

NYC Department of Transportation Testimony
Executive Budget Hearing Before the City Council Committees on
Transportation and Infrastructure and Finance
May 12, 2022

Good morning Chair Brooks-Powers, Chair Brannan, and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and Committee on Finance. I am Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation. With me today are Eric Beaton, Deputy Commissioner for Transportation Planning and Management, Elisabeth Franklin, Associate Commissioner of Budget and Capital Program Management, Yogesh Sanghvi, Associate Commissioner for Grants and Fiscal Management, Charles Ukegbu, Assistant Commissioner for Regional and Strategic Planning, and Rebecca Zack, Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Eric Adams on DOT's FY23 Executive Budget and FY22-31 Capital Plan. I am proud to be here for my first Executive Budget hearing on this side of the table as DOT's Commissioner—after my 12 years serving on the Committee on Transportation and eight years as Chair, and look forward to partnering with you all.

At the First 100 Days address, Mayor Eric Adams unveiled his vision for our shared future and this budget that reflects those values. As the Mayor said, this budget puts people front and center—especially those who have often been left behind. Despite the massive shocks to our system in the past two years, our city enters fiscal year 2023 on strong financial footing—which is the result of effective planning and fiscal responsibility.

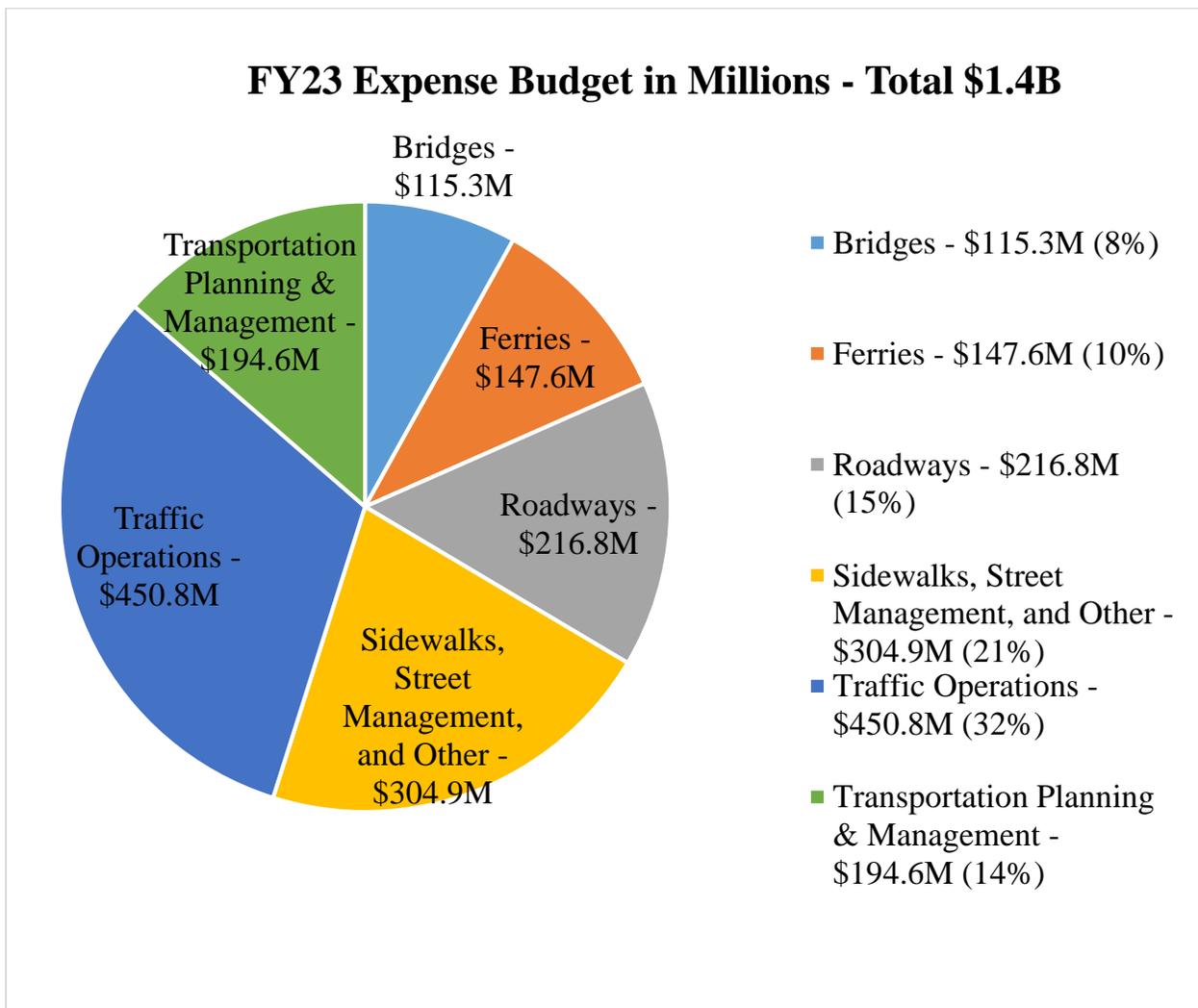
This budget will allow DOT to fight the rise in reckless driving, enhance safety with intersection upgrades, provide more public space in communities across the city, speed up buses, expand and harden our bike lane network, make the city more accessible for all New Yorkers including people with disabilities, maintain our infrastructure, and continue to transport about 25 million passengers each year on the Staten Island Ferry. And it will further the Mayor and my commitment to focus our investment in working class communities that have received less investment historically.

