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April 23, 2015

OVERSIGHT: TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR SENIORS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN NEW YORK CITY
Introduciton

On April 23, 2015, the Committee on Aging, chaired by Council Member Margaret Chin, the Committee on Transportation, chaired by Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, and the Committee on Mental Health, Developmental Disability, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse & Disability Services, chaired by Council Member Andrew Cohen, will hold an oversight hearing on Transportation Services for Seniors and People with Disabilities. Those invited to testify include the Metropolitan Transportation Authority-New York City Transit (MTA-NYC Transit), the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA), the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), providers and advocates.

Background

As the City’s population ages, with a significant portion of the senior community affected by disabilities, having adequate accessible transportation options will become increasingly essential to providing all New Yorkers safe, reliable, efficient, and affordable meaning of moving about the City. According to the United States (U.S.) Census Bureau, there are 862,783 New Yorkers with a disability. Of this population 7 percent are under 18 years old, 48 percent are 18 years old to 64 years old, and 44 percent are 65 years old or over. Without accessible transportation, persons with disabilities are effectively locked out from participating in the social and economic life of the City. According to DFTA, disability rates are slightly higher for older New Yorkers when compared with the national population. In 2012, 37 percent of the non-institutionalized population of older adults (372,906 adults) reported some level of disability. Of this group, 27 percent had physical disabilities that affected walking, climbing stairs, reaching,

2 Id.
lifting, or carrying, and 20 percent had conditions which restricted their ability to go outside the home, shop, or visit the doctor. Older Hispanic men and women have higher disability rates compared with similarly situated non-Hispanic older adults. Disability also correlates with poverty, as older New Yorkers with disabilities reported higher poverty rates. Finally, disability is a significant contributing factor to social isolation, making the need for accessible transportation even more urgent.

**Access-A-Ride**

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires any public entity which operates a fixed route system to provide paratransit and other special transportation services to individuals with disabilities and to provide such individuals with a level of service and response time comparable to the level and response time given to non-disabled passengers. For purposes of the ADA, a “fixed route system” constitutes a system for providing designated public transportation along a prescribed route according to a fixed schedule.

The ADA also provides that “it shall be considered discrimination” for a public entity to fail to provide paratransit and other special transportation services on a level “which is comparable to the level of designated public transportation services to individuals without disabilities using such system.” The terms “comparable level of services” and “comparability” refer to whether the system is providing a level of service that meets the needs of persons with and without disabilities to a comparable extent.

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4 *Id.*

5 *Id.*

6 *Id.* at 13.

7 42 U.S.C. § 12143(a).

8 *Id.* at § 12141(3).

9 *Id.* at § 12132.

10 See S. Rep. No. 101-116, 101st Congress, 1st Session 52 (1989) (Comparable level of services as defined by the United States Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources).
The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation sets forth specific requirements that a paratransit system must meet in order to be deemed compliant with the ADA requirement that such system be comparable to fixed route public transportation services. MTA-NYC Transit was responsible for submitting a plan illustrating ADA compliance by January 26, 1992, and had until January 26, 1997 to implement its compliance plan. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approved the plan regarding ADA compliance and since July 1993, MTA-NYC Transit has taken full responsibility for the implementation of the paratransit system known as Access-A-Ride. From 1989 to 1993, prior to the MTA-NYC Transit take over, Access-A-Ride was operated through private transportation companies by the New York City Department of Transportation.

MTA-NYC Transit contracts with 13 carriers, both for profit and nonprofit organizations, to provide paratransit service. Access-A-Ride operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and in the five boroughs of the City, as well as within a three-quarter of a mile corridor beyond fixed-route service to certain areas of Nassau and Westchester Counties. Access-A-Ride’s services include shared-ride, feeder service, and door to door service.

