion, the
15 restaurant sheds.

16 I have a car because I need a
17 car. I don't have it because I'm
18 rich. I have it because I made
19 sacrifices to have it. I have worked
20 two and three jobs for most of my
21 adult life just to survive, always
22 spending way more than half of my
23 income on a tiny apartment.

24 My budget is cut to the bone and
25 my car driving use is not clogging the

1 streets. I do not drive my car around
2 the city. I drive out of the city and
3 back in. I drive from my apartment to
4 the tunnel and coming back from my
5 tunnel to my apartment and I park in
6 the garage that I sacrifice to pay
7 for.

8 My car is not on the street.
9 I'm not only going to have to pay your
10 tax when I'm using the car because I
11 live in the tax zone, I'm going to
12 have to pay every single day, period,
13 everyday I'm breathing, when my car is
14 sitting there in the garage and I'm
15 not driving it. You have arbitrarily
16 decided to charge me a new tax just to
17 live in my home.

18 I'm going to have to pay this
19 tax and it's going to cause me to lose
20 my home. How is that fair? It's not
21 fair. If you're truly concerned about
22 congestion, why do you keep creating
23 more.

24 The restaurant sheds --

25 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude

1 your remarks.

2 DG: -- out of control bikes,
3 are three things that cause tons of
4 congestion and safety issues, but
5 you're ignoring that congestion and
6 but all the blame on cars.

7 MR. WOJNAR: Our next speaker is
8 Bernardo Celerino, followed by our
9 90th person to sign up, Adam Nazario.

10 Our next speaker is Adam
11 Nazario, followed by Michael Elitt.

12 ADAM NAZARIO: Hello, can you
13 hear me?

14 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

15 ADAM NAZARIO: Okay. So I'm a
16 life-long resident of New York.
17 Currently, I live in Rockland County,
18 so I echo the sentiments of Ed Vey,
19 County Executive, there are no
20 options, one -- one option to drive or
21 one, you know, train option to go into
22 the city. I do security and I have to
23 drive to Brooklyn sometimes or
24 Manhattan. And you know, I think it's
25 unfair to continue taxing me. You got

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1 the bridge toll, which I have to
2 cross, whether it's the GW, I have to
3 pay \$16 for that or the Tappan Zee,
4 which is a lesser option.

5 On top of that now, every time I
6 drive anywhere in the city, if I go to
7 church in the Bronx, I have to worry
8 about speed cameras, I have to worry
9 about red light cameras, I have to
10 worry about mobile cameras. This is
11 all just another tax. And this is
12 making life impossible for people who
13 live on fixed incomes or don't have
14 any other options. Like I said, I
15 drive because that is probably the
16 only way I could to get in. It takes
17 me an hour and 15 minutes to drive to
18 Brooklyn to a job. If I were to try
19 to take a bus then a train then
20 another train, I wouldn't be able to
21 work. So driving a car is really my
22 only option.

23 So it's unfair -- not to
24 mention, you are taking away the
25 people who are police, firefighters,

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1 people who just commute into those
2 areas or have no other choice. It's
3 unfair, you know, everything is always
4 we got to tax you more, we got to tax
5 you more, we got to tax you more.

6 At one point, people are going
7 to break and just say, you know what
8 New York, to hell with living in New
9 York. New York has become, you know,
10 has this war on cars. Listen, I drive
11 my car, I'm not committing violence on
12 anybody, all right. I avoid people, I
13 do the speed limit, I make sure I'm
14 obeying all the laws and, you know.

15 I just -- you know, just to keep
16 adding fees and taxes and, you know,
17 just -- just breaking people's back.
18 I mean, listen, the rich and some of
19 the people that are on this panel who
20 say -- oh, I wholeheartedly support
21 it, they're probably making a hell of
22 a lot more money than people who are
23 just struggling to make ends meet, and
24 you're going to tax them. I mean, I
25 strongly suggest that you do not go

1 forward with this.

2 And let's look at all these
3 people who are making a lot of money
4 in the MTA, TBTA, all these executives
5 who make tons of money, and then they
6 are coming up with this new tax to
7 hurt people. Because that's what
8 you're doing, you're hurting people,
9 you're hurting hard-working people.
10 And people are going to avoid -- sure,
11 they're going to avoid it. But then
12 you're not going to have their money
13 when people are going in to frequent
14 businesses.

15 That's all I have to say. I
16 really hope you guys consider not
17 doing this.

18 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude --

19 ADAM NAZARIO: That's it. I'm
20 done. Thank you.

21 MR. WOJNAR: As a reminder, If
22 you have joined the Zoom under a name
23 that is different from the one you
24 used when you signed up to speak, OR
25 if you did not sign up to speak but

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1 would like to speak, please identify
2 yourself in the Q&A function.

3 The next speaker is Michael
4 Elitt, followed by Felicia
5 Park-Rogers.

6 Our next speaker is Felicia
7 Park-Rogers, followed by Cynthia Soto.

8 The next speaker is Cynthia
9 Soto, followed by Josh Gottheimer.

10 The next speaker is Josh
11 Gottheimer, followed by Scott Sloat.

12 The next speaker is Scott Sloat,
13 followed by Aleks Gilbert.

14 The next speaker is Aleks
15 Gilbert, followed by Miranda Adams.

16 The next speaker is Miranda
17 Adams, followed by Galina Kaminker.

18 The next speaker is Galina
19 Kaminker, followed by L. Rich.

20 The next speaker is L. Rich,
21 followed by Michael Jones.

22 The next speaker, our 100th
23 person to sign up, is Michael Jones,
24 to be followed by Michael Huarachi.

25 The next speaker is Michael

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1 Huarachi, to be followed by Jenny Lee.

2 MICHAEL HUARACHI: Can you hear
3 me?

4 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.
5 Please proceed.

6 MICHAEL HUARACHI: Hello?

7 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can hear
8 you.

9 MICHAEL HUARACHI: Okay. Thank
10 you for your time again.

11 We all know the data behind
12 this. I think it's kind of silly that
13 we have to have so much of these
14 discussions. I think we need to look
15 into also New Jersey E-ZPass sending
16 out mass texts to all of their clients
17 to come to these meetings against the
18 congestion pricing thing.

19 One of the journalists in the
20 New York Times, posted his Twitter
21 experience about how he got a mass
22 text from New Jersey E-ZPass. I
23 think -- I don't see them on the line
24 with us today, but the Federal Highway
25 Administration, I think the city DOT,

1 the state DOT, biggest obstacle -- one
2 of their biggest obstacle is going to
3 be the Port Authority of New York and
4 New Jersey.

5 I'm not quite familiar of the
6 quasi ownership of the TBTA, but I do
7 know for sure that they are not in
8 favor of congestion pricing. I myself
9 am wholeheartedly in support of
10 congestion pricing with zero
11 exemptions. I really respect the
12 callers who called in, I think that
13 there is a lot of improvements to be
14 made with MTA, with our services with
15 the cleanliness of the subway. But I
16 think we have to put the horse before
17 the carriage.

18 This is going to be the first
19 transportation policy that addresses
20 these issues in the country. I think
21 it behooves all of the panelists
22 today, Rick, William, Lou, and all
23 your counterparts, to mold your legacy
24 in this policy. And that is done by
25 making this policy as productive as

1 possible and having it able to be
2 implemented broadly. So we start in
3 the Central Business District and
4 let's see this rolled out throughout
5 all five boroughs, as one caller said
6 yesterday. Right.

7 I think we all have the
8 opportunity to look within ourselves
9 to realize how this country has put
10 private -- the private sector before
11 the public sector in almost every
12 aspect of society; from education, to
13 healthcare, to transportation, to
14 housing. We can obviously know the
15 legacy of racism and white supremacy
16 that has stemmed from our highways
17 being built and plumaged through black
18 and brown neighborhoods. And this
19 will be to address the historical
20 legacy of white supremacy --

21 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
22 remarks.

23 MICHAEL HUARACHI: Thank you.

24 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
25 Jenny Lee, followed by Dan Bianco.

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1 Our next speaker is Dan Bianco,
2 followed by Michelle Grossman.

3 Our next speaker is Michelle
4 Grossman, followed by Nadia
5 Holubnyczyj.

6 MICHELLE GROSSMAN: I live in
7 the CBD. I'm for the environment and
8 reducing congestion, but I'm against
9 the current congestion pricing plans.
10 Today I will speak to concerns around
11 reliability, accessibility, and
12 safety.

13 The subways are not reliable.
14 For example purposes, I pulled up the
15 service status just before this
16 meeting started 12:45 p.m. on Sunday.
17 Of the 27 lines listed, 17 had active
18 alerts. For example, trains rerouted,
19 A and D; delays, 6, E, F, N, R;
20 planned parts suspended, J, L; planned
21 express to local, 2, 3; no weekend
22 service, E, W. This is not reliable
23 and not acceptable.

24 In terms of safety, the subways
25 as they are today are simply not safe.

1 As a woman, I do not feel comfortable
2 riding the subway outside certain
3 times. Even during times of broad
4 daylight, I don't always feel
5 comfortable and have sometimes turned
6 around and gone back to street level
7 to either walk or take a cab if I
8 don't feel safe.

9 And I say this realizing I am
10 coming from a place of privilege as a
11 white woman. My friends of Asian
12 descent are extremely concerned,
13 cautious, and avoid the subway at all
14 costs due to hate crime.

15 In terms of accessibility, the
16 subways are not universally
17 acceptable. And this isn't just for
18 people in wheelchairs, or on crutches,
19 et cetera. This is for people, often
20 again women, who have young kids in a
21 stroller. A woman spoke to this
22 yesterday that she couldn't take a
23 subway when her children were young
24 because going up and down the stairs
25 with a stroller if you are by

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1 yourself, it is not safe and not
2 possible and working elevators are not
3 always available.

4 We've all seen people standing
5 at the top of the steps with a
6 stroller before, waiting for a good
7 samaritan to help them up and down the
8 steps; I've stepped in to do this
9 before. Why are we putting people,
10 often young women or caretakers, in
11 this position to begin with? For
12 seniors, as many have spoken to at
13 these hearings, it is challenging, if
14 not impossible, for some seniors to
15 safely access and ride the subway.

16 I get that these funds are
17 intended to go to these very concerns
18 and issues I'm speaking to, but it
19 should be that these issues are
20 addressed first or at least make
21 positive momentum and improvements
22 before expecting the public to rely on
23 these services more. The MTA has a 18
24 billion-dollar budget.

25 And as a reminder, when this

1 meeting started, two-thirds of the
2 subway lines had active service
3 alerts.

4 Instead of asking the public to
5 put their blind trust in the MTA, the
6 MTA should focus on management of
7 their budget and operations. Be clear
8 and transparent about issues,
9 improvements and status of those, hold
10 themselves accountable. Give the city
11 the public transportation they
12 deserve, then, then maybe turn to the
13 public asking for more money.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Nadia
17 Holubnyczyj, followed by L. Rich.

18 NADIA HOLUBNYCZYJ: Are we good?

19 MS. FLAX: Yes.

20 NADIA HOLUBNYCZYJ: My name is
21 Nadia Holubnyczyj, and I'm resident of
22 Floral Park, Nassau County. I also
23 use a wheelchair full time.

24 Through the years, I've spoken
25 on the issue of public transportation

1 accessibility, specifically as it
2 relates to the LIRR and the subway
3 system. I lobbied the MTA LIRR, and
4 governor's office to acquire elevators
5 at the Floral Park train station
6 during the planning stages of the
7 third track expansion project.

8 Most recently, I demonstrated
9 the poor planning and execution of the
10 New Hyde Park train station to bring
11 it to ADA compliance. I brought in
12 electric meters to witness the
13 stresses a disabled person must endure
14 when using the station because the MTA
15 LIRR failed to include the disabled
16 community in planning.

17 So now I am here once again
18 imploring the MTA to take heed the
19 advice of the disabled community when
20 making decisions regarding Central
21 Business District Tolling Program. I
22 acknowledge that this program is in
23 its infancy and that there is a broad
24 exception made with regards to the
25 disabled community.

1 The program must not toll
2 qualifying authorized emergency
3 vehicles and qualifying vehicles
4 transporting people with disability.
5 But I'm compelled to highlight another
6 demographic of the disabled community
7 that would be adversely affected by
8 the CBD program if there is no
9 consideration made for them. There is
10 a large portion of the disabled
11 community who use their own private
12 automobiles to travel to various parts
13 of the city, such as myself, who are
14 independent.

15 I do not see public
16 transportation as a viable alternative
17 to entering, exiting and traveling
18 within Manhattan. Public
19 transportation is not reliable for the
20 general public, let alone someone with
21 a physical impairment. Not all train
22 stations are accessible, not all
23 subway stations have elevators. And
24 those that do have elevators, they are
25 often in disrepair.

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1 My own car is the most reliable
2 form of transportation for me to enjoy
3 the culture capital of the world that
4 is Manhattan, from Uptown to Downtown,
5 East to West. Placing a toll on my
6 car when I go into Manhattan
7 inherently punishes me and others like
8 me for entering the city or portions
9 of the city. As it is, parking is a
10 premium in the city, always hoping to
11 score street parking rather than pay
12 for a space in a parking lot.

13 Public transportation is nowhere
14 near consistently accessible across
15 the board for the disabled community
16 to have a choice of whether or not
17 they want to drive in or use mass
18 transit, to forego a toll and use mass
19 transit or suck it up and drive into
20 the city.

21 I'm here today to implore the
22 board to recognize the inequity of the
23 CBD Program for drivers who are
24 disabled. There should be a
25 requirement for driver's who are

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1 disabled to register with the
2 authorizing entity so that they may be
3 exempt from tolls.

4 And when that auspicious day
5 comes when public transportation is
6 100 percent accessible as a result of
7 the benefits of the tolling program, I
8 will most happily choose to leave my
9 car at home and do my part to ease
10 congestion in the city I love so
11 dearly.