Staten Island Ferry



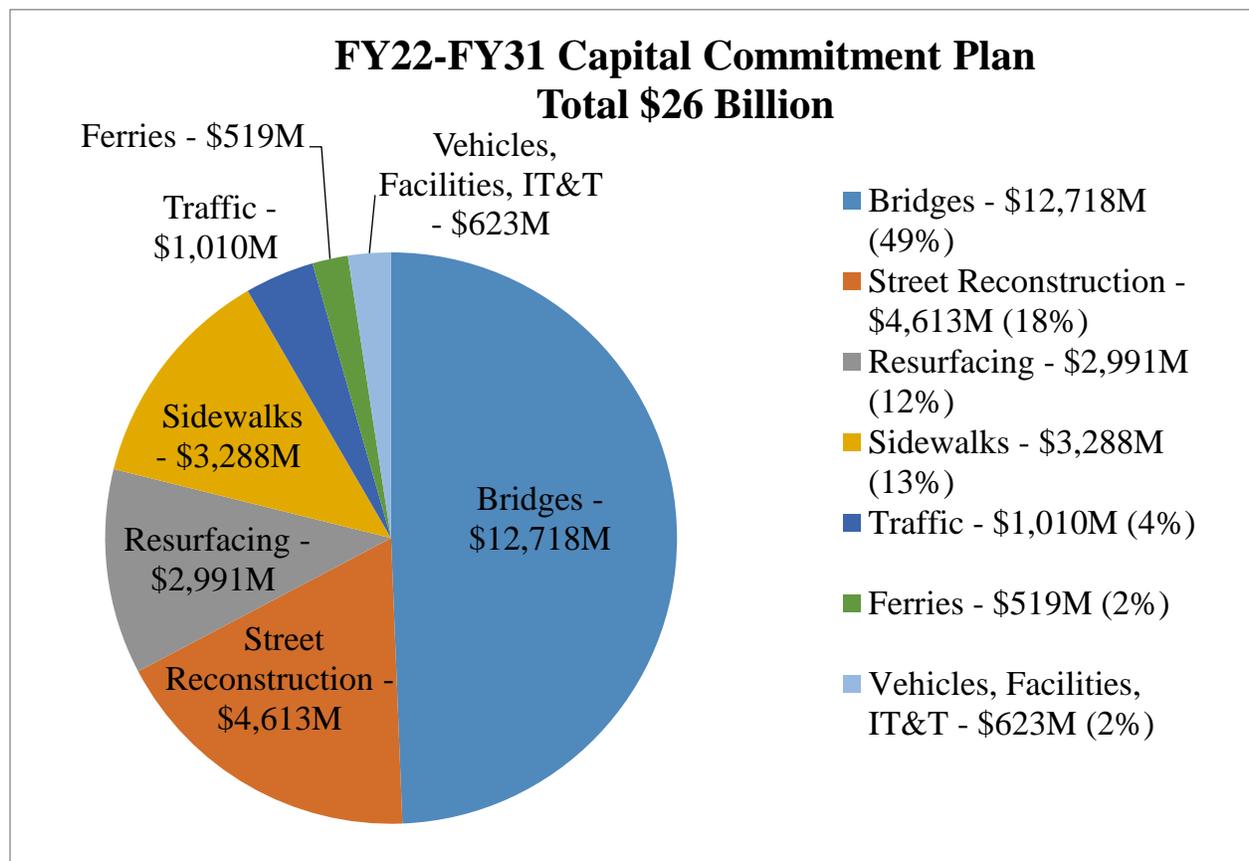
DOT's \$1.4 billion FY23 Expense Budget includes:

- \$451 million for traffic operations, including signals, streetlights, automated enforcement, and parking;
- \$217 million for roadway maintenance;
- \$195 million for transportation planning and management, including installation of street signs and roadway markings;
- \$148 million for ferry operations and maintenance;
- \$115 million for bridge maintenance and inspection; and
- \$305 million for other DOT operations and administration, including sidewalk management and inspection.



DOT's proposed \$26 billion FY22-FY31 Capital Plan includes:

- \$12.7 billion for bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation;
- \$4.6 billion for street reconstruction;
- \$3 billion for resurfacing;
- \$3.3 billion for sidewalk and pedestrian ramp repair and reconstruction;
- \$1 billion for the Staten Island Ferry;
- \$519 million for streetlights, signals, and automated enforcement; and
- \$623 million for the facilities and equipment needed to support DOT's operations.



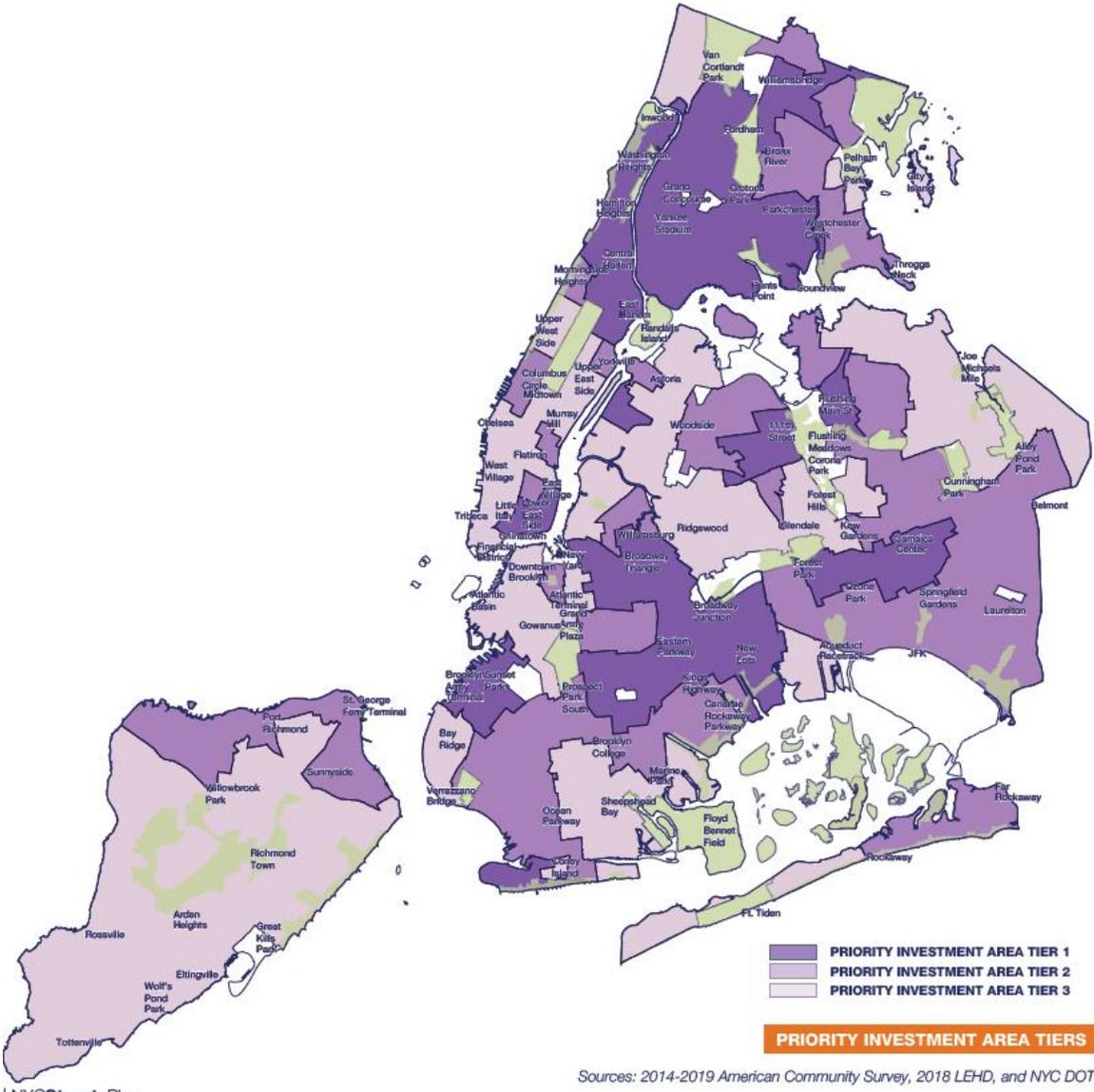
First, as the Mayor announced, this Administration is making an historic investment of \$904 million to advance the goals laid out in the *NYC Streets Plan* and rapidly build out critical street safety and public transportation infrastructure. This investment includes nearly \$580 million in capital funding as well as expense funding that ramps up to more than \$65 million annually, or \$328 million over five years. This will fund positions to conduct outreach and community engagement as well as manage, monitor, and coordinate agency efforts to meet the plan's benchmarks. This funding is both an important down payment for the *NYC Streets Plan* benchmarks and also fills critical shortfalls in other ongoing work.

Mayor Adams and Commissioner Rodriguez biking on Car-Free Earth Day, before the NYC Streets Plan investment announcement



This investment is critical for furthering Mayor Adams's and my commitment to create a more equitable city and our goal of making New York City the safest city for pedestrians and cyclists in the nation. As I testified before this Committee previously, the *NYC Streets Plan* laid out Priority Investment Areas (PIAs) that will help focus our investments to where they can have the greatest impact.

Map of Priority Investment Area Tiers included in the NYC Streets Plan, released December 2021



DOT will continue to invest in communities across the entire city. But going forward, street design investments as a whole will be prioritized in higher-need neighborhoods based on the PIA tiers—while still being guided by data such as crash histories and slow bus speeds. The city’s transportation network **must** meet the needs of all New Yorkers—regardless of race, ability, or economic status—in a safe, efficient, and sustainable manner. And this historic investment will help push us closer to that goal.

Far too many New Yorkers have lost their lives to traffic violence. This new *NYC Streets Plan* funding builds on the ongoing budgetary commitments to curb traffic deaths. The total Vision Zero investment in DOT’s current Ten Year Capital Plan (FY22-31) is nearly \$3 billion, in addition to an average yearly investment of about \$250 million in the expense budget.