**Eligibility**

The ADA requires that for an individual to be paratransit eligible they must be found to be “unable, as a result of a[n] ... impairment, and without the assistance of another individual..., to board, ride, or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is readily accessible to and

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11 49 C.F.R. §§ 37.121(b) and 37.123-37.133.
12 42 U.S.C. § 12134 (c)(7); 49 C.F.R. § 37.135.
13 N.Y.C. Independent Budget Office, New York City’s Access-A-Ride Program: Costs and Funding Sources (Feb. 2002), available at http://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/paratransit.pdf; For purposes of this briefing paper, the terms “Access-A-Ride” and “paratransit service” will be used interchangeably.
14 Id.
usable by individuals with disabilities.”17 Before an individual may use Access-A-Ride, potential passengers must first visit an assessment center within the borough in which they reside to determine eligibility.18 At the center, an applicant will have a face-to-face interview with a healthcare professional and, where appropriate, undergo functional testing.19 An assessment report is then sent to MTA-NYC Transit eligibility staff for a decision within 21 days of the initial visit, which is delivered by written notification.20 MTA-NYC Transit uses a two-prong test to determine eligibility, predicated on establishing that the individual has a disability and determining whether they demonstrated an inability to make use of fixed public transportation services.21

Those individuals deemed eligible are assigned into one of four categories of eligibility: full, continual, temporary, or conditional. Individuals are assigned continual eligibility—a designation requiring no reapplication—if their condition is permanent and will not improve. Temporary eligibility provides an applicant either full or conditional service for a period of less than five years. Those assigned conditional eligibility may only use Access-A-Ride when a condition noted on the Access-A-Ride MetroCard ID applies.22 The categories of conditional eligibility include stairs restricted, extreme cold, extreme heat, extreme cold and stairs restricted, extreme heat and stairs restricted, when the customer is navigating an unfamiliar location, and travel beyond a particular distance. Customers may be assigned one or more conditional categories.23

17 49 C.F.R. § 37.123[e][1].
19 Id.
20 Id.
23 Id.
Service

Once an applicant is determined eligible, they become a registrant of the service and MTA-NYC Transit gives the registrant an ID number. Registrants make reservations through MTA-NYC Transit’s call center and for a specific type of trip they may make reservations via email. MTA-NYC Transit records the reservations, develops the trip schedule by the end of each day, packages the schedules, sends the packages to the carriers, and then the carriers execute the schedules. However, MTA-NYC Transit contracts out a least part of the Access-A-Ride logistical operation. Two of MTA-NYC Transit’s broker car service vendors, Medical Transportation Management (MTM), Inc. and Corporate Transportation Group, Ltd., schedule and dispatch pre-arranged trips for their ambulatory registrants through a non-dedicated subcontractor network of livery and black car service providers.

The type of service MTA-NYC Transit provides for a registrant depends on whether or not they are ambulatory. “Non-ambulatory” usually means a registrant who uses a wheelchair. As of March 2012, 15 percent of registrants used wheelchair-type assistive devices. For registrants with disabilities who are unable to use public bus or subway service for some or all of their trips, MTA-NYC Transit delivers door-to-door service consisting of a broker car service, carriers under MTA contract, taxi companies, or voucher car companies (i.e. livery car companies). Feeder service constitutes a trip that is made partly by paratransit and partly by bus

26 Id.
27 Id.
28 Id.
or subway. The NYC Transit examines feeder trip eligibility on a trip by trip basis and depends on a registrant’s ability to access fixed-route transportation.

Ridership

According to the NYC Transit performance data, total paratransit ridership increased from 7,243,550 in 2008 to 9,266,385 passengers in 2013. For 2014, the total paratransit ridership in New York City dropped to 8,884,282 passengers, with ridership lower every month than the equivalent month in 2013. Ridership was also lower in January 2015 with 647,955 passengers, compared with 662,079 in January 2014. This number was also well below the January 2015 target of 791,880 passengers. Paratransit ridership has grown quickly since 1993, but growth has slowed since 2010. MTA-NYC Transit’s attributes reduced ridership to various paratransit initiatives, described in detail below.

NYC Transit Paratransit Expenditures

MTA-NYC Transit’s Paratransit Division receives revenue from fares, State taxes, New York City reimbursement, and the MTA’s contribution. The 2015 final proposed operating revenue for the division is $17.4 million from fare-boxes and $182.4 million in

29 Id.
30 Id.
33 Id.
34 Id.
reimbursements. Most recently, paratransit revenue was below forecast as various initiatives continue to reduce ridership growth rates below historic rates.