12 Thank you.

13 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is L. Rich,
15 followed by, Liam Higgins.

16 L. RICH: Can you hear me?

17 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

18 L. RICH: Thank you.

19 At the hearing on August 25th,
20 by a ratio of 3:1, people spoke
21 against your plan. Per your own
22 presentation, the plan shifts
23 congestion elsewhere. You glossed
24 over the unintended consequences of
25 the adverse effects of increased

1 delays westbound on the LIE, westbound
2 on the George Washington Bridge,
3 thereby hurting Long Islanders and
4 those from New Jersey. You have not
5 addressed the adverse environmental
6 impact of the increased congestion
7 caused by your plan.

8 In addition, you acknowledge it
9 will hurt areas of Manhattan that
10 there are intersections that will see
11 increased delays. Your plan harms
12 residents and property values of
13 commuters and harms environment in
14 certain areas. Your mitigation
15 measures are unproven and
16 unacceptable.

17 It is clearly not about
18 congestion because you now propose a
19 toll on evenings and weekends to steal
20 more money from the car drivers, those
21 times should not be tolled. There are
22 also privacy issues. You said third
23 parties can access the toll
24 information, thereby giving up
25 commuter privacy.

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1 You have not taken into account
2 the slow, feeble elderly who become
3 short of breath after a few minutes
4 and could not possibly walk on the
5 subway, which is a very fast-paced
6 situation. Or the person with cancer
7 on chemo who cannot be exposed to all
8 the germs in the subway. Doctors have
9 stated after testing the handrail the
10 subway is dirtier than a toilet seat.

11 This is a selfish money grab for
12 the MTA. You have not announced
13 exemption for cars with passengers who
14 have disabled car tags hanging from
15 the mirror and are physically
16 incapable of taking the subway, and
17 there should be exemptions for them.

18 Your life is at risk on the
19 subway. People have been thrown to
20 their deaths on the tracks, people
21 have been stabbed, shot, murdered,
22 pickpocketed in this unsafe New York
23 City transit. The MTA should not
24 benefit off the backs of commuters in
25 cars and the elderly on fixed income.

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1 Many of those who drive are barely
2 making ends meet, and you're going to
3 compound the economic devastation of
4 COVID-19, and harm businesses in the
5 tolling district.

6 These hearings are happening
7 only because they are required. The
8 plan is going forward. People opposed
9 need to contact Governor Hochul.
10 People need to start a hashtag on
11 Twitter; hashtag, no congestion
12 pricing. If you oppose the plan,
13 please follow me on Twitter
14 @enhancesociety. I started the
15 account today so it's not searchable
16 yet. Again, @enhancesociety.

17 You should not punish drivers to
18 unfairly subsidize New York's mass
19 transit and take food out of
20 hard-working people's mouths. It's
21 insensitive, it disproportionately
22 affects the disadvantaged. And by
23 making drivers pay for services they
24 do not receive, it is theft. It is
25 theft of money from hard-working --

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1 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
2 remarks.

3 L. RICH: -- by giving financial
4 preferential treatment for mass
5 transit users.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

8 Our next speaker is Liam
9 Higgins, followed by Ali Madu.

10 LIAM HIGGINS: Hi. So my name
11 is Liam, I live in Crown Heights. I
12 would like to show my enthusiastic
13 support for this new congestion price
14 proposal.

15 So first of all, the previous
16 panelist had a lot of mistakes in what
17 she was saying. For starters, we as
18 pedestrians and as taxpayers of the
19 city are subsidizing your car driving.
20 So why should I pay for you to be able
21 to drive your giant metal, polluting,
22 noise-inducing death trap through my
23 streets while I have to deal with you
24 polluting the entire environment.

25 Second of all, traffic violence

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1 is a very real problem in New York
2 City and it is far worse than violence
3 on the subways you are more likely to
4 die as a result of traffic violence in
5 New York City than you are to be a
6 victim of a crime on the subway. I
7 ride the subway all times of the day.
8 I ride the subway at 2 a.m., I never
9 feel unsafe.

10 What we need to do is we need to
11 improve accessibility for those with
12 disabilities and these funds are meant
13 to do that. We need to improve mass
14 transit in the city and make sure we
15 get cars off the streets. I like to
16 feel safe when I'm crossing the street
17 and I don't because there are so many
18 cars destroying our streets.

19 We need to improve bicycle
20 infrastructures so that we can have
21 cargo bikes that support delivering
22 goods to businesses. We need to allow
23 for more people to ride E-Bikes and
24 other forms of mobility -- hand trucks
25 for those who are disabled. And we

1 need to designate safe protected lanes
2 for that to occur. These funds can
3 help go to that.

4 I don't have any sympathy for
5 people who are too elitist to take
6 public transportation to get into the
7 city. As a former Long Islander, I
8 would take the train every time I went
9 into Manhattan; and I loved it. I
10 didn't need to worry about driving, I
11 could listen to music, I could sit on
12 my phone and I didn't need to worry
13 about hitting a pedestrian or getting
14 into an accident. You can do the
15 same.

16 If you're able-bodied, there is
17 no reason for you to go from Long
18 Island to Manhattan by car. That is
19 ridiculous, and I have no sympathy for
20 anyone who chooses to do that. If you
21 are disabled, I understand, and there
22 should be an exemption for that. But
23 other than people with disabilities,
24 there should be no exemptions
25 whatsoever. And I'm in support of

1 Plan D, I believe.

2 I would like to also emphasize
3 everything that Mary Garvey said
4 because she is exactly on point be
5 everything that she said in her
6 speech. We need -- traffic violence
7 and we need to stop catering to the
8 needs of car drivers. Because if we
9 continue to do that, New York City
10 will be destroyed.

11 What makes New York City so
12 great is that it is a place with
13 plenty of public space where
14 pedestrians, cyclists and other people
15 who are taking sustainable forms of
16 transportation can enjoy all five
17 boroughs without having to worry about
18 getting hit by cars.

19 Thank you very much for having
20 this, and have a nice day.

21 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Ali Madu,
23 followed by Steve Sands.

24 Our next speaker is Steve Sands,
25 followed by our 109th speaker to sign

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1 up, Drew Stillman.

2 Our next speaker is Drew
3 Stillman, followed by Geovanny Yauri.

4 DREW STILLMAN: Hi. Can you
5 guys hear me?

6 MS. FLAX: Yes.

7 DREW STILLMAN: Hi. Thank you.
8 Sorry, I just can't use my video at
9 the moment.

10 My name is Drew. I want to
11 thank you guys for letting me speak
12 during this hearing.

13 And I want to say that I
14 agree with -- I think Sharon Jones
15 (sic) earlier had it right on point.
16 This is kind of an unfair tax on
17 everybody else in all the outer
18 boroughs. I don't believe there was
19 enough scoping that was involved in
20 this as well. There needed to be more
21 time dedicated to speaking with
22 members and stakeholders in the outer
23 boroughs, specifically people who are
24 going to be affected by this directly.

25 Like, for example, on the Cross

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1 Bronx Expressway and in Staten Island,
2 we're going to be receiving a lot of
3 the brunt of people who are going to
4 be avoiding the tunnel toll and
5 avoiding congestion pricing to move
6 back into the city. So we also had a
7 giant amount of environmental
8 injustice and just inequity from the
9 city and the services that we receive.

10 The MTA doesn't even really do a
11 good job at servicing our borough. We
12 have very little access to all the
13 other boroughs. Yeah, we have a free
14 ferry, yeah, we have a free train,
15 both of which are unreliable, both of
16 which have tremendous signaling
17 problems. And then there's also
18 connectivity problems when you're
19 trying to connect from said ferry to
20 train to then another train.

21 So not only is the congestion
22 pricing going to be a tax on people who can't
23 afford to get in, it's people who don't have the
24 actual infrastructure that's built to support us
25 as well. Yes, congestion pricing in the end

1 game would be great. To be going into public
2 transportation, pedestrian access, bikes -- and
3 by the way, yes, the bicyclists should be
4 licensed. Because right now, they are
5 ridiculously reckless.

6 There are more accidents that are
7 cause by irrational bicyclists on the road, and
8 pedestrians, both of you are at fault. You guys
9 are on your cell phones all the time as you're
10 crossing the street and all the time as you're
11 walking along. Those are big issues. So I
12 understand that your needs need to be met, but
13 the needs have to be done in an appropriate
14 timeline.

15 Right now, we don't have the
16 services, we don't have the infrastructure. And
17 MTA is telling us, basically, tough it out, deal
18 with it, we don't have a plan to actually
19 structurize and strategic plan to bring you guys
20 into the infrastructure network of MTA, but
21 we're going to have to tax you until we do.

22 So in addition to that, I would
23 really enjoy if there was an outside inquiry or
24 an independent inquiry oversight committee that
25 was looking into the MTA and those things and

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1 the actions of where the money is going, how the
2 budget is being used. Because you guys have
3 gotten hundreds of millions of billions of
4 dollars in federal tax money and federal
5 support, and where does it go?

6 We want accountability, we want
7 transparency, we want to know where the money is
8 going. And honestly, there's a lot of
9 oversight, like redundancy within your own
10 department for a lot of executives that you know
11 that are there, making six figures a year,
12 they're doing the same job as two other
13 executives. You really need to have some sort
14 of forensic accounting and to have some sort of,
15 I don't know, performance management consulting
16 that looks over where your real redundancies.

17 I agree with congestion pricing, it
18 needs to be done in a timely manner.
19 Infrastructure first.

20 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
21 your remarks.

22 Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is Geovanny
24 Yauri, followed by Anonymous 1.

25 Our next speaker is Anonymous 1,

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1 followed by Farley Whitfield.

2 ANONYMOUS 1: Can you hear me?

3 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

4 ANONYMOUS 1: Okay. I can't see
5 the time, but I'm a Lower East Side
6 resident who relies on the subway,
7 walking -- and a pedestrian. On
8 occasion, I take a taxi. On occasion,
9 I take a taxi because if you try to
10 walk from Alphabet City to 2nd Avenue,
11 it can take up to 15 or 20 minutes;
12 and forget it if you're carrying
13 something heavy.

14 If you decide to take a bus to a
15 train, if you can catch it in a
16 reliable amount of time, you have to
17 pay your fare twice. It costs \$10
18 just to sit in a cab before the time
19 even starts. When locals who rely on
20 the subway and don't own a car need to
21 take a cab on occasion, it's pricey,
22 and there's no problem with that. It
23 needs to be pricey because we need to
24 make sure that everybody gets their
25 fair and we need to make sure these

1 people get compensated for the work
2 that they do.

3 My question is, how will you
4 discern a taxi taking a tourist or a
5 high net worth individual up and down
6 6th Avenue which is covered with
7 subway accessibility versus somebody
8 trying to take a taxi from Alphabet
9 City to a subway line which could be
10 up to a 20-minute walk?

11 Secondly, a few months ago,
12 there was an obvious change that
13 occurred with taxis. Lots of drivers
14 no longer possess the important
15 knowledge of the street to get
16 passengers efficiently from point A to
17 point B. Just the other day, I
18 explained to a taxi driver to drive
19 down Allen Street or drive down the
20 FDR and instead, he decided that
21 Google was more important and he drove
22 into the traffic of SoHo and Tribeca
23 because this individual was not
24 equipped to be a taxi driver.

25 Taxis are heavily regulated, but

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1 we no longer have consistent access to
2 drivers who understand Lower Manhattan
3 Streets. If we do not protect the
4 wages of our taxi drivers, we risk
5 losing them and getting more Uber and
6 Lyft drivers who only rely on Google
7 Maps.

8 Further, relying on Uber and
9 Lyft drivers means more of our money
10 goes to San Francisco versus staying
11 here and supporting local business
12 owners who have those taxi medallions
13 and who want to be a part of our
14 community. I think it's very
15 important, as some other people have
16 said, we need to augment the existing
17 public transportation so that people,
18 such as myself, who are local
19 residents, who pay taxes, can actually
20 take public transit at all hours. I
21 am a female, I am proud to take the
22 subway. I tell tourists, you should
23 be taking the subway when you come
24 here.

25 I think it's very important that

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1 we acknowledge that there are certain
2 aspects, particularly in Lower
3 Manhattan, in Alphabet City through to
4 the Seaport, also getting from FDR on
5 Houston all the way to the other side
6 to Chelsea Piers on Houston, there is
7 not efficient ways to get from point A
8 to Point B without taking a bus to a
9 subway. And at present day, there is
10 not an easy way to only pay one fare
11 in one direction.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is Marie Vella,
15 followed by Richie Romero.

16 Our next speaker is Richie
17 Romero, followed by Alison Glestein.

18 RICHIE ROMERO: Am I on?

19 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, you are.
20 Please proceed.

21 RICHIE ROMERO: I just wanted to
22 state that I'm a born and raised New
23 Yorker from Manhattan and Queens. I
24 am a driver, transportation on trains,
25 I'm on my scooter daily, and I am a

1 small business owner in different
2 parts of Manhattan.

3 I could pretty much state, like
4 I said, every day I'm either on the
5 train, I'm on my scooter in the bike
6 lanes. This is pretty much a
7 middle-class tax. And as basic
8 opportunity costs where we come down
9 to, we're kind of forcing everyone to
10 just take the train. And as knowing
11 many people and owning different
12 businesses, the trains are not up to
13 par, and we all know that.

14 In terms of as a small business
15 owner, I'll use my analogy of it, if I
16 was the only restaurant in Manhattan,
17 I was a monopoly of it and I had bad
18 service, bad food, and it was actually
19 pretty dangerous, you wouldn't go to
20 my thing, but you'd be pretty much
21 forced to. I think the normal thing
22 to do in the situation is let's fix
23 the train system, make it up to par.