This Streets Plan investment in the Mayor’s Executive Budget goes with funding for our previous announcement that we are redesigning 1,000 intersections to enhance safety. Thanks to funding in this budget, we will make intersection safety enhancements in areas near Southern Boulevard and Boston Road in the Bronx, Bayswater Park in Queens, the New York Public Library main branch in Manhattan, and on New Utrecht Avenue and in Gowanus in Brooklyn. This budget also includes \$195 million in capital funds to help us install raised crosswalks citywide in partnership with the Department of Design and Construction.

Raised Crosswalk at Mount Hope and Walton Avenue in Mount Hope, Bronx



Bikes

Turning to bikes, our bike lanes make roads safer for all road users, and we are focused on improving the cycling network coverage and connectivity across the entire city by building out the bike lane network. The Streets Plan investment in this expense budget includes \$27.8 million in FY23, increasing to \$33.5 million in FY26 and the out-years to expand the City's protected bike lane network.

*Crescent Street and 31st Avenue in Astoria, Queens
Before and After (both 2020)*



On the capital side, this budget includes nearly \$26 million that will go towards creating a raised and protected two-way bike lane on Willis Avenue in the Bronx—connecting the Willis Avenue Bridge and Roberto Clemente Plaza, which will also include accessibility, safety, and bus stop improvements.

It also includes funding for Destination Greenways to improve access to parks in Brooklyn and Queens: \$30 million for Utopia Parkway in Queens that will allow us to initiate a new greenway connection from Little Bay Park and Joe Michael's Mile to the wider bike network in this part of Queens. The funding will also allow us to bring significant pedestrian and bike improvements while protecting the waterfront on the parkway's northern end.

And in Brooklyn, work is underway on one of the most critical segments of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway. Currently planned for completion late next year, this project will create a safe, separated bike path connecting Sunset Park to Red Hook and Gowanus on Hamilton Avenue. Additional pedestrian safety, landscaping, and accessibility enhancements will help realize the vision of a connected waterfront greenway for the borough.

The budget also includes funds for hardening existing bike lanes to enhance safety, adding \$6.6 million in FY23 and FY24 and \$500 thousand in FY25 and the out-years. DOT crews have already begun work to meet the Administration's commitment to upgrade physical infrastructure on 20 miles of bike lanes by the end of 2023. Mayor Adams recently announced an additional five bike lanes that have been selected for upgrades, keeping the city on track to complete 10 miles of bike lane upgrades in 2022 and 10 more miles in 2023. These include 20th and Grand Streets in Brooklyn, Northern Boulevard in Queens, 60th Street in Manhattan, and Southern Boulevard in the Bronx.

*Bike Lane Hardening on Clinton Street
in Lower East Side, Manhattan*



Buses

Our Better Buses program speeds up buses and shortens commutes through dedicated bus lanes and busways. This budget funds approximately \$15 million per year starting in FY23, increasing to \$23 million in FY26 and the out-years to build out more protected bus lanes. It also includes \$29 million in capital funds to install bus lane cameras.



E.L. Grant Highway, Highbridge, The Bronx

It is not enough to just speed up buses; we need to continue improving the bus riding experience for New Yorkers. Annual expense funding is provided in this budget for bus stop upgrades, at \$1.5 million in FY23, increasing to \$3.8 million in FY26 and the out-years. Capital funds are provided in this budget to fund safer and more accessible bus stops on 79th Street in Manhattan as well as a number projects in the Bronx tied to the MTA bus network redesign such as bus improvements on White Plains Road.

In Brooklyn, we will start construction next year on improvements to the B82 bus route—one of the largest street projects in our ten-year capital plan. This project will provide many benefits to bus riders, including expanded and accessible bus stops, as well as safety benefits for all street users throughout the route. Through this project, DOT will also reconstruct the medians along Kings Highway to a State of Good Repair. I would like to thank Council Member Louis for her financial support for this project.