Cost has been a primary factor in the NYC Transit’s decision-making process regarding paratransit eligibility and service. Between 1994 and 2012, ridership increased from 424,000 to approximately 9.3 million in 2012. Due to the significant increase in ridership, the cost of the program grew from $14.5 million to $446 million over a period of twenty years. Each ride on a Paratransit bus costs an average of $56.89 per customer.

NYC Transit’s 2015 final proposed budget indicates that their paratransit service contracts expenditure is $386 million, of which $385.5 million is non-reimbursable non-labor expenses. Most recently, Paratransit Division service contract expenses were under forecast by $12.8 million (3.7 percent), due mainly to a lower number of completed trips. The MTA’s 2015 budget projects reductions in paratransit expenses of $31.6 million. Further planned reductions are $41.1 million in 2016, $58.7 million in 2017, and $74.0 million in 2018. The MTA cites lower trip projections as the reason for these cuts.

According to an April 2014 report by the office of the New York State Comptroller, after the cost of the paratransit program experienced an average annual growth rate of 20 percent

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38 Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Transit & Bus Committee Meeting (Jan. 2015), supra note 36.
40 Id.
41 Id.
44 Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Transit & Bus Committee Meeting (Jan. 2015), supra note 36.
45 Id.
between 2000 and 2009 as the number of trips tripled, 2013 costs came in 41 percent lower than MTA-NYC Transit had projected in 2009, with 2017 costs forecast to be 50 percent lower than original projections.\(^{46}\) Half of the savings between 2010 and 2012 came from initiatives that reduced the cost of services, and the other half from initiatives that reduced the demand for services.\(^{47}\) For example, in 2001, MTA-NYC Transit introduced the voucher car service program whereby it arranged for participating black car and livery services to transport customers in an attempt to reduce costs.\(^{48}\)

Prior to 2011, MTA-NYC Transit provided door-to-door service for all paratransit customers.\(^{49}\) However, this service changed in 2010 as MTA-NYC Transit sought to reduce the cost of paratransit in the face of deficits. At that time the agency made several service-related cost reduction proposals. These included replacing door-to-door service with feeder service to and from fixed-route transit, where applicable. With respect to registrants with conditional eligibility based on weather and/or temperature conditions, the MTA proposed determining registrant eligibility for service on a trip by trip basis, rather than based on a broad category of conditions. Other proposals included using more car services and taxis, and increasing enforcement of no-show and late policies.\(^{50}\)

\(^{47}\) Id.
MTA-NYC Transit is attempting to reduce costs for paratransit services through the Zero-Fare MetroCard program (Zero-Fare). In June 2012, the MTA Board authorized the Paratransit Division to establish the program, which offered free travel to Access-A-Ride-eligible customers on fixed route service (subways and buses). At the time, McKinsey & Co., an MTA consultant, projected that by 2015 the Zero-Fare program would reduce demand for paratransit services by 15 percent, resulting in a cost savings to MTA-NYC Transit of over $90 million. Cards were first issued in April 2013, with an expected roll-out to over 161,000 Access-A-Ride-eligible customers. Paratransit customers may either present the card as identification when using Access-A-Ride services, while still being required to pay the $2.75 to use the service. Additionally, when using the card on public transit, customers are allotted up to four free one-way rides per day on subways, MTA local buses, and the Staten Island Railway. Customers authorized to travel with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), are given a card encoded to allow up to four additional one-way trips for use by the accompanying PCA, for a combined maximum of eight one-way trips per day.

Over a year after the program was initiated, the MTA Inspector General’s Office issued a report which found several problems with the service. This included significant underutilization, as of the 30,919 Zero-Fare MetroCards issued to paratransit customers in 2013, only 10,338 (34 percent) of the cards had been used even once in the 6-month period between September 2013 and February 2014. The report also found misuse of trips designed for PCAs, fraudulent usage.