24 I'd rather take the train, first
25 of all, to be honest with you, I get

1 nervous, you know, at my age going on
2 the scooter, hitting -- you know.
3 I've gotten hurt before hitting a
4 crack on the thing, you know, but I'd
5 still rather do it than taking the
6 trains, just because -- it's not even
7 dangerous. Its just dirty, it's not
8 good, and a lot of people are making
9 the investment because they are scared
10 of taking cars.

11 So I think step one would be
12 just to upgrade the MTA system. I've
13 seen it done. I live on 14th Street
14 in Manhattan and four years ago when
15 it was implemented to doing the bus
16 lanes, which would save bus lanes a
17 little less than six minutes, I think
18 that was the report on it, this was
19 pre-COVID.

20 Now with COVID, no one's really
21 taking the bus as much. And you have
22 elderly people in my building I live
23 in that have problems getting cabs and
24 you also when you do have an Uber,
25 it's congestion everywhere else.

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1 And being a part of the
2 Department of Transportation, what you
3 guys do with it, most of the signs
4 there are you're forcing traffic to go
5 to more congested places because you
6 can't make left turns, you can't make
7 right turns, and you have parks in the
8 middle of nowhere.

9 I just think it needs an
10 overall system on it because there's
11 like no master plan here. And it's
12 like, you know, you're making people
13 unaffordable living in the city and
14 making more people leave. Like most
15 of the people coming in, you see the
16 rents and everything, it's more people
17 from out of town, they're not New
18 Yorkers. Most New Yorkers here are
19 rent-controlled apartments and it's
20 hard to afford living in this city.

21 Especially as a small business
22 owner, it's hurting to have less
23 people coming in here and more people
24 moving away with just the inflation of
25 getting things around and getting my

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1 trucks and everything going from store
2 to store.

3 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
4 your remarks.

5 RICHIE ROMERO: I just want to
6 say I think, you know, plan one should
7 be up-fixing the system and then --

8 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

9 Our next speaker is Farley
10 Whitfield, followed by Beryl
11 Rosenberg.

12 FARLEY WHITFIELD: All right,
13 there I am.

14 Thank you for this opportunity
15 to speak. My name is Farley Whitfield
16 and I agree that congestion is a
17 problem in New York City. I'm here
18 today to speak on behalf of licensed
19 insured motorcyclists who operate in a
20 safe manner.

21 Motorcycles are a great solution
22 to the congestion problem.

23 Motorcycles take up a fifth of the
24 space of the average car and when it
25 comes to parking at least five

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1 motorcycles can fit in the space taken
2 up by one car. Motorcycles are very
3 fuel efficient, far more so than the
4 most fuel efficient cars. Motorcycles
5 produce less emissions and therefore
6 less pollutions than cars.

7 Motorcycles weigh less than
8 cars. On average, a motorcycle weighs
9 about 500 pounds as compared to the
10 other 5,000 pounds of a car or truck.
11 And having only two wheels, we have
12 much less impact on the road surfaces,
13 which lessens the need for road
14 surface maintenance.

15 I'm a stagehand working in
16 theater, film and television, and I
17 often have to travel in the early
18 morning or late at night when the
19 subways are not running regularly or
20 reliably. Which is why I have to have
21 my own reliable and cheap mode of
22 transport to make it to my work calls
23 on time or to get home quickly to rest
24 before the next call start.

25 In every way, motorcycles are a

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1 great human transport vehicle. And
2 they're not for everyone or my best
3 option at this time. In every other
4 city that has implemented congestion
5 pricing, motorcycles have been
6 100 percent exempt. So if we're
7 following the other cities, I urge
8 those of you who will be making these
9 decisions to give motorcycles a
10 100 percent exemption.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Beryl
14 Rosenberg, followed by Walter Iwachiw.

15 Our next speaker is Walter
16 Iwachiw, followed by Ramond Lin.

17 Our next speaker is Ramond Lin,
18 followed by Ricia Augusty.

19 Our next speaker is Ricia
20 Augusty, followed by Ethan A.

21 RICIA AUGUSTY: Hello. Can you
22 hear me?

23 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.
24 Please proceed.

25 RICIA AUGUSTY: Sure. My name

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1 is Ricia Augusty. I'm a native New
2 Yorker, I've been born and raised on
3 Staten Island, and I want to tell you
4 thank you for the work your team has
5 done on this project and allowing for
6 the public to issue comments.

7 I agree with Ms. Michelle
8 Grossman, Ms. Nadia Holubnyczyj and
9 Drew Stillman who spoke before me.
10 And I apologize Nadia if I said your
11 name wrong.

12 I agree that we need to improve
13 our environmental issues, but I do not
14 agree with the congestion pricing.
15 Living on Staten Island, I am disabled
16 and I'm on a limited income and I'm a
17 patient of Memorial Sloan Kettering.
18 I physically cannot use the buses and
19 subways.

20 For those who have handicap
21 stickers or plates, what toll will we
22 pay? Are we exempt? For those who
23 have E-ZPass, will there be a spot on
24 our account that would indicate that
25 we have a handicap sticker or plate so

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1 that we are able to obtain the
2 discount or exemption?

3 In addition, some of the funds
4 that you are going to be receiving,
5 would they help with the
6 transportation on Staten Island? It
7 is not fair and right that the other
8 boroughs benefit but not Staten
9 Island. For example, the tunnel that
10 was partially built between Staten
11 Island and Brooklyn or the disabled
12 train tracks around its harbor.

13 Why not issue small tolls on
14 other bridges and tunnels that are not
15 charged instead of doing this
16 congestion pricing? Why isn't our
17 buses and subways clean like other
18 counties and other countries; for
19 example, Canada?

20 The MTA has received plenty of
21 money over the years but not really
22 have kept their promises to New
23 Yorkers. The MTA needs to create more
24 jobs; for example, creating MTA police
25 instead of heavily depending on NYPD.

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1 What about the parents who have
2 children who have cancer and need to
3 get to appointments. Most train
4 elevator subways don't work and the
5 people who are disabled can't use them
6 either. The disabled and elderly and
7 the residents of the borough of Staten
8 Island are forgotten and it's a shame.
9 Staten Islanders pay the highest tolls
10 compared to all the other boroughs.
11 What about the environmental impact to
12 Staten Island, there's no information
13 about that.

14 Also, lastly, I'm very concerned
15 about the moneys collected would not
16 be allocated properly and into the
17 pockets of top management. Will there
18 be a freeze on top management salary
19 yearly?

20 Please consider not doing this.
21 Thank you very much, and have a good
22 day.

23 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

24 The next speaker, the 120th
25 person to sign up is Ethan A.,

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1 followed by Joel Gutierrez.

2 The next speaker is Joel
3 Gutierrez, followed by Jason Nelson.

4 The next speaker is Jason Nelson
5 followed by Janice Gardner.

6 The next speaker is Janice
7 Gardner, followed by Sidney Moskowitz.

8 The next speaker is Sidney
9 Moskowitz, followed by Ronald
10 Weismann.

11 The next speaker Ronald
12 Weismann, followed by Tylie Waters.

13 The next speaker is Tylie
14 Waters, followed by Ron Simoncini.

15 The next speaker is Ron
16 Simoncini, followed by Hertzberg.

17 The next speaker is Hertzberg,
18 followed by Cathy Burton.

19 The next speaker is Cathy
20 Burton, followed by Sue Low.

21 The next speaker, the 130th
22 person to sign up, is Sue Low,
23 followed by Magdamary Marcano.

24 Sue Low, if you unmute yourself,
25 you may proceed.

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1 SUE LOW: Hi. I live in Queens.
2 I was born in Manhattan, lived in
3 Queens all my life, except for
4 college.

5 I don't think the congestion
6 pricing is fair for really anyone.
7 It's just a money grab for the MTA.
8 After all, they raised the tolls for
9 the Holland Tunnel and George
10 Washington Bridge and supposedly to
11 pay for the new World Trade Center.
12 It's just a money grab. So it's just
13 more for the poor and middle-class to
14 pay.

15 Some of us live in a
16 transportation desert. I mean, I'm
17 lucky enough to live near a train
18 station, but I have to pay for it. I
19 don't see why just because you're in
20 Manhattan -- I want to go to
21 Manhattan, I can go in there, I'm
22 already paying enough taxes just to
23 take -- just to go to work.

24 It's like everything they are
25 saying there is a drop -- there

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1 needs -- why is this a drop in riders?
2 It's because the trains and the buses
3 are not safe. I'm Asian, I'm a woman,
4 I don't feel safe going on the train.
5 I mean, this is during the peak hours
6 and I still don't feel safe. I
7 basically told my office that I still
8 freak out going -- the train.

9 Don't just as for money, oh, we
10 have to expand; expand for what,
11 expand for who? It's not for me
12 because I'm still freaking out just
13 going on the train. I'm just one
14 rider who's basically saying I can't
15 go on the train. How many others are
16 there? Unless you can bring us back
17 to get your revenue up, don't tax
18 other people because of your
19 shortcoming.

20 Good for people in Manhattan
21 because they -- you know, the police
22 are crawling, you know, probably where
23 that lady in the CBD district is
24 living. But here, I mean, it's the
25 old saying, there's never a cop when

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1 you need one. And that certainly
2 applies when I go on the train. If I
3 take -- I look at the news and I freak
4 out when I have to take my dog -- I
5 just read oh, there is a stabbing at
6 Queensborough Plaza. That's at
7 Queensborough Plaza, so I'm freaking
8 out just taking my dog to the vet. I
9 mean, how do you expect me to go to
10 work?

11 I think that you're being unfair
12 for people who basically have to take
13 -- have to drive. And even the people
14 at work who basically is saying that,
15 you know, we're willing to look at
16 discounted parking because they want
17 the employees to come. They don't
18 want their employees to freak out on
19 the transportation system that's
20 unsafe.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

23 The next speaker is Magdamary
24 Marcano, followed by Dawn Kojak.

25 The next speaker is Dawn Kojak,

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1 followed by Jorge Urena.

2 Dawn, if you unmute, you could
3 proceed with your comment.

4 DAWN KOJAK: Can you hear me?

5 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

6 Please proceed.

7 DAWN KOJAK: Hi. Thank you.

8 This is Dawn Kojak. Good Sunday
9 afternoon and thank you for this
10 week's public open comment sessions.
11 I'm trying to marinate my mind within
12 this concept of congestion pricing and
13 the opening presentation on
14 fundraising, and I loosely understand
15 all the theoretical pros and cons to
16 implementing it. But I also
17 understand why people are against it,
18 and why some of us believe it's
19 already a done deal.

20 I think we all want a clean
21 world, clean air, I'm doing the same
22 as others to contribute to the goal as
23 well. I take public transit, I ride a
24 bicycle. And as a pedestrian, I've
25 been hit by a bicycle. And traffic

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1 violence and aggression doesn't simply
2 involve car drivers; there's bikes,
3 there's motorized bikes. Being hit by
4 a bike does not feel good.

5 And of course I'm
6 pro-environment and I use a lot of
7 public transit. But I'm against this
8 congestion pricing here and now, and I
9 agree that it's not fair to Midtown
10 residents and residents who live
11 below.

12 I ask that you seek and pursue
13 another method to fund raise and to
14 bring moneys into the system. And why
15 you are proposing this additional
16 burden when the city is trying to
17 rebuild and bring working people back
18 to work in person in Midtown, and come
19 to town for entertainment and to
20 receive medical care here in the city
21 post-pandemic is beyond comprehension.

22 And your slides had a lot of
23 data on them, and I apologize, I
24 likely missed some of the highlights.
25 But I think the theoretical concepts

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1 are great on paper. But concepts like
2 elevator speed might work great if
3 we're robots, but we're not, we're
4 human beings. We might drop
5 something, we have kids that don't
6 walk six miles an hour.

7 I live in Midtown West. I've
8 been here for 30 years. I recently
9 walked past a bus that was retrieving
10 theater goers from a popular theater
11 on 52nd Street. The bus couldn't pull
12 over because of restaurants,
13 restaurant space occupying street
14 space. So the bus blocked traffic for
15 ten minutes. It was still there when
16 I returned from my trip, picking up
17 the people and God knows the traffic
18 went even further west than 8th
19 Avenue.

20 So people have to pay an
21 additional \$20 per day to simply walk
22 out the front door and get into their
23 vehicle to go out into the world and
24 earn a living. Personally, I have
25 three part-time jobs; I work as a

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1 substitute teacher during the school
2 year, I work as an actor, a background
3 actor in our city's wonderful t.v. and
4 film industry, and I work as a legal
5 billing assistant. And if you include
6 my poll-working job two to three days
7 a year, it's another job.

8 And if I don't work -- I don't
9 own a car, but when I need a car, I
10 rent one from one of the Midtown
11 locations. I might have a call time
12 at 4:00 a.m. in Rockland or
13 Westchester, I can't just jump on a
14 bike. I have wardrobe I have to carry
15 with me.

16 Renting a vehicle is already a
17 financial burden and having to pay
18 this additional charge would just be a
19 nightmare. I request that you ideally
20 find another way to handle this fund
21 raise.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is Jorge Urena,
25 followed by Kenny Tai.

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1 The next speaker is Kenny Tai,
2 followed by Michi Mee.

3 The next speaker is Michi Mee,
4 followed by Lawrence Zimmer.

5 Our next speaker is Lawrence
6 Zimmer, followed by Deborah Weiss.

7 The next speaker is Deborah
8 Weiss, followed by Emma Cupela.

9 The next speaker is Emma Cupela,
10 followed by Renee Youmans.

11 The next speaker is Renee
12 Youmans, followed by Lorenz Skeeter.

13 The next speaker is Lorenz
14 Skeeter, followed by John Trantos.

15 The next speaker is John
16 Trantos, followed by Rae Richards.

17 The next speaker is Rae
18 Richards, followed by Suzette Francis.

19 Our next speaker is Suzette
20 Francis, followed by Francis Vaughn.

21 Our next speaker is Francis
22 Vaughn, followed by April Beckles.

23 The next speaker is April
24 Beckles, followed by Carol Puttre.

25 April, if you're able to unmute

1 yourself, you can proceed with your
2 comments.