*B82 Bus Stop at Kings Highway and Nostrand Avenue in Midwood, Brooklyn
Before (2017) and After (2018)*



For bus stop Real Time Passenger Information, this budget includes \$74 million in capital funds for installation as well as \$840 thousand in FY23 increasing to \$1.2 million in FY26 and the out-years for maintenance and operations. These investments will allow us to enhance the experience of bus riders throughout the city.

And related to buses and other public transportation, as Mayor Adams and Speaker Adams announced, the Fair Fares program will be expanded and made permanent. This budget baselines \$75 million in funding for discounted MTA rides and is the first time that the City has guaranteed annual funding for the program.

Accessibility

DOT is committed to making the city more accessible for all New Yorkers. Many of the bus projects I mentioned include accessibility enhancements and the agency continues to work with the MTA to make bus stops physically accessible for all users—growing from a longstanding program to upgrade bus stops under elevated subways, to now addressing all kinds of physically inaccessible bus stops. This budget also includes \$1.5 billion in capital funding over the next four years to continue pedestrian ramp installation and upgrades citywide.

Upgraded pedestrian ramps in Bay Terrace, Staten Island



Our Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) program provides access to traffic signals for pedestrians with vision disabilities and is the largest and fastest expanding in the nation. This budget includes \$232 million in capital funds for APS installation and, expense funds to support these installations: \$11.8 million in FY23 growing to a baselined of \$16.8M annually. DOT will install APS at 400 intersections this year, 500 next year, and eventually over 1,000 intersections annually, with 10,000 intersections equipped with APS by the end of 2031. Together, this work will make it easier for the approximately one million New Yorkers living with disabilities to travel around the city.

Accessible Pedestrian Signal



Open Space

All New Yorkers should also have access to safe, welcoming, and attractive public spaces close to where they live. In the lead up to Car-Free Earth Day, last month DOT launched the 2022 Open Streets program through which New Yorkers will be able to enjoy more public space on 150 streets covering a total of 300 blocks. This budget includes funds that will allow us to advance permanent redesigns of popular Open Streets, including \$88 million to transform 34th Avenue in Queens.

34th Avenue Open Street, Jackson Heights, Queens



And to support new, vibrant public space in areas that would not have had it otherwise, this budget includes \$5.4 million in FY23 and the out-years for a Public Space Equity Program. This comprehensive approach to public space support and management includes partner reimbursements and a contract for maintenance, landscaping, and technical assistance for public space partner organizations in greatest need. This will allow us to continue providing direct support to over 20 Open Streets, over 30 plazas, and more in the future. We encourage Council Members to connect us with community organizations that are interested in becoming public space partners.

Freight

To reduce congestion and competition for limited curb space, DOT will be exploring and piloting micro-distribution centers (MDCs): locations or facilities for transferring goods from large commercial vehicles to smaller, more sustainable last-mile delivery models. This budget includes \$959 thousand in FY23 and baselines \$154 thousand in FY25 to support the freight industry engagement, report, and pilot required by Local Law 166 of 2021. We are excited about the potential of these centers to enhance safety and efficiency in the public right-of-way while accommodating the growing number of deliveries.

*Trucks unloading near Times Square, Manhattan:
example of a condition MDCs seek to address*



Educational Awareness Media Campaign

This month, DOT unveiled “Speeding Ruins Lives,” a public-awareness campaign directed at drivers that aims to counter speeding in New York City. The campaign, which uses baselined Vision Zero media funding, is widespread across the five boroughs and includes billboards, bus shelters, LinkNYC kiosks and gas station pumps. Radio, television, print and digital ads are featured in multiple languages.



To ensure New Yorkers continue to hear from us, this budget baselines an additional \$960 thousand in funding that will allow us to expand our media and promotional events going forward. This will enable us to reach more New Yorkers and spread important news and information to diverse communities across the city. Examples of this type of work include amplifying the City’s efforts to expand automated enforcement programs, announcing new or enhanced bike lanes, and celebrating car free events.