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52 Id.
53 Id.
54 Id.
55 Id.
56 Id.
of cards intended for Access-A-Ride customers who use wheelchairs (41 percent of these cards were swiped a total of 9,222 times at non-accessible stations), excessive Zero-Fare trips compared to paratransit usage, and poor fraud controls and detection systems.57

The report recommended that the agency: 1) centralize accountability and responsibility for developing and implementing fraud controls governing the program; 2) monitor and analyze trip data to detect suspicious patterns of use; 3) develop policies and procedures for deactivating, suspending, and terminating cards if fraudulent use is detected; 4) give appropriate notice to customers that their Zero-Fare MetroCard usage is being monitored for fraud and that their privileges could be terminated if warranted; 5) issue non-activated Zero-Fare/Identification MetroCards to all customers and only activate the free-fare function if requested; and 6) deactivate unused Zero-Fare cards already in circulation after providing appropriate notice to customers.58 The MTA agreed with all of these recommendations except for issuing non-activated cards, as current MetroCard production does not allow for the creation of cards that can be issued and activated at a later date.59

Broker Car Service

Broker Car Service (BCS), introduced in 2011, sought to reduce paratransit administrative costs by using brokers to manage, schedule, and assign trips provided to customers by the car service. In July of 2013, the NYCT selected Medical Transportation Management, Inc. and Corporate Transportation Group, Ltd. as providers following a competitive request for proposal.60 The contract term for each vendor is three years with a two year option. According to the MTA, BCS provides a cost benefit as the MTA does not bear the

57 Id.
58 Id.
59 Id.
60 Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Board Action Items (Jul. 2013), supra note 25.
direct responsibility for maintenance of the vehicles and other operating costs, as is the case with their Primary Carrier service. In 2011, BCS accounted for 13 percent of paratransit trips. During that same year, MTA-NYC Transit projected such trips they would grow up to 30 percent by 2017. With the expansion of BCS, MTA-NYC Transit has reduced voucher and taxi authorizations.

*Access-A-Ride Yellow Taxi Debit Card Program*

Through a partnership between the MTA and the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC), some Access-A-Ride registrants are provided with a prepaid debit card to use in yellow taxis for routine trips in Manhattan. The cost to the customer is the same as a regular Access-A-Ride trip and taxis can be hailed in the street or arranged via the TLC’s Accessible Dispatch program. This saves MTA-NYC Transit money, as the cost of a taxi trip is significantly less than the cost of a traditional Access-A-Ride trip.

*Taxi Reimbursement*

Since at least 2000, Access-A-Ride has reimbursed taxi, livery, and black car trips for customers whose regular Access-A-Ride trips are “late, interrupted, or unable to be completed by existing Paratransit Services.” In 2013 the program reimbursed customers “just over $4 million for nearly 190,000 taxi trips.” In a January 2015 report, the MTA Inspector General found that Access-A-Ride “does not presently have sufficient controls to adequately prevent and uncover

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61 Id.
62 Metropolitan Transportation Authority, 0000020733 – Notice of Addendum – Addendum #4, supra note 26.
65 Id.
66 Id.
67 Id.
68 Id.
fraud and other misuse of the program” and “should require more detailed information on taxi receipts and reimbursement requests [and] should also generate additional lists of frequent taxi users to help focus reviews for potential abuse, and conduct greater fraud awareness training for [Taxi Reimbursement] staff.”

**Access-A-Ride Issues and Concerns**

**Safety**

Despite the vulnerabilities of the passengers utilizing paratransit services, they are not always operated in a manner which ensures the safety of these passengers. As discussed above, MTA-NYC Transit uses a car service broker to provide rides to some paratransit customers in an effort to save costs. Riders have expressed complaints about the safety of the trips provided by these brokers. An April 2014 review by the MTA Inspector General’s Office found that from August 2012 to June 2013, 36 percent of Access-A-Ride drivers were observed driving dangerously, 28 percent were either texting or talking on a cell phone while driving, and 6 percent were speeding.70 Despite this, the report stated that safety violations and excessive cell phone use were not being reported by MTA-NYC Transit to the broker, which meant that such drivers were not being disciplined.71 Additionally, although under contractual obligation to do so, brokers were not reporting crashes and injuries to MTA-NYC Transit.72

The Office of the New York State Comptroller, in a report issued the same month, found that carrier incidents of under $1,000 in damage and black car service provider accidents were not all reported as required, and that the Paratransit Division did not maintain information about

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69 *Id.*  
71 *Id.*  
72 *Id.*
these crashes. Additionally, the audit found that the first annual review of drivers by carriers, necessary to determine whether they should be able to continue operating a vehicle, was not always conducted on a timely basis.