3 APRIL BECKLES: Good afternoon,
4 and thank you for allowing my opinion
5 to be heard.

6 I just want to say that I
7 disagree with this plan. As a
8 Pennsylvania resident of only ten
9 years, but most of my 30-plus years
10 living and working in New York, I now
11 try to limit my commute back and forth
12 by staying with family and friends
13 already in the New York area due to
14 increases in gas, tolls, now food and
15 other essentials.

16 And now this increase to
17 suburban commuters like myself, I feel
18 crushed as a working person of New
19 York City for whom once coming through
20 the Holland Tunnel for my commute and
21 paying at the Holland Tunnel will now
22 have to pay another toll immediately
23 thereafter upwards of \$23. Which is
24 now absurd to me, and I really
25 disagree with it.

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1 Also, since you believe that
2 this plan is likely to divert traffic
3 into other boroughs, such as Queens
4 and I believe you mentioned Staten
5 Island as well, then these other
6 communities will now be polluted with
7 gas emissions and also congested with
8 traffic, which is not really
9 considering New York City as a whole.
10 Or maybe you are considering them
11 because at a later date, this is also
12 expected to happen in other boroughs.

13 Also, a tax credit only being
14 offered to CBD residents with a
15 minimal credit or discount or any
16 incentive to those who are doomed to
17 pay these tolls, like myself, it is
18 just unfair to me and I just disagree.

19 In order for someone like me to
20 be pushed to public transportation, I
21 would have to drive my vehicle to
22 somewhere in New Jersey then jump on
23 the New Jersey Transit to then travel
24 all the way to New York City to an
25 unsafe and unreliable New York transit

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1 system, who knows what time I'd have
2 to leave my house at this point. And
3 this will really disturb my mental
4 wellness and just having to travel
5 like that is just a lot to me.

6 So I believe maybe a possible
7 suggestion is creating maybe times and
8 dates for truck delivers which go into
9 the city in this area, which seem to
10 be the greatest problem in the area.
11 Maybe there's something that can be
12 implemented with different times and
13 dates just the same way during the
14 pandemic that that was created to even
15 go to the store and shop.

16 Again, I thank you for allowing
17 my opinion to be heard. And once
18 again, I do disagree with this plan.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Carol
22 Puttre, followed by Yuki Endo.

23 CAROL PUTTRE: Hello. Carol
24 Puttre --

25 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

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1 CAROL PUTTRE: Thank you. I'm
2 Carol Puttre. I'm retired. I live in
3 the East Village on a fixed income and
4 I have a car. Needless to say, money
5 is always an issue --

6 I'm hearing an echo here. I'm
7 sorry.

8 MR. WOJNAR: We hear you fine.

9 CAROL PUTTRE: All right. I
10 live on a fixed income and I have a
11 car. Needless to say, money is an
12 issue. I need my car, as I have an
13 elderly brother on Long Island and a
14 daughter with a new baby in Queens,
15 both of whom I see once a week.

16 I also do community outreach to
17 a neighbor currently in a nursing home
18 in Westchester. If I relied on public
19 transportation to see them, it would
20 easily take me two hours each way. I
21 need a car and I don't have any extra
22 money in my budget for these excessive
23 charges.

24 People who live in Manhattan who
25 have cars, generally do not drive

1 around visiting and doing errands, as
2 parking is impossible with bus lanes,
3 bike lanes, dining sheds, Citi Bike
4 Kiosks and parking regulations. We
5 mostly use our cars to go out of
6 Manhattan and return home.

7 We are hardly the cause of
8 traffic congestion. It's disgraceful
9 that half of us will be penalized
10 because we live south of 60th Street.
11 We need to be exempt.

12 These are some reasons for
13 traffic congestion. In 2013, the city
14 spent 55 million dollars to close
15 southbound traffic on Broadway at
16 Times Square and shortly thereafter,
17 at Herald Square to create pedestrian
18 plazas. PR hype aside, cutting out
19 three lines of downtown traffic and
20 rerouting them to side streets and
21 parallel avenues causes major traffic
22 congestion.

23 In 2015, when it was voted that
24 there would be no cap on the number of
25 Uber cars on the road, there were only

1 25,000 Uber cars in New York City. A
2 study after four months found that
3 there was no increase in traffic --
4 now fast-forward to 2022 with a
5 whopping 80,000 New York City Uber
6 drivers and tell me that's not a major
7 cause of traffic congestion. Almost
8 every third car on the road has a T on
9 their license plate; check that out
10 next time you're on the road.

11 Also in 2015, 2.4 billion
12 dollars was spent to expand the number
13 7 train line to Hudson Yards, the
14 failed playground of the rich.
15 Wouldn't that money have been better
16 spent fixed fixing the crumbling MTA
17 structure -- infrastructure?

18 And lastly, with rising
19 inflation and businesses still
20 recovery from the affects of COVID, is
21 this really the time to implement a
22 program that will increase the cost of
23 goods even more and literally take
24 money out of the pockets of the
25 middle-class?

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1 Thank you.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Yuki Endo,
4 followed by Suraj Bhoge.

5 Our next speaker is Suraj Bhoge,
6 followed by Paul Chan.

7 Our next speaker is Paul Chan,
8 followed by Caleb Pan.

9 Our next speaker, the 150th
10 person to sign up, is Caleb Pan,
11 followed by Christopher Greif.

12 CALEB PAN: Hi, can everyone
13 hear me?

14 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

15 CALEB PAN: Great. Hi,
16 everyone. My name is Caleb Pan. I
17 grew up in Brooklyn. I've taken the
18 subway my entire life. I currently
19 live in Flatbush.

20 I'm just going to get straight
21 to the point. It's a Sunday, I know
22 we all want to get out of here,
23 including myself. First off, shout
24 out to the good people at the MTA, New
25 York City DOT, New York State DOT,

1 U.S. DOT for keeping our subways,
2 trains and buses running and therefore
3 New York City running.

4 All of you deserve an applause
5 in appreciation for keeping one of the
6 biggest economies in the entire world
7 running 24/7, 365 days of the year.

8 And secondly, I am for the
9 congestion charging with little to no
10 exemptions. New York City has known
11 since the 1970s that's 50 years ago,
12 ladies and gentlemen, 50 years ago
13 that there were too many motor
14 vehicles going into Manhattan.

15 There are almost two million
16 motor vehicles coming in and going out
17 of Manhattan everyday; that's the
18 entire population of New York City.
19 Eight million cars, trucks, vans from
20 Long Island, Upstate New York, New
21 Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut,
22 going through a tiny portion of New
23 York City in one week.

24 We have a geometry problem,
25 folks. We cannot fit all these cars

1 in New York City.

2 We've given -- we've bulldozed
3 neighborhoods, we've filled our air
4 with noise and pollution and we've
5 given up our very limited space to
6 bridges, tunnels, roads, highway,
7 streets, all to support motor
8 vehicles. All of which is costing
9 billions and billions of dollars every
10 year to maintain because there are
11 over eight million cars that shouldn't
12 be here in the first place.

13 We've acquiesced to the motor
14 vehicle driving public for over 50
15 years, ladies and gentlemen. This is
16 not a tenable situation.

17 Let's make this congestion
18 charge thing happen and most
19 importantly is make sure that the
20 money we make from this, that's up to
21 15 billion dollars, goes to funding
22 public transportation infrastructure
23 only. That's buses, that's trains,
24 that's subways, rail and bicycle
25 infrastructure and nothing else.

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1 Let's make sure our subway and
2 buses get the love and attention that
3 they deserve.

4 Thank you for your time. Thank
5 you for your consideration. I'm
6 looking forward to a better version of
7 New York City, ladies and gentlemen.
8 Have a good rest of your weekend.

9 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Christopher
11 Greif, followed by Anonymous number 2.

12 CHRISTOPHER GREIF: Good
13 afternoon. I'm Christopher Greif. I
14 hope everyone's doing well.

15 As an advocate for people with
16 disability representing every advocate
17 titles that I have. I would like to
18 remind -- I'd also like to agree with
19 the gentleman behind me. Also, we
20 need to focus on the structure on the
21 subways, Long Island Rail Road,
22 Metro-North to make it more ADA
23 accessible. But we also have to
24 remember also that people who are in
25 group homes, day hab programs, they

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1 have those special plaques.

2 And the one thing that I hope
3 our press people are listening very
4 carefully, please always remember that
5 seniors and people with disabilities
6 are part of this too. And the one
7 thing is we need to make sure that
8 information is going out correctly.

9 We need to make sure that
10 information is going out for seniors
11 and people with disabilities and we
12 need to make sure that information is
13 going out where discounts are coming
14 in. If we have reduced fare prices,
15 we need to know where reduced fare
16 prices for people who have those
17 plaques who are agencies that
18 transport them to the doctors in
19 Manhattan or to -- from Queens to
20 Manhattan, Staten Island to Manhattan,
21 that goes from Brooklyn to Manhattan
22 or the Bronx to Manhattan.

23 We need to make it clear that
24 information needs to go out and those
25 plaques needs to be going out. So DOT

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1 for city and state, we need to make
2 sure we work on that as well because
3 accessibility is the main thing --
4 reason why I advocate for, for
5 accessibility.

6 We need to make sure our buses
7 our subways and our subway trains,
8 Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North,
9 everything is truly ADA accessible.
10 That's why it's called the American
11 Disability Act, there since 1990.

12 Some of you have made it
13 perfectly that we need to have more
14 accessibility. We need it very much.
15 We also need to make sure that
16 bicycles need to follow the same laws,
17 yes, number one, wearing a helmet;
18 two, follow the traffic light signals;
19 and three, cars that are in bus stops,
20 get them off.

21 Enough is enough. How can a
22 senior or a person with disability get
23 on and off the bus safely? It is not
24 the bus driver's fault or the
25 Access-A-Ride drivers. It's the cars

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1 that need to follow the laws, so
2 please.

3 Please, guys, let's work
4 together and let's get this
5 accessibility and the congestion price
6 in or do something about it to make
7 sure information goes out.

8 Thank you.

9 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Anonymous
11 number 2, followed by Zach Weinberg.

12 ANONYMOUS 2: Hello, can you
13 hear me?

14 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

15 ANONYMOUS 2: Okay. I'm against
16 congestion pricing or at least with
17 some regard to people that are going
18 in for medical reasons.

19 You know, some people have said,
20 oh, you can take Paratransit. Some of
21 us are not eligible for that. Some of
22 us are immunocompromised even before
23 COVID. There are, you know, we get
24 radiation at some point in treatment,
25 we have to go in daily and we're too

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1 weak to go on a train. Some of us
2 live in Westchester or Northern Bronx
3 are not close to take multiple -- most
4 multiple modes of transportation to
5 get to NYU or to Sloane.

6 I won't belabor the point
7 because it's been made before, but I
8 think it's a population that needs to
9 be thought of and represented here.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. WOJNAR: Our next speaker is
12 Zach Weinberg, followed by Debra
13 Greif.

14 Our next speaker is Debra Greif,
15 followed by Lina De La Cruz.

16 DEBRA GREIF: Can you hear me?
17 Hi. Can you hear me?

18 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can. Yes,
19 we can. Please proceed.

20 DEBRA GREIF: My name is Debra
21 Greif. I am a life-long subway and
22 bus rider. I also am -- I use
23 Access-A-Ride. I am in favor of
24 congestion pricing, but I also want to
25 say that there are parts of Downtown

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1 Brooklyn -- I live in Brooklyn -- that
2 is crowded beyond belief. The same in
3 Long Island City, other part and right
4 near all the buses, the bridges and
5 tunnels.

6 It's impossible for the
7 Access-A-Ride vehicles to get us
8 through because there's so many cars
9 and we have to wait for them to make
10 it through. It's frustrating because
11 I was with a patient who had to go to
12 Sloane Kettering. They were late and
13 I was late to my special eye doctor
14 appointment because we had to wait for
15 all the traffic, for all the cars, to
16 figure out how to get through the
17 Brooklyn Battery -- well, I call it
18 Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, now known
19 as Hugh Carey.

20 I'm also frustrated when I'm
21 also on the city buses and cars are
22 blocking the driver from getting me in
23 safely or in Manhattan.

24 I could -- actually, I use a
25 walker now. I can actually walk

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1 faster than most buses, especially the
2 one on 42nd Street. Now, I'm 64. If
3 I can beat that bus, that's not good
4 because all I see is traffic, traffic,
5 traffic. I see the buses that take --
6 the express buses that try to get
7 people to go into New Jersey, as well
8 Staten Island, Brooklyn, Bronx and
9 Queens, they're blocked because of so
10 many other cars involved.

11 I understand the frustration.
12 Yes, it costs money but also it's not
13 fair for people with disabilities,
14 whether seniors or young people with
15 disabilities, that we can't get around
16 because we rely on special vehicles to
17 get us around.

18 You need to see that this
19 funding helps to go to improve the
20 true accessibility for the subways.
21 Not just elevators, but ramps and --
22 if they could also do flat escalators
23 so that they -- in certain stores have
24 so it's easier for people with
25 wheelchairs and walkers can access the

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1 subways when we need to.

2 Thankfully, I have a young son
3 who can help me. And, yes, I do know
4 how -- there are times we had
5 elevators and I'm going back to
6 Brooklyn because I didn't know what
7 time Access-A-Ride should pick me up.
8 So I had to go uptown to go downtown
9 because the elevator was broken. But
10 I still knew how to get around because
11 I used all the apps.

12 So I'm in favor of congestion
13 pricing, but I think you also have to
14 include the other parts of the
15 boroughs that are so congested near
16 the buses and the tunnels.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

19 The next speaker is Lina De La
20 Cruz, followed by Marc Kagan.

21 The next speaker is Marc Kagan,
22 followed by Howard Birnbaum.

23 Our next speaker is Howard
24 Birnbaum, followed by Aaron Loo.

25 Howard, if you can unmute

1 yourself.