Federal Funding

Turning to federal funding, as the agency testified last month, DOT is working closely with City Hall and our sister agencies to go after every dollar available from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to advance projects that will benefit New Yorkers for decades to come. Our team has a history of successfully competing for federal grants.

Some recent successes include winning a \$2 million RAISE planning grant to re-imagine the Cross-Bronx Expressway last year in partnership with New York State DOT and the Department of City Planning, a \$10 million grant in 2020 for bus stop improvements along the BX6 Select Bus Service route which connects Washington Heights in Manhattan to the South Bronx, and a \$9 million grant in 2019 for a Safe Routes to Transit project to make infrastructure, pedestrian safety, and accessibility enhancements for transit riders along 86th Street in Brooklyn. I am happy to say that this budget funded additional headcount for our Grants Unit to assist with the coordination, completion, and review of BIL grant applications.

Cross Bronx Expressway



State of Good Repair and other Capital Safety Projects

This budget adds \$185 million to fund dozens of capital projects to address State of Good Repair and to enhance safety. Some examples include street and sidewalk reconstruction upgrades in Far Rockaway and South Jamaica in Queens, South Shore in Staten Island, and in Clason Point and Harding Park in the Bronx, following a DEP project to upgrade the sewer system.

Many critical projects are also ongoing. We recently started construction for the next phase of our Great Streets program for Atlantic Avenue, between Conduit and Rockaway Boulevards in East New York and Ozone Park in Queens. This project will continue important safety enhancements along the corridor as well as introduce protected bike paths along a new planted median.

Atlantic Avenue Great Streets Phase I: Norwood Ave and Atlantic Ave, Cypress Hills, Brooklyn Before (2017) and After (2021)



And we are starting construction on many critical capital projects soon. This year, we will begin construction on a project to make access to Canarsie Pier in Brooklyn safer. Next year, we will partner with the Department of Environmental Protection to bring much needed street repair and flooding relief to dozens of neighborhood streets in South Jamaica. Streets will be brought to DOT standards and we will be making safety and accessibility enhancements. This project is part of the larger Southeast Queens initiative and will bring critical investment to a part of the city that has received less investment historically.

We are also planning to start construction next year on one of several large school safety contracts citywide. This project will create safer pedestrian crossings near eight schools in Brooklyn and Staten Island—which will particularly benefit school-age children.

Turning to our bridges, this budget funds the reconstruction of the bridge that carries Grand Street over Newtown Creek. For upcoming construction, we plan to start construction soon on the Williamsburg Bridge, continuing the goal of maintaining the iconic East River Bridges in a State of Good Repair. This contract will extend the service life of the bridge for up to 60 years, and will include rehabilitating the floor-beams, structures supporting the subway tracks, and more.

Williamsburg Bridge



And this fall, we plan to start construction on the 5th Avenue Bridge over the Long Island Railroad and subway tracks, which is an important north-south connection between Sunset Park and Bay Ridge in Brooklyn. This project will modernize the 106-year-old-bridge to the current design standards and address the factors that are contributing to its decline.

Automated Safety Enforcement

Before I close, I must once again take this opportunity to emphasize the Mayor and my call on the State to allow the City to expand and enhance our automated enforcement programs. Our safety projects are critical for enhancing safety on our streets, but we need every tool available to us to save lives and fight the rise in reckless driving. And we need your support, including a home rule message. Without action—by the Legislature, the Council, and the Governor who has expressed her support—these lifesaving cameras will go dark on July 1st. There is too much blood on our streets from people of all ages and economic and ethnic backgrounds. Together we must do everything in our control to keep New Yorkers safe.

Mayoral Press Event for Local Control of Automated Enforcement with the family of Isaiah Benloss



Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Council for the opportunity to testify before you today. We should all be proud that New York City has the largest transportation network in the nation. I look forward to partnering with you as we work together to make this network and our city safer, more equitable, and accessible for all New Yorkers for generations to come. We would now be happy to answer any questions.