Language Access

Access-A-Ride’s language access policies have raised concerns among limited English proficient (LEP) New Yorkers. These individuals comprise a significant part of the population in New York City. According to a 2013 report by the Center for an Urban Future, immigrants constitute 46 percent of the City’s population age 65 and over. The various foreign-born populations in New York City speak as many as 170 different languages, and one in four New Yorkers identifies themselves as LEP.

Currently, MTA-NYC Transit instructs all applicants for Access-A-Ride service that “NYC Transit does not provide language translators. You must bring your own language translator, if needed.” In December 2014, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYPLI) filed suit in U.S. District Court against MTA-NYC Transit on behalf of five LEP individuals who alleged that they experienced significant barriers in applying for and using Access-A-Ride services. The suit claimed that the agency has continuously failed to provide equal access to LEP individuals by failing to make the application process and the processes for communicating with Access-A-Ride by phone and in writing accessible to such individuals.

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74 Id.
78 Id.
complaint noted that NYC Transit fails to provide application materials, or correspondence such as eligibility and appeals information, in any language other than English. It further alleges that individuals who have arrived at their Access-A-Ride eligibility interviews without an interpreter have been turned away and instructed to return with an interpreter. Even where individuals are able to receive approval for the service, many are unable to use it as needed because of difficulties communicating with Access-A-Ride staff to schedule rides or report late or absent vans. This lawsuit is still pending in the Court. The MTA announced in December 2014 that interpreters would be available for LEP individuals at Access-A-Ride interviews beginning on January 20, 2015.

Carrier No-Shows

MTA-NYC Transit defines “carrier no-show” as when the vehicle does not arrive at the registrant’s pick-up location within or after the 30-minute waiting period when circumstances are within the carrier’s control. At prior Council hearings on Access-A-Ride service, advocates and riders have expressed concerns about carriers not picking them up from their points of origin and arrival destinations. According to the latest MTA-NYC Transit monthly operations report, carrier and no-fault no-shows are up slightly from last year. In 2014, such no-shows made up

79 Id.
80 Id.
84 See Council of the City of New York, Hearing of the Committee on Aging, Committee on Mental Health, Developmental Disability, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse & Disability Services and Committee on Transportation, Oversight: Will the MTA’s proposed Access-A-Ride cuts have a negative impact on disabled New Yorkers? (March, 2010), http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=96819&GUID=BFF2153E-1B34-4697-946E-4F7704C2AAAE&Options=&Search=
0.52 percent of all paratransit trips scheduled, while as of the latest data for 2015, this percentage has gone up to 0.75 percent.\textsuperscript{85}

\textit{Late Pick-Ups and Arrivals}

The MTA defines “late pick-ups” as when the vehicle arrives after the 30-minute waiting period.\textsuperscript{86} Advocates and paratransit registrants have expressed many concerns regarding Access-A-Ride’s tardiness in picking up passengers.\textsuperscript{87} MTA-NYC Transit-contracted carriers bear the responsibility for late pick-ups and are penalized for an excessive amount of them.\textsuperscript{88}

To determine if a carrier’s driver is late in picking up a registrant, MTA-NYC Transit places an Automatic Vehicle Location Monitoring (AVLM) system in all Access-A-Ride vehicles.\textsuperscript{89} While this does not apply to broker vehicles, broker vehicles must contain a GPS system and MTA-NYC Transit requires brokers to monitor vehicle location on a real time basis and record it to verify execution of a trip.\textsuperscript{90} The AVLM system allows MTA-NYC Transit to remotely monitor vehicle location in real time, and to feed this information to the Paratransit Division’s scheduling software to provide computer aided dispatching information for the Division’s Command Center personnel.

If a vehicle arrives more than 30 minutes after a registrant scheduled pickup time, NYC Transit advises the passenger to call and ask a Customer Care Associate (CCA) for a trip status. The CCA will check AVLM and tell the registrant the vehicle’s location or estimated time of