2 HOWARD BIRNBAUM: Can you hear
3 me?

4 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.
5 Please proceed.

6 HOWARD BIRNBAUM: Good afternoon.
7 I want to scratch it and start all
8 over again.

9 It's not fair the people have to
10 pay double and it's not fair to them
11 and also why don't we go back -- go
12 back to the private bus driver you
13 used to have and stuff like that. It
14 would be better that way. You go by
15 the private lines instead of by the
16 MTA. Every time, every year -- there
17 was worry about money, money, money.
18 They got lots of money right now and I
19 feel that it's -- scratch this whole
20 project.

21 It's not fair for the people.
22 If you do this, you have a lot of
23 people leaving and the taxis that are
24 going to be Chapter 11 and also the
25 MTA will go Chapter 11.

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1 And also, the governor is up
2 running for reelection -- and Chuck
3 Schumer -- if this goes through, it
4 would be big trouble. I just want to
5 tell you right now.

6 Thank you for your time.

7 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

8 The next speaker is Aaron Loo,
9 followed by Frank Ruisi.

10 The next speaker is Frank Ruisi,
11 followed by Madeleine Rumely.

12 The next speaker, our 160th
13 person to sign up, is Madeleine
14 Rumely, followed by Kevin Martin.

15 MADELEINE RUMELY: Hello. I'm
16 hoping you can hear me okay.

17 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.
18 Please proceed.

19 MADELEINE RUMELY: I'm a working
20 mom with a two-year-old and his great
21 grandparents were born in East New
22 York, Brooklyn and I've been taking
23 the subway every day pretty much since
24 the 1980s when I was born. Even
25 during the pandemic to get to work in

1 Midtown.

2 I fully support congestion
3 pricing. In the middle of spring of
4 2021, I was in a crosswalk when a
5 distracted driver blew through a stop
6 sign and struck my stroller. By some
7 miracle, I can walk and my child is
8 still alive.

9 But I rely on the subways and
10 buses and in response to people like
11 Michelle Grossman and other people who
12 live in Manhattan and complain about
13 how unreliable the trains are, I'm
14 that mom who lives on the B train
15 that's suspended on the weekends.

16 I take the subway at 5:00 or
17 6:00 a.m. in the morning. I took the
18 subway to the hospital to give birth,
19 I had to buy a car seat for a car,
20 that I don't own, in order to take him
21 home. I have struggled on and off
22 buses with C-section stitches because
23 the subways are not accessible and I
24 fully understand and I feel bad for
25 people who have issues getting on and

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1 off trains. It's very hard,
2 especially with a kid.

3 This is my only option. My
4 husband has a disability. He doesn't
5 drive. I take the train sometimes at
6 5:00, 6:00 in the morning to get to
7 work and often times as late as
8 midnight to get home with hundreds of
9 thousands of other people, many of
10 whom are children and are parents.

11 I take the D Train to go visit
12 my family in the Bronx from Brooklyn
13 and it can take two to three hours
14 sometimes. By car it takes 35
15 minutes.

16 This system is not fair, it's
17 broken. My family's been here over
18 100 years. I've never seen so many
19 cars as somebody who lives in
20 Brooklyn, who lives in an outer
21 borough and has family in another
22 outer borough, the Bronx and in
23 Washington Heights.

24 I pay taxes and I deserve a good
25 system. Thank you, I fully support

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1 congestion pricing.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 The next speaker is Kevin
4 Martin, followed by Jason Gers.

5 The next speaker is Jason Gers,
6 followed by Rajinder Singh.

7 JASON GERS: Hi there, how's it
8 going?

9 Hi. My name is Jason Gers. I
10 live in the Lower East Side of
11 Manhattan. I'm also the former Chair
12 of the Manhattan Activist Committee
13 with Transportation Alternatives.

14 When my father grew up in East
15 Flatbush, Brooklyn in the 1950's, his
16 childhood was the stuff of New York
17 City legend. You know, the streets
18 were shared space where neighborhood
19 kids could gather and play stickball.
20 Now, as I'm raising my daughter in the
21 city, the idea of letting her play in
22 the street seems absolutely insane.

23 I live in constant fear that one
24 day, my one and only child will be
25 taken away from me by a careless

1 driver on the road. When I was a
2 child, my aunt was taken away from me
3 by a hit-and-run driver and several of
4 my young classmates also lost their
5 lives in crashes, one after another in
6 the drum beat of pain.

7 All this is on my mind every day
8 when I take my daughter to school.
9 Our daily bike commute is a nerve
10 wrecking ordeal. Drivers are more
11 selfish and antisocial than after.
12 6,000-pound vehicles blocking the bike
13 lanes, parking on the sidewalks,
14 disfiguring their plates to avoid
15 accountability, as they avoid
16 double-parked trucks, vehicles cross
17 over the median headlong into us
18 without the slightest hesitation.

19 As we cross the crowded
20 Williamsburg Bridge entrance,
21 thousands of toll shopping drivers
22 enter and exit Manhattan for free
23 creating unsustainable levels of
24 congestion on narrow neighborhood
25 streets. Every single time I cross

1 this bridge entrance, drivers
2 blatantly run the red lights just to
3 avoid a few extra seconds of sitting
4 in their cars.

5 Our addiction to cars hurts no
6 one more than our children; our
7 children who can't walk themselves to
8 school because the street isn't safe,
9 our children who suffer with asthma or
10 can't play outside because it's too
11 hot. Our children will ultimately
12 have to bear the financial burden of
13 repairing a city constantly flooding
14 due to climate disruption.

15 Most of the folks in this
16 hearing opposing congestion pricing
17 have one simple message, I shouldn't
18 pay, someone should pay. If we don't
19 enact immediate limits on car
20 congestion, it is our children who
21 will pay the toll and form an
22 increasingly unliveable city.

23 I understand the short-term pain
24 that this policy will cause. But just
25 like the pain of child birth, the pain

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1 of congestion pricing is necessary to
2 finally bring New York City out of the
3 Robert Moses era and into the 21st
4 Century.

5 The fact that people are so
6 vocal about the pain of congestion
7 pricing is proof that it's going to
8 work. Congestion pricing will reduce
9 pollution, noise, danger. It will
10 make commercial deliveries easier and
11 less expensive as workers spend fewer
12 hours stuck in traffic or looking for
13 parking. We need congestion pricing
14 now, no exceptions.

15 Thank you for your
16 consideration.

17 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

18 The next speaker is Rajinder
19 Singh, followed by Rebekah Shoaf.

20 RAJINDER SINGH: Hello, I wanted
21 to ask some questions regarding -- for
22 the yellow cab medallions in regard in
23 this congestion pricing, where was
24 this problem with congestion when
25 100,000 Uber and Lyft cars were added

1 illegally to the New York City
2 transportation industry? Where was
3 the congestion and pollution
4 environmental ideas then? This idea
5 was just brought up right now because
6 the MTA needs more money, even though
7 they already received a lot of money
8 from the federal government.

9 Then another problem comes in is
10 from medallion owners who are drivers,
11 we already paid for our hail, to drive
12 and pick up people in the city.
13 That's why we pay for it, so we don't
14 have any other restrictions in regard
15 to picking up passengers.

16 We can't stay in one part of
17 the city and pick up passengers.
18 Passengers don't come to us, we have
19 to go to them. We have to look around
20 for passengers and pick them up.

21 We are more accessible than the
22 MTA. We have more wheelchair
23 accessible cars. We're more
24 environmental friendly right now
25 because we're adding hybrids and

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1 electric cars. Yet, the MTA as a
2 department of the government, isn't
3 even completely part of the
4 government. Why are we paying for a
5 competitor, basically, in the
6 transportation industry for them to
7 stay afloat?

8 Many people added that the MTA
9 in New York City would become like
10 London. It wouldn't. The Metro in
11 London was already profitable before
12 the pandemic. The pandemic took them
13 down. The MTA was never profitable
14 because of mismanagement. And we
15 already paid to the MTA 2.50 per trip
16 and \$50 -- 50 cents to MTA tax. And
17 we already pay \$800 per car for road
18 tax to drive a car.

19 People keep saying that the MTA
20 needs more funds. But what do they do
21 with these funds? We don't know,
22 there's never accountability. Execs
23 keep taking money, but nobody ever --
24 nothing ever gets done. Empty buses
25 are running in the city, nobody

1 complains about them. There's no
2 passengers in them and they're still
3 running.

4 These new restaurant shed posted
5 up, nobody said anything about them.
6 They created a lot of traffic because
7 we can't park anymore. They've taken
8 up the parking, so most people double
9 park. Then we also have the entry and
10 the point of staying and working in
11 NYC. If you keep taking people's
12 livelihood away, you keep -- if you
13 reduce the traffic and congestion in
14 a -- economic liability in New York
15 City, people will leave.

16 The business district, the idea,
17 it will die down. People will move
18 elsewhere. That's what happens when
19 you don't allow people to flourish as
20 a society, as people. We don't need
21 cars, but we need cars at the moment.
22 It's not a future problem, it's a
23 problem today.

24 Thank you for listening and I
25 hope you really do pay attention to

1 this. It's an important idea for
2 everybody who lives in New York City.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. WOJNAR: Our next speaker is
5 Rebekah Shoaf, followed by Stephen
6 Wong.

7 REBEKAH SHOAF: Good afternoon.
8 My name is Rebekah Shoaf, and I'm a
9 resident of and small business owner
10 in the South Bronx. I do not own a
11 car. I mostly get around the city on
12 the subway and bus.

13 The fact that we are on the
14 verge of adopting congestion pricing
15 makes me proud to be a New Yorker. I
16 think New York is the best city on
17 Earth, but it's also one of the most
18 unique. I love that we will be the
19 first city in the nation to implement
20 congestion pricing. I'm proud that in
21 this area we are setting the standard
22 for how a 21st Century city should get
23 around.

24 If you've ever watched in agony
25 as an ambulance with its siren on

1 becomes stuck in gridlock traffic with
2 nowhere to go, knowing that a fellow
3 New Yorker might be dieing inside or
4 somewhere nearby because help cannot
5 get to them, then you know that we
6 need a traffic reduction plan now.

7 The specific congestion pricing
8 scenario selected should have the most
9 significant impact possible on both
10 traffic reduction and increase funding
11 for much-needed capital improvements
12 on public transportation.

13 We can't demand subway
14 improvements without giving the MTA
15 funding to do so. The tolling plan
16 will make it possible for the MTA to
17 continue making improvements to
18 infrastructure, service, and
19 accessibility; such as the recent
20 implementation of the M125 bus service
21 in Manhattan and the South Bronx that
22 I enthusiastically applaud and am
23 extremely grateful for.

24 As a Bronx resident, I want to
25 stress that given the existing

1 long-term negative and racist impacts
2 of Cross Bronx Expressway traffic
3 pollution on Bronx children, I urge
4 the project sponsors to select a plan
5 that does not significantly increase
6 truck traffic on the Cross Bronx
7 Expressway. Which as I understand it,
8 would be Scenario C or G.

9 I believe that this plan should
10 be just the start of turning New York
11 City into an international transit
12 model for the future. The tolling
13 plan of my dreams is far broader and
14 more radical, one that extends beyond
15 the CBD and draws enough revenue that
16 subways, buses and ferries are made
17 completely free for all New York City
18 residents, if not suburban commuters
19 and tourists.

20 The New York City citizens of
21 the future need us to act with
22 courage, imagination, vision and
23 audacity to address the climate
24 emergency today. I love the boldness
25 of this plan and I hope we will

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1 embrace its potential to transform the
2 long-term future of New York City and
3 through example, the rest of the
4 country and the world.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

7 The next speaker is Stephen
8 Wong, followed by Mamadou Diallo.

9 The next speaker is Mamadou
10 Diallo, followed by Juan Goris.

11 The next speaker is Juan Goris,
12 followed by Cristina Ponsell.

13 JUAN GORIS: Hi. Good
14 afternoon. Can you see me? Okay.
15 Great.

16 My name is Juan Goris, and I
17 completely oppose the MTA price
18 congestion. Reason -- one reason is
19 because I fall within the catchment
20 area of the pricing -- of the
21 congestion pricing.

22 Some city have adapted the
23 congestion pricing such as London,
24 talks about they save commuters 148
25 hours per year. That's about five

1 minutes per month if they leave their
2 home early.

3 San Diego has congestion pricing
4 and they have something that favors
5 the rich, the Lexus lane. The
6 congestion prices burdens the poor and
7 favors the rich. Environmental impact
8 is to a minimum. What causes
9 environmental concern is the building
10 boiler emission and industrial, not
11 vehicle. There's already a penalty
12 for trucks and vehicle.

13 So in sum, the MTA fails to
14 prove -- fails to prove that it will
15 improve air quality by reducing
16 emission for cars. Reducing traffic
17 congestion is a failed model presented
18 by MTA. The MTA revenue is not the
19 responsibility of the people of New
20 York, the New Yorkers. The MTA is
21 anti-car, pro-traffic.

22 Already there is a congestion
23 pricing, it's called bridges and
24 tunnels. Also by the inflation and
25 hardcore economic. Corporate

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1 governor's model is used to justify
2 the congestion prices.

3 In conclusion, New Yorkers
4 should not pay for MTA financial
5 mismanagement. I call on everyone to
6 write to the -- to write an opposition
7 letter to the Federal Highway
8 Administration, to your elected
9 official to oppose. It does not favor
10 the poor or the disabled, it favors
11 the rich.

12 MTA is not green. It takes a
13 lot of energy to produce electricity,
14 and that's not green. No company is
15 green that is in business. New York
16 City residents should not pay the
17 congestion pricing. MTA is not
18 qualified to run they survey. It
19 should be done by the Federal Highway
20 transportation system because the MTA
21 will be bias in this survey.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

24 The next speaker is Cristina
25 Ponsell, followed by Gordon Lee.

1 CRISTINA PONSELL: Thank you for
2 your time and consideration today. I
3 am very concerned about this proposal.
4 First, it is not equitable and it will
5 further divide New York City by income
6 and continue to push out the
7 working-class which this city relies
8 on.

9 Second, I want to highlight the
10 importance of the exception for
11 vehicles transporting people with
12 disabilities. As someone with a
13 disability, I am unable to take the
14 train and am forced to rely on
15 vehicles to get around, this includes
16 my many different doctors'
17 appointments, most of which fall
18 within the proposed CBD.

19 Without an exception for
20 vehicles transporting people with
21 disabilities, this proposal could
22 arguably be in violation of the
23 Americans with Disabilities Act. As
24 of May 2022, only 29 percent of subway
25 stations are accessible. This does

1 not even take into account broken
2 elevators and sanitary concerns at the
3 stations.

4 Since the subway system is not
5 accessible, taxing vehicles
6 transporting persons with disabilities
7 would not provide a safe and effective
8 transportation alternative for
9 disabled people.

10 The best way to get people to
11 use the subway system is to improve
12 the system first, including safety,
13 sanitation, timeliness, reliability,
14 and accessibility.

15 An alternative to this
16 discriminatory proposal that would
17 create more disparity between classes
18 and will have a much higher impact
19 than anticipated on goods and services
20 would be to consider adding a penny
21 tax for a determined amount of time
22 for all purchases made in New York
23 City.

24 This will reduce the individual
25 burden while achieving the goal to

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1 increase funding for the MTA. With
2 that funding, the system could be
3 improved and naturally, less cars
4 would be on the road.

5 I strongly recommend that this
6 program not move forward and that the
7 city and MTA find a more equitable
8 solution.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

11 Our next speaker is Gordon Lee,
12 followed by Craig Smith.

13 The next speaker, the 170th
14 person to sign up, is Craig Smith,
15 followed by Vince Malfetano.

16 CRAIG SMITH: You could thank
17 Michael Bloomberg for initiating this
18 price and congestion plan when he came
19 in and he left the city with more
20 money than he can count, and now his
21 predecessors is continuing the
22 robbery. MTA, I'm really mad at y'all
23 for siding and then y'all taking all
24 the blame like it's the problem of the
25 MTA and know you're not going to get

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1 all the money and you get enough money
2 from the state and the federal
3 government.

4 All these -- before
5 gentrification and all these people
6 started coming back into the city,
7 they called the city -- you know what
8 they called the city. But now they
9 have a problem because they don't have
10 enough money to buy a car. But they
11 could go to 200-dollar-a-night place.
12 Come on, it's just another cash cow.

13 Fired city workers are not even
14 back to work. Fired city workers are
15 not even back to work. So now you
16 want to bleed the city some more.
17 It's bad enough that Rodriguez put the
18 cameras with Adams with the cameras.

19 So it's a cash cow. And I don't
20 like y'all being the scapegoat for
21 this. I really don't. Because
22 everybody's flocking back into the
23 city when they didn't want to come to
24 the city before.

25 Take your headphones off your

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1 bikes. And if you want a car, you
2 save enough to get a car. Stop trying
3 to tax us to death. And then when you
4 can't get you a coffee because the
5 truck can't deliver coffee to the
6 coffee machine, then you going to say
7 why the trucks ain't getting in there.

8 I'm tired of hearing this. You
9 get enough money from the bridges.
10 And I take the bridges with E-ZPass,
11 some \$60 every time coming out my
12 account. I mean, come on, fired city
13 workers are not even back to work.
14 And you can thank Michael Bloomberg,
15 you know he don't pay no congestion
16 pricing. And now it's being carried
17 out by Adams.

18 And new transportation is run --
19 who Adams just appointed. Y'all need
20 to stop. Y'all get enough money. The
21 trains have been having a problem
22 since the turn of the century when
23 August Beaumont built the train
24 system. So stop putting the blame on
25 public transportation, they get enough

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1 money. You don't got enough money to
2 buy a car, people save up all they
3 life to get a motor vehicle for
4 privacy. But now that you don't have
5 enough money to buy it, you got a
6 problem with it.

7 It took me -- stop it. All
8 y'all need to stop it, all you
9 privilege, wanna be privilege. You
10 didn't even want to come to the Bronx.

11 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
12 remarks.

13 CRAIG SMITH: You didn't even
14 want to come to the Bronx.

15 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Vince
17 Malfetano, followed by Margaret May.

18 Vince, you may unmute yourself
19 and begin your remarks.

20 VINCE MALFETANO: Hello. Okay.
21 I don't know if I have the video.

22 But in any case, I'm in my 70s.
23 My family's been in New York for 120
24 years. We've owned businesses, my dad
25 was a doctor, made house calls all

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1 over the city. I'm a retired teacher,
2 I do voluntary work from Westchester
3 County, I drive down and I try to help
4 kids out. I don't know how the hell
5 I'm going to keep doing it. Between
6 Biden's ridiculous economic failure,
7 our idiotic democrats in New York.
8 I'm almost getting priced out of being
9 able to stay in New York.

10 Couple of quick things.
11 Everybody knows your Environment
12 Assessment will be approved by Biden.
13 I've been involved in land use for
14 30-something-years and when's the last
15 time you ever heard of an impact
16 statement coming back oh, it's going
17 to have a negative impact. Right.

18 Couple of other thoughts. A lot
19 of people mentioned earlier yeah,
20 you're going to shift the burden of
21 this whole traffic thing of the outer
22 boroughs. Everybody knows that. When
23 I used to go into the city sometime
24 ago, you ought to see the cars backed
25 up by Woodlawn Avenue, up by Dyer, up

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1 by Pelham Parkway for the 6 train.
2 Everybody up by Manhattan College
3 getting on the end of those subway
4 lines. You guys are going to push all
5 of this stuff back out into the other
6 boroughs, but you know that already.
7 This is a one billion-dollar-a-year
8 money grab, I get it.

9 But I'm just making a polite
10 suggestion out there, for the folks
11 who are listening to this that might
12 be paying attention to what's really
13 happening here, this is your failed
14 democratic leadership trying to find
15 ways to squeeze more money out of
16 people from some pie in the sky idea
17 of solving pollution and congestion.

18 By the way, they created both by
19 taking away traffic lanes, putting
20 restaurants in the middle of the
21 street, all of the bike lanes,
22 two-lane roads are now one-lane. All
23 over New York, traffic is backed up
24 the wazoo. Traffic is stalled
25 creating immense pollution, and the

1 traffic hazards you're talking about.

2 You guys, look, I know you're
3 drawing a salary and, you know, I get
4 the game. But I'm not going to be
5 fooled by this kind of stupidity. I
6 hope the people out here actually do
7 understand that it's your democratic
8 party, the people that you have been
9 voting for, are screwing you big time.
10 And you're going to let them get away
11 with it.

12 Well, not me. I'm voting
13 republican. I'm voting for Zeldin,
14 and I pray to God Chuck Schumer does
15 not stay as majority leader of the
16 senate.

17 Good luck, everybody.

18 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
19 Margaret May, followed by Darby Moses.

20 Margaret, you may unmute
21 yourself and begin your remarks.

22 Margaret, you're currently
23 muted.

24 Margaret, you may unmute
25 yourself and begin your remarks.

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1 MARGARET MAY: Hi. Can you hear
2 me now?

3 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

4 MARGARET MAY: Okay. Good. Had
5 a little bit of difficulty there with
6 the technology.

7 So I've been listening from the
8 very beginning. I appreciate the
9 panelists' presentations, they were
10 very informative, which taught me a
11 lot. I also appreciate the people
12 who've spoken, some very intelligent
13 responses and comments.

14 And so, from my position after
15 listening to everybody, I have to say
16 that at this point, I'm in opposition
17 to this plan. I mean, I'm in support
18 of a lot of the ideal motives behind
19 it, but in very practical ways and
20 also financial repercussions for the
21 people who will be suffering so much
22 from this plan as those who have
23 already spoken. That is where I
24 stand.

25 And for me, some of the major

1 points I'd like to make, again, which
2 some of the others have made, are the
3 concerns about people who are either
4 are disabled or have medical problems,
5 you know, people who are suffering
6 from certain types of diseases.

7 Whether it's cancer or other forms of
8 illness, where they really have to
9 rely and need the ability to go to the
10 world's top-notch hospitals that we
11 have here in the city, that we're so
12 thankful for in the first place.

13 And to be able to get to them
14 with the ability to have that
15 protection and that reliability to go
16 and receive those services, that's
17 number one for me.

18 Also, we talk about congestion,
19 well, and the problems that exist
20 right now which DOT and the rest of
21 the city has not gotten under control
22 are the bicyclists. And so I'm sure
23 there's going to be even more problems
24 with bicycle congestion and the
25 failures of regulating the bicyclists

1 in the city.

2 And I'm a Native New Yorker,
3 I've grown up here, and I've
4 experienced everything, so many
5 changes from back in the 60s to now.
6 So that's another problem that really
7 bothers me is that, what's going to
8 happen with the regulation of the
9 bicyclist which hasn't even dealt
10 with?

11 And then of course our safety,
12 especially as a result of the
13 pandemic, so much has deteriorated in
14 our city, but their reform laws
15 haven't supported any sense of safety
16 for the regular person who lives here,
17 who is a resident for their whole
18 life. So I'm not in support of this
19 plan.

20 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
21 remarks.

22 MARGARET MAY: That's all I have
23 to say. Thank you.

24 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

25 Our next speaker is Darby Moses,

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1 followed by Juliette Federico.

2 Our next speaker is Juliette
3 Federico, followed by Shailesh Naik.

4 Our next speaker, and 175th to
5 sign up, is Shailesh Naik, followed by
6 Kate Fletchall.

7 Our next speaker is Kate
8 Fletchall followed by Frederick
9 Springer.

10 Our next speaker is Frederick
11 Springer, followed by Bee Dorsey.

12 Our next speaker is Bee Dorsey,
13 followed by Noah Lenovitz.

14 Our next speaker is Noah
15 Lenovitz, followed by Lauren Hauptman.

16 Our next speaker is Lauren
17 Hauptman, followed by Brian Swift.

18 Our next speaker is Brian Swift,
19 followed by Tashana Watson.

20 BRIAN SWIFT: Good afternoon,
21 and thank you for your time. My name
22 is Brian Swift, I am a life-long New
23 Yorker. I currently live in Brooklyn.
24 I work as a designer and educator. I
25 constantly need cars, vans, and trucks

1 to move my machinery and products
2 around the city.

3 Despite this fact, I recognize
4 the impact that cars have on our city
5 and I'm here to speak in support of
6 congestion pricing. Cars undoubtedly
7 make our city worse, they contribute
8 to air, sound, and space pollution.
9 They damage our roadways
10 proportionately to their weight. They
11 are dangerous to pedestrians, cyclists
12 and other roadway users.

13 The congestion pricing zone is
14 some of the most valuable real estate
15 in the world. Why should we give away
16 that real estate to move people in one
17 of the least efficient methods?

18 One of the major arguments
19 against congestion pricing centers on
20 the deficiencies within our transit
21 system. We all aware of and agree
22 with those deficiencies and congestion
23 pricing is a means of funding the MTA
24 such that it can to fix those
25 deficiencies.

1 We should be aiming to
2 disincentivize personal vehicles from
3 coming into the city at all costs.
4 With this said, we still will need
5 some commercial vehicles in the city
6 to deliver goods, contribute to mass
7 transit in the form of buses, and so
8 on. I think we should opt for a
9 tolling scenario that charges a high
10 price with few exceptions. As such,
11 I'm in favor of tolling Scenario F,
12 which will reduce the number of solo
13 drivers on our roads.

14 Thank you for your time, and I
15 want to say goodbye.

16 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

17 Our next speaker is Tashana
18 Watson, followed by Michel Salomon.

19 Our next speaker is Michel
20 Salomon, followed by Sean de Ganon.

21 Our next speaker is Sean de
22 Ganon, followed by Christopher Haynes.

23 Our next speaker is Christopher
24 Haynes, followed by Joshua Thomas.

25 Our next speaker is Joshua

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1 Thomas, followed by David Goldsmith.

2 Our next speaker is followed by
3 Robin Villa.

4 Our next speaker is Robin Villa,
5 followed by Jean Moacko.

6 Our next speaker is Jean Moacko,
7 followed by Davide Gentile.

8 Our next speaker is Davide
9 Gentile, followed by Darlyn Francisco.

10 Our next speaker is Darlyn
11 Francisco, followed by our 192nd
12 speaker, Olive Freud.

13 Our next speaker is Olive Freud,
14 followed by Enrique Espinet.

15 OLIVE FREUD: Yes. Olive Freud.
16 I live on the Upper West Side. The
17 problem of air pollution and
18 congestion in New York City must be
19 addressed.

20 Congestion pricing is a good way
21 of addressing the problem and
22 improving the quality of life in our
23 city. Traffic is overwhelming and
24 must be reduced. There are, however,
25 shortcomings in this plan. As some

1 have explained, if you reduce
2 congestion and pollution below 60th
3 Street, you may be pushing it above
4 the street. They have a right to
5 worry about that. But the problem --
6 but they recognize there is a problem
7 that has to be done and that's where
8 we start.

9 Tolls will reduce traffic, but
10 where are the plans to provide a
11 better mass transit system? I would
12 like to suggest some ways to encourage
13 and to enhance mass transit.

14 For example. On the west side,
15 where I -- I'm very familiar with
16 that, there is a rail road parallel to
17 the West Side Highway, and that rail
18 road isn't used very much. It should
19 be used. There shouldn't be all those
20 commuters coming down the West Side
21 Highway when they could be on that
22 rail road. And it wouldn't cost them
23 anything to put them there. There's
24 no infrastructure needed, the rail
25 road is there and it goes into Penn

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1 Station or the Moynihan Station. And
2 that's the sort of thing all over the
3 city that we should be doing.