\textsuperscript{85} Metropolitan Transit Authority, \textit{New York City Transit and Bus Committee Meeting 35 (March 23, 2015)}, available at \url{http://web.mta.info/mta/news/books/pdf/150323_1030_Transit_BUS.pdf}.
\textsuperscript{86} Metropolitan Transportation Authority, \textit{Summer/Fall 2009 – All the news on Access-A-Ride – Volume 8, supra note 83}.
\textsuperscript{88} Metropolitan Transportation Authority, \textit{Paratransit} Newsletter – Paratransit Advisory Committee (PAC), \url{http://web.mta.info/nyct/paratran/newsletr2/pac.htm} (last accessed Apr. 20, 2014).
\textsuperscript{90} Metropolitan Transportation Authority, \textit{0000020733 – Notice of Addendum – Addendum #4, supra note 26}. 
arrival, the carrier’s name and the vehicle’s number. If the vehicle will not arrive in a “reasonable period of time” the CCA will attempt to locate a nearby vehicle to pick up the registrant or authorize taxi/car service.91

A registrant’s paratransit trip has a maximum ride time determined by the drip distance. For example, if a trip is between 0 to 3 miles a registrant can expect a maximum ride time of 50 minutes. At prior hearings by the Committees on this issue, advocates and paratransit registrants have reported that their vehicles arrive late at their destinations, and Council Members have reported hearing similar issues from their constituents.92

Staten Island Service

Staten Island, in particular, has experienced a number of service challenges which present difficulties in a borough with more limited taxi service. Complaints from customers include no-show drivers, or drivers who are frequently late and do not know how to navigate the borough, MTA-contracted car companies who shut down Access-A-Ride service during poor weather while serving paying customers, and a complex application process that is often frustrating to individuals either applying or reapplying for the service.93

Transportation Services for Individuals with Disabilities

In addition to Access-A-Ride, there are several transportation options for New York City residents with disabilities. For example, the TLC regulates and licenses ambulette services, which provides medical and leisure transportation services to people with special needs.94 Accessible car services are another alternative to Access-A-Ride.95 There are also free

91 Metropolitan Transportation Authority, What to Do if an AAR Vehicle is Late, http://web.mta.info/nyct/paratran/guide.htm#late (last accessed Apr. 20, 2015).
92 Council of the City of New York, supra note 84.
93 Barone, supra note 41.
95 Id.
transportation programs that provide transportation to and from medical appointments, hospitals, shopping centers, and recreational activities.\textsuperscript{96} The New York City Department of Transportation administers contracts with private vendors to provide transportation to children ages 0-5 who are receiving Early Intervention Services and Pre-Kindergarten Special Education Services.\textsuperscript{97}

\textbf{DFTA Transportation Services}

As a compliment to existing services such as Access-A-Ride and Reduced-Fare Metrocards, DFTA provides transportation for seniors through its Transportation Services Program. DFTA-contracted non-profit organizations transport frail older New Yorkers who are unable to access or use public transportation to senior centers and essential medical and social service appointments.\textsuperscript{98} Currently, DFTA funds fourteen programs that serve a limited number of community districts in the city.\textsuperscript{99} These programs make approximately 250,000 one-way trips per year.

The Administration’s 2013 November Plan baselined a $2 million Council initiative to support senior centers transportation operating costs. The Council allocated an additional $500,000 to further support operating costs such as insurance, fuel, and maintenance of existing vans and other vehicles used by senior centers and programs.

DFTA’s 2016-2025 Preliminary Ten-Year Capital Strategy provides $2.8 million for the purchase and replacement of vehicles and other transportation related expenses. This amount represents 14\% of DFTA’s total capital plan. In addition to the Transportation Services Program,

\textsuperscript{96} Id.
\textsuperscript{97} Id.
\textsuperscript{98} N.Y.C. Department for the Aging, supra note 3, at 12.
\textsuperscript{99} Currently, all community districts (CD) in Manhattan and Staten Island are covered. In the Bronx, CD 4, 5, 6, and 12 are not covered. In Brooklyn, 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 16, and 17 are not covered. In Queens, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 14 are not covered.
approximately 80 DFTA-funded senior centers feature transportation to access the centers and then participate in activities outside the center.

**Conclusion**

New York City’s paratransit and senior transportation services provide an essential means of transport for individuals unable to access the City’s mass transit system. However, many customers and advocates have expressed concerns about tightened eligibility and poor service, which make it difficult for many New Yorkers to travel in a safe and efficient manner. Today, the Committees expect to hear from MTA-NYC Transit about how they intend to improve service for seniors and others with disabilities, and about DFTA’s expansion of transportation services, to ensure that all New Yorkers are able to fully access the city in which they live.