4 There should be buses and places
5 and cars that connect with the subways
6 and the railroads, that must be part
7 of a congestion pricing study. Or
8 what about this, what about extending
9 the subways or elevated lines. For
10 example, the number seven going
11 through the tunnel over to Secaucus
12 and bringing everybody in so the cars
13 don't go near the Lincoln Tunnel.
14 Other than the 60th Street being the
15 cut off from the West Side Highway.
16 There's no reason why people should be
17 going down the West Side Highway, they
18 go to Brooklyn, okay. But as they
19 leave to enter the Central Business
20 District, the --

21 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
22 remarks.

23 OLIVE FREUD: Many ways I'm glad
24 that you started with the plan, just
25 improve it.

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1 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

2 OLIVE FREUD: -- congestion --

3 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
4 Enrique Espinet, followed by Anonymous
5 speaker 3.

6 Our next speaker is Anonymous
7 speaker 3, followed by Elizabeth
8 Tavares.

9 Our next speaker is Elizabeth
10 Tavares, followed by Marta Cepeda.

11 Our next speaker is Marta
12 Cepeda, followed by Diana Ross.

13 Our next speaker is Marta
14 Cepeda.

15 Marta, you may unmute yourself
16 and begin your remarks.

17 Marta, if you unmute yourself,
18 you can begin your remarks.

19 MARTA CEPEDA: The thing is that
20 this is the democrats bring this
21 problem. The republican would not do
22 a problem like this.

23 And another thing, how about the
24 doctors and the nurses, they have to
25 be going to the hospitals downtown.

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1 They have to be paying double. The
2 nurses on-call, the doctors they have
3 on-call too. They shouldn't be paying
4 all these congestion pricing.

5 You know, the doctors have to be
6 going back and forth, back and forth,
7 the nurses too. And then they're
8 constantly going back to the hospital
9 to work and the people that have
10 appointments, they have to go and come
11 back, go and come back. It's not fair
12 for the patients. It's not fair for
13 the other people that have to be --
14 it's a luxury for you to drive in New
15 York.

16 New York is the best world --
17 place to live in this world. We
18 should enjoy driving. But if you want
19 us to pay, pay for these motorcycles,
20 these mopeds. Let them pay. We
21 should not be paying. And it's not
22 fair for us that we have to pay for
23 other people's problems. We shouldn't
24 pay for this.

25 Our taxis, I mean, they have to

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1 be paying double for the fairs, and
2 the taxis and the bridges. You know,
3 it's not fair for us, we never had
4 these problems before. We shouldn't
5 be having any of these problems.

6 Fix the trains, fix the
7 elevators, get elevators for the
8 handicap. You know it's not fair for
9 us, for us to be paying for other
10 people's problem. You know, you
11 should get other ways for us to do and
12 pay for these congestions. You know,
13 double it up on the trains if you want
14 to do that, double up on the trains
15 so, you know, we could use the trains,
16 fix the trains.

17 Thank you. Have a great day.

18 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Diana Ross,
20 followed Jean Moacko.

21 Our next speaker is Jean Moacko,
22 followed by Sudeep Uprety.

23 Jean, you may unmute yourself
24 and begin your remarks.

25 JEAN MOACKO: Hi. I just want

1 you to know that I think this is
2 really bad on multiple levels. First
3 of all, a lot of this traffic was
4 created by you. I remember when you
5 first changed the traffic on 1st
6 Avenue, I had to move my mother out of
7 the neighborhood because she couldn't
8 even cross the street. Between the
9 traffic, the buses, and the
10 bicyclists, it was ridiculous. And
11 now you have all of the sheds. I
12 really think all of this needs to go
13 back to be reevaluated.

14 Secondly, this is not London.
15 London has a beautiful tube system, we
16 do not. London also has multiple
17 exemptions. It is not a 24-hour
18 pricing toll. There are stipulated
19 hours, there is a week off for the
20 holidays when no one is tolled. Let's
21 be honest about this, maybe change
22 needs to come from within, not from
23 the drivers.

24 My family lives right in the
25 middle of this. How am I supposed to

1 visit my own family members, my own
2 grandchild without being tolled. I am
3 a disabled person, I am a cancer
4 patient, I cannot be on public
5 transportation. I have doctors all
6 over the city. How am I supposed to
7 afford this?

8 Your Access-A-Ride is one of the
9 worse programs there is around. I
10 wouldn't even take it if I was totally
11 blind, deaf, and dumb; that's how bad
12 it is. Disabled people really need to
13 have some kind of exemption. We need
14 to be looked at. Senior citizens,
15 disabled, come on, give us a break
16 already.

17 I can no longer from Brooklyn
18 take the bridges because you destroyed
19 the underpass going towards the
20 bridges. And there's traffic almost
21 24/7 now getting out of Brooklyn
22 because of what you decided to do.
23 This is only going to worsen with this
24 toll.

25 And you know what, I've been

1 watching this all day just as much as
2 you've been listening to it. And I
3 admit, some of your faces have been
4 nice, and some of your faces show how
5 totally bored you are with all of us.

6 And I really think that these
7 panels are just to pacify us. I
8 really think this is a done deal. But
9 I honestly think it needs to be
10 reevaluated tremendously.

11 And that's all I've got to say.

12 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Sudeep
14 Uprety, followed by Steve Azor.

15 SUDEEP UPRETY: Hello?

16 MS. FLAX: We can hear you.

17 SUDEEP UPRETY: Okay. I have a
18 few points. Number one, we have a
19 governor who says people to move out
20 of state if they don't agree with her.
21 So is the CBD toll program a way of
22 saying for middle-class people to move
23 out of state? And number two, from
24 time to time, MTA has always raised
25 tolls and fares to cover their

1 incompetence.

2 They have constantly raised
3 tolls, as far as I remember, from
4 2008. In 2008, cash toll was \$5, now
5 it's 10 17 (sic). And I am a TLC
6 driver and we always face the burden
7 of MTA incompetence. Including they
8 charge us \$2.75 congestion surcharge
9 starting from 2019. And they have
10 been charging us surcharge of 2.50
11 recently. We cannot pay for more
12 surcharges.

13 Lots of surcharges and still,
14 subways are dangerous. I heard three
15 of the panelists saying like subway
16 systems are safe. Have they even rode
17 the subway after midnight, no, none of
18 them have. They are this privileged
19 person who don't have to ride subways
20 during midnight.

21 And how does MTA thinks people
22 living in outer borough afford more
23 tolls, when inflation is at its peak?
24 And I just looked at the 2021 MTA
25 employees' payments, like top ten of

1 the employees make 333-plus, and their
2 highest employee make 412K,
3 that includes overtime. So will that
4 be frozen when the surcharge was
5 trying to implement? And how can MTA
6 NYC people who make more money think
7 we can afford it? Have they even
8 tried surviving outside by making 10K
9 and 100,000 and can they afford to pay
10 the surcharge, no.

11 MTA has always considered NYC
12 residents as a cash cow and I can bet
13 that even after this congestion
14 surcharge pricing, they will again
15 come up with some -- saying well, we
16 need more money, let's raise the taxes
17 more.

18 And one last thing I would like
19 to add, ridership is down since 2020
20 due to COVID and increase in crime
21 rates. You MTA officials say that
22 they will be facing a deficit of 2.5
23 billion dollars by 2025. But yet,
24 they decided to spend 249 million
25 dollars policing to crack down on

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1 200 million in fare evasion.

2 I will be back with the London
3 congestion system that everybody is
4 saying is good, no. London congestion
5 system is bad and it is considered the
6 worst city with traffic currently.

7 Thank you.

8 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
9 Steve Azor, followed by our 200th
10 speaker to sign up for today, Bill
11 Weber.

12 Steve, you may unmute yourself
13 and begin your remarks.

14 STEVE AZOR: Thank you. It's
15 been a great -- I've learned a lot. A
16 lot of people already said things that
17 I wanted to say.

18 I think that this tax -- or
19 excuse me, this fee, this congestion
20 pricing is more of a tax. It's a tax
21 on the poor or just on the regular New
22 Yorkers, people coming into the city.
23 You want to city to do better, but
24 being in the boroughs, you know,
25 having to spend extra money to come

1 in, I think I'm going to find a lot
2 more ways to stay in Queens or
3 Brooklyn or in the Bronx.

4 I hear about the environmental
5 stuff, this is not going to stop
6 people from coming into the city.
7 People are going to come into the
8 city, not because they want to drive
9 into the city, but because they have
10 to. And they will find a way by
11 cutting back on other expenses that
12 they would pay for or passing the fees
13 and the fines onto everybody else.

14 I am an Uber driver. I drive
15 nights because I don't like the don't
16 turn left, don't turn right. I do
17 think that if you did add more left
18 and right turn signals to let the
19 pedestrians walk and to let the
20 drivers go, that that would also help.

21 Someone also stated earlier
22 about the merging of the traffic that
23 causes -- of the cars -- that causes a
24 lot of traffic. For instance, there's
25 less streets, there's more bus lanes,

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1 which we needed, there's more bike
2 lanes, which we also needed, now we
3 just need to try to get bikers to
4 actually stay on the bike lanes
5 instead of everywhere else. But then
6 that leaves us with less streets, more
7 merges, more sideways roadway houses
8 and the outdoor -- all that stuff, the
9 outdoor eating restaurants, they all
10 make it harder for us to pick up and
11 drop off passengers.

12 So you wind up, like someone
13 said, staying in the middle of the
14 street. But there's one lane, so now
15 you either drive to the end of the
16 block, where you're going to be in the
17 crosswalk, or hope that there is a
18 fire hydrant or something there to
19 pick up or drop the people off.

20 The Uber drivers, the taxicabs
21 are getting too much of the blame.
22 Almost every block or every other
23 block has construction going on which
24 takes up one lane or two lanes. And I
25 thought it was the safety issues, but

1 when you look behind the barricade,
2 it's their cars, pickups, materials,
3 their building materials, other
4 trucks. They are taking up one lane,
5 sometimes two lanes.

6 They need to find another way to
7 get this money. New York is the
8 greatest city in the world. It is not
9 London. Do not compare us to London
10 because I'm not sure what their health
11 care plan is like and stuff like that.
12 But if we're going to look at
13 something else, maybe we should look
14 at their college tuition stuff and
15 their health care plans.

16 And find another way to feed
17 this bottomless pit called the MTA.
18 And also, they need to be
19 investigated, where's the money,
20 that's it.

21 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Bill Weber,
23 followed by Avtar Duhra.

24 BILL WEBER: Hello, everyone.
25 And thank you for having this panel

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1 discussion today. My name is Bill
2 Weber and I am running for New York
3 State senate from the 38th District
4 here in Rockland County.

5 One of the reasons why I'm
6 running for office is because our
7 current elected state senator here in
8 Rockland, Elijah Melnick, has failed
9 us in Rockland County. He has said
10 absolutely nothing for the last number
11 of years and now we are in a
12 congestion pricing prices.

13 When I'm elected this coming
14 January into office, I will work to
15 repeal the congestion pricing tax
16 because it's unfair, unfair to the
17 residents of Rockland.

18 For far too long the Rockland
19 residents have been the redheaded
20 stepchild of the MTA. We don't have
21 one-seat service into New York City,
22 we have very limited unreliable
23 service into the city, and that's why
24 a lot of our residents do not use the
25 services into the city.

1 And frankly, with the
2 ever-increasing crime in New York City
3 and in the subway systems, a lot of
4 our residents, whether they're
5 seniors, whether they're woman,
6 whether they're even younger adults,
7 are afraid to take the rail lines into
8 the city.

9 So to impose a massive
10 congestion pricing tax on our
11 residents is not only insulting, it's
12 crazy. And I'm going to help to
13 prevent that from happening. I'm a
14 certified public accountant for the
15 last 25 years. The MTA, as everyone
16 knows and everyone has mentioned in
17 the past, has been mismanaged
18 financially for decades. They need to
19 get their house in order and not pass
20 their bad, poor management decisions
21 onto the residents of New York State.

22 Again, I will work to repeal the
23 congestion pricing tax because it's
24 unfair. It's unfair to the police
25 officers from Rockland who have to

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1 drive to the city to work, to the
2 firemen, to the first responders to
3 the New York City public school
4 teachers who commute into the city, to
5 people like my wife and my daughter
6 who like to go to Downtown Manhattan
7 to go see plays and to go to
8 restaurants and to visit all the great
9 things we love about New York City.

10 We can't afford to pay an
11 exorbitant tax in addition to the
12 tolls on the bridge, in addition to
13 the fuel taxes that we pay, in
14 addition to the parking that we have
15 to pay when we're in the city. Again,
16 we need to repeal the congestion
17 pricing tax. You guys need to start
18 over and find a way to get your books
19 in order and not put it on the
20 hard-working middle-class people of
21 Rockland County.

22 Thank you very much.

23 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

24 We've reached our final two
25 speakers on the list. The next two

1 speakers are Avtar Suhra and New
2 Yorker 101. After they have both had
3 an opportunity to speak, we will call
4 again the names of all speakers who we
5 previously called but did not speak
6 yet.

7 As we make our way through the
8 list of speakers for the second time,
9 those present who have not spoken yet
10 will be given an opportunity to
11 comment.

12 If you missed your name being
13 called, did not sign up to speak but
14 would like to speak, or have joined
15 the Zoom under a name that is
16 different from the one you used when
17 you signed up to speak, please
18 identify yourself in the Q&A function.
19 You may also request to speak
20 anonymously.

21 Our next speaker is Avtar Duhra,
22 followed by New Yorker 101.

23 AVTAR DUHRA: Hello.

24 MS. FLAX: You may begin your
25 remarks.

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1 AVTAR DUHRA: Good afternoon,
2 everyone. I hope anybody of you
3 living in lower 60th Street in
4 Manhattan, I hope and you understand
5 what the congestion pricing -- what
6 the problem, all started this problem.

7 It start problem from 2012 when
8 the app started coming in New York
9 City. There was no congestion problem
10 before that. So you guys let them
11 flooding in New York City. Now my
12 question is, why we collecting money
13 from lower 96th Street, 2.50, 3.00 to
14 congestion price if the congestion
15 problem only lower 60th? You have
16 anybody answer, give me that.

17 Number two, be helping, you want
18 help failure department. New York
19 City MTA, failure department that we
20 already get failed because Uber come
21 in city take our job. How come one
22 failure department can't help other
23 failure department?

24 We are competition with them.
25 We carry passenger, they carry

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1 passenger. So both, we carry
2 passenger in New York City. So how
3 come we get more -- let me know if
4 lower 60th and Upper Manhattan is
5 different Manhattan. When we bought
6 the medallion, gave us five-borough
7 permit. Means five borough can pick
8 up anywhere. So that's is our legal
9 right.

10 Next point, I bought my car,
11 that's private property. I bought my
12 meter, that's private meter. And you
13 give us piece of metal to run in city.
14 Department give us -- you do not put
15 any condition sold that medallion.
16 You couldn't put any condition -- if
17 failure department -- any department
18 we can collect the money, help by the
19 taxi.

20 Next one, we collecting already
21 3.00 MTA fund each trip. So means
22 each trip -- 2.75, we collecting for
23 them same customer 3.00. Illegal,
24 yellow cab, very, very, like a -- I
25 can't say nothing. You people must

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1 wake up. Congestion pricing is not
2 for yellow cab.

3 Thank you.

4 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

5 Our final speaker before we read
6 our list of speakers a second time is
7 New Yorker 101.

8 NEW YORKER 101: I have not seen
9 one elderly person speak in favor of
10 congestion pricing at any of these
11 meetings. The elderly count, the
12 elderly are people too. Many elderly
13 are not technology savvy and cannot
14 get on to express their
15 dissatisfaction.

16 You are showing no consideration
17 for the elderly, the sick, the
18 business owners in the district who
19 will be adversely impacted, the
20 suburbanites who you will harm. You
21 were showing no consideration except
22 for the MTA.

23 In light of the recent pandemic
24 that required COVID-19 where social
25 distancing was required, it is

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1 unhealthy and outrageous to want to
2 pack people into the subway like
3 sardines where disease can spread
4 rapidly and widely.

5 I'm opposed to congestion
6 pricing. It should not be.

7 Thank you.

8 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

9 We will now read our list a
10 second time starting with those we
11 believe are present. If you missed
12 your name being called, did not sign
13 up and would like to speak, or joined
14 the Zoom under a name that's different
15 from the one you used when you signed
16 up to speak, please identify yourself
17 in the Q&A function.

18 Our next speaker is Annie Jung.

19 Annie, you may begin your
20 remarks.

21 ANNIE JUNG: Hi. Can you hear
22 me?

23 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

24 ANNIE JUNG: I'm here to oppose
25 the congestion pricing proposal. I

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1 want to start by saying that everyone
2 wants less congestion. And as
3 resident of -- I hate city congestion.

4 But the way to address this
5 isn't to increase fees and taxes on
6 top of the existing congestion pricing
7 we already pay, especially when the
8 cost of living has skyrocketed in
9 recent years and everyone I know is --

10 MS. FLAX: Annie, we cannot hear
11 you. You are currently muted.

12 ANNIE JUNG: Okay. Can you hear
13 me now?

14 MS. FLAX: Yes.

15 ANNIE JUNG: Sorry about that.
16 Thank you for your patience.

17 I'm here to oppose this
18 congestion pricing proposal. I want
19 to start by saying that everyone wants
20 less congestion, including me. And as
21 a resident of Midtown East for nine
22 years, trust me, I hate city
23 congestion.

24 But the way to address this
25 isn't to increase fees and taxes on

1 top of the existing congestion price
2 we pay, especially when the cost of
3 living has skyrocketed in recent
4 years. And everyone I know is feeling
5 that burden.

6 The way to decrease congestion
7 will be to make public transportation
8 safe and reliable and accessible, and
9 get rid of things like restaurant
10 sheds that are causing -- so
11 obviously.

12 I'm happy for and jealous of
13 those who said they feel completely
14 safe on the subway, but that's just so
15 out of touch with reality. I want to
16 take the subway and buses over a cab
17 or Uber, but as an Asian American
18 woman who has been the subject of
19 harassment on the subway, I find this
20 proposal to be, frankly, a slap in the
21 face; and I'm not alone.

22 Unless safety and reliability
23 are addressed, you're asking many city
24 residents to choose between personal
25 safety and being able to pay their

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1 bills. People who can't afford this
2 but have the ability to move, will
3 move; and the wealth disparity in this
4 city will be even bigger. And
5 decreasing mobility of a population is
6 never the answer. The city has so
7 much to offer and we shouldn't make
8 traveling to the city harder for
9 people.

10 I think the theme of the
11 comments we've heard today is pretty
12 clear, the MTA should put time and
13 existing resources into making public
14 transportation more accessible, safe,
15 and reliable first. This will
16 naturally direct commuters towards
17 public transportation and relieve
18 congestion without putting extra
19 economic burden on New Yorkers.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Miriam
23 Fisher.

24 Miriam, you may unmute yourself
25 and begin your remarks.

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1 MIRIAM FISHER: Can you hear me,
2 can you see me?

3 MS. FLAX: Yes.

4 MIRIAM FISHER: I'm a long-time
5 supporter of traffic reduction for
6 reasons environmental, pollution, and
7 car domination of streets, space, and
8 safety. I was hit by a yellow cab in
9 1984, in a coma for nine days. I've
10 spent a lifetime with permanent
11 injuries and multiple back surgeries
12 and hospitalizations. Less cars is
13 more safety for all.

14 I'm also rising to support
15 exemptions from surcharges for people
16 with disabilities. The 2019 law which
17 states qualifying vehicles for
18 transporting people with disabilities
19 has to be maintained as a category
20 qualifying, clarified and expanded.

21 This is a population with few
22 transit choices. A prime example is
23 subway inaccessibility. I'm a member
24 of the Elevator Action Group but I'm
25 speaking for myself. All

1 transportation options need to be
2 accepted, Access-A-Ride and all
3 vehicles needed for transportation
4 with disabilities.

5 London is a model exempting both
6 privately-owned vehicles and also
7 those driven by others and owned by
8 others for people with disabilities
9 with placards. This has not been in
10 this dialogue in the agenda, and I
11 want to use London as a model.

12 Transportation for people with
13 disabilities needs to be available for
14 all life needs, not just medical
15 visits. People with disabilities
16 should be on equal status and
17 participating in recreational, social,
18 educational, as are people who are not
19 disabled.

20 Surcharges are regressive tax in
21 a largely low-income population of
22 people with disabilities that is
23 mainly unemployed and underemployed.
24 Many are receiving low fixed-income
25 rates of disability benefits. A

1 3/5/21 article in New York Times,
2 fewer than one-half of working-aged
3 disabled adults in New York City are
4 in the labor force. This was before
5 the pandemic. Their unemployment rate
6 has gone even worse.

7 The money generated by
8 congestion pricing should be earmarked
9 and lock-boxed for the MTA Capital
10 Plan including supporting greater
11 accessibility in the subway elevators
12 for everyone.

13 Thank you for listening.

14 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

15 We'll now start our second run
16 through the list. If you hear your
17 name and want to speak, please tell us
18 in the Q&A. If you don't hear your
19 name and you want to speak, please
20 tell us in the Q&A.

21 Philip Papaelias.

22 Rita Simpson.

23 Inocencio Lopez.

24 Warren Ashenmil.

25 Diane Canino.

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1 Michael Murray.

2 Jason Stahl.

3 Diana Palermo.

4 Lesedi Toussaint.

5 Tim Lau.

6 Mariel Felix.

7 Susan Lazor.

8 Ilan Cardenas-Silverstein.

9 Paul Campione.

10 Elizabeth Fennimore.

11 Our next speaker will be Yuki

12 Endo.

13 Yuki.

14 YUKI ENDO: Yes.

15 MR. WOJNAR: Please proceed.

16 YUKI ENDO: This is -- I oppose
17 congestion pricing -- but because they
18 not add -- pay highest toll while New
19 York New, Jersey bridges. I including
20 community. It in -- and thank you.

21 (Technical difficulties.)

22 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

23 Judi Edwards.

24 Danielle Quinn.

25 Brian Seminario.

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1 Nisan Cornibert.
2 Eugene Weston.
3 Mary Di Gregorio.
4 Malki Sinensky.
5 Andy Pollack.
6 Edgar Carmona.
7 Carlos Castell Croke.
8 Bruce White.
9 Jack Kaplan.
10 Thomas Miller.
11 Vincent Purdy.
12 Thomas Lepri.
13 Nina Sabghir.
14 Emily Criste.
15 Adrian Camacho.
16 Ari Teitelbaum.
17 Manuel Valerio.
18 Menachem Hornbacher.
19 Phil Wong.
20 Jennifer Schiano.
21 Tish Losure.
22 Carlos Aleman.
23 Jorge Zapata.
24 Melissa Gajarsa.
25 Jessii Parham.

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1 Kathryn Cunney.
2 Henry Ward.
3 Enrique Jimenez.
4 Alexander Vasilescu.
5 Lissette Inshanally.
6 Howard Stokar.
7 Carolyn Robinson.
8 James Matroni.
9 Mohammed Akber.
10 Moreno DiMarco.
11 Lydie Kane.
12 Robert Kelman.
13 Michael Golz.
14 Mukul Biswas.
15 Michael Riley.
16 Richard Sonenberg.
17 Diane Battista.
18 John Pohl.
19 Constance Stellas.
20 Steven Namm.
21 Bernardo Celerino.
22 Michael Elitt.
23 Felicia Park-Rogers.
24 Cynthia Soto.
25 Josh Gottheimer.

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Scott Sloat.
Aleks Gilbert.
Miranda Adams.
Galina Kaminker.
L. Rich.
Michael Jones.
Jenny Lee.
Dan Bianco.
Ali Madu.
Steve Sands.
Geovanny Yauri.
Marie Vella.
Alison Glestein.
Beryl Rosenberg.
Walter Iwachiw.
Ramond Lin.
Ethan A.
Joel Gutierrez.
Jason Nelson.
Janice Gardner.
Ronald Wiessman.
Sidney Moskowitz.
Tylie Waters.
Ron Simoncini.
As a reminder, if you have

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1 joined the Zoom under a name that is
2 different from the one you used when
3 you signed up to speak, or if you did
4 not sign up to speak but would like to
5 speak, please identify yourself in the
6 Q&A function.

7 Hertzberg.

8 Cathy Burton.

9 Magdamary Marcano.

10 Jorge Urena.

11 Kenny Tai.

12 Michi Mee.

13 Lawrence Zimmer.

14 Deborah Weiss.

15 Emma Cupela.

16 Renee Youmans.

17 Lorenz Skeeter.

18 John Trantos.

19 Rae Richards.

20 Suzette Francis.

21 Francis Vaughn.

22 Suraj Bhoge.

23 Paul Chan.

24 Zach Weinberg.

25 Lina De La Cruz.

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1 Mark Kagan.
2 Aaron Loo.
3 Frank Ruisi.
4 Kevin Martin.
5 Stephen Wong.
6 Mamadou Diallo.
7 Gordon Lee.
8 Darby Moses.
9 Juliette Federico.
10 Shailesh Naik.
11 Kate Fletchall.
12 Frederick Springer.
13 Bee Dorsey.
14 Noah Lenovitz.
15 Lauren Hauptman.
16 Tashana Watson.
17 Michel Salomon.
18 Sean de Ganon.
19 Christopher Haynes.
20 Joshua Thomas.
21 David Goldsmith.
22 Robin Villa.
23 Davide Gentile.
24 Darlyn Francisco.
25 Enrique Espinet.

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1 Elizabeth Tavarez.

2 Diana Ross.

3 Jessii Parham.

4 MR. WOJNAR: That concludes our
5 second runs through the list of
6 speakers.

7 MR. OLIVA: Thank you all for
8 joining us today. For those of you
9 who did not do so already, we
10 encourage you to take our short survey
11 via the QR code or link currently
12 being displayed. The link can also be
13 found in the Q&A section of the Zoom.

14 For details about upcoming
15 hearings, please visit the project
16 website at mta.info/CBDTP or call the
17 Public Meeting Hotline at (646)
18 252-6777.

19 As a final reminder, in addition
20 to the virtual public hearings, there
21 are several other ways you can provide
22 comments on the Environmental
23 Assessment through September 9, 2022.
24 We encourage the public to comment via
25 the CBDTP website, where you can also

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1 find the latest project information
2 and sign up to stay informed via
3 e-mail.

4 You may also e-mail comments to
5 CBDTP@mtabt.org, send them via mail to
6 CBD Tolling Program, 2 Broadway, 23rd
7 Floor, New York, New York 10004, or
8 call (646) 252-7440.

9 Comments may also be provided
10 directly to the Federal Highway
11 Administration via e-mail to
12 CBDTP@dot.gov, or via mail to FHWA -
13 New York Division, RE: CBDTP, Leo W.
14 O'Brien Federal Building, 11A Clinton
15 Avenue, Suite 719, Albany, New York
16 12207.

17 The time is currently 5:44 p.m.,
18 this concludes our hearing. Thank you
19 again for your participation.

20 (TIME NOTED: 5:44 P.M.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)

:SS

COUNTY OF QUEENS)

I, MAKEDA EDWARDS, a Notary Public
within and for the State of New York, do hereby
certify:

That the witness whose examination is
hereinbefore set forth was duly sworn and that
such an examination is a true record of the
testimony given by such witness.

I further certify that I am not related
to any of these parties to this action by blood or
marriage, and that I am not in any way interested
in the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
my hand on this 28th day of August, 2022.

Makeda Edwards

MAKEDA EDWARDS