

**NYC Department of Transportation Testimony Preliminary Budget Hearing Before the
City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
March 9, 2023**

Good morning Chair Brooks-Powers and members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation. With me today are Paul Ochoa, Executive Deputy Commissioner, Eric Beaton, Deputy Commissioner for Transportation Planning and Management, and Elisabeth Franklin, Associate Commissioner of Budget and Capital Program Management. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Eric Adams on DOT's Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary Budget and Fiscal Years 2023-2033 Capital Plan.

At the Preliminary Budget press conference, Mayor Eric Adams unveiled his vision for our shared future. This budget reflects the Mayor's commitment to promote an equitable recovery by making investments in affordable housing, keeping city streets clean, ensuring the safety of communities, and promoting a greener city.

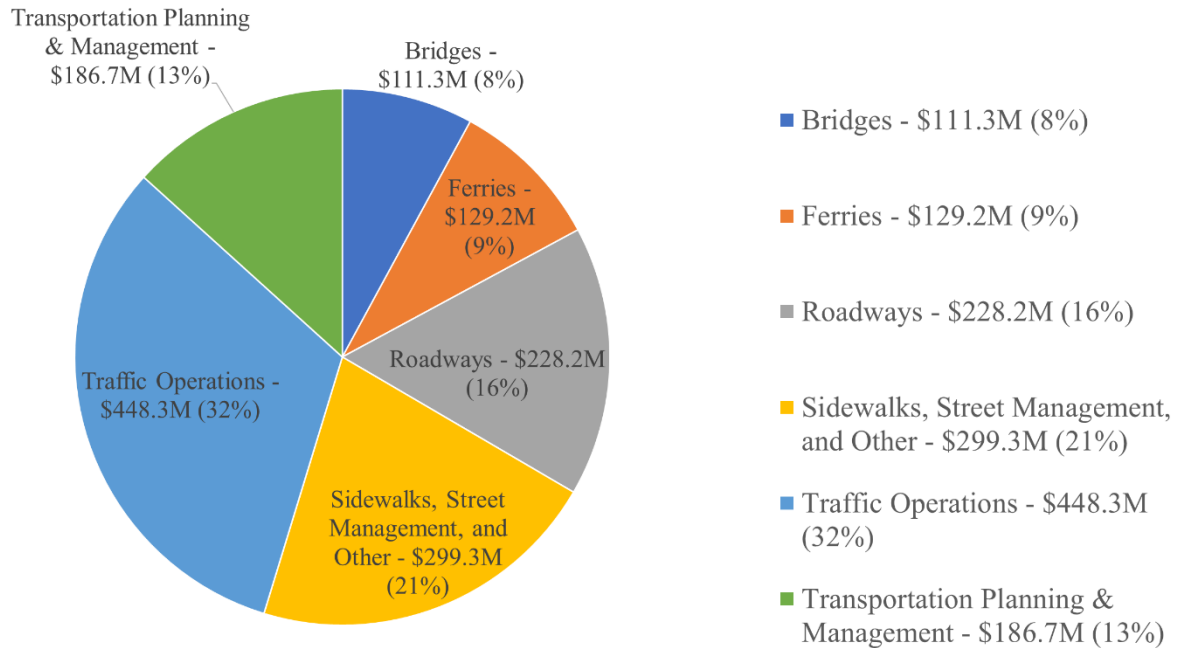
As the Mayor said, while we have made a strong recovery, the city, state, and nation still face economic challenges. The Preliminary Budget doubles down on the Mayor's commitment to fiscal responsibility by spending limited resources wisely. We appreciate the Mayor's investment in DOT during the City's disciplined fiscal approach.

This budget will allow DOT to continue critical safety work, reimagine the use of public space, invest in low-income communities and communities of color, make the city more accessible for all New Yorkers including people with disabilities, maintain our infrastructure, and continue to operate the Staten Island Ferry.

DOT's \$1.4 billion FY24 Expense Budget includes the following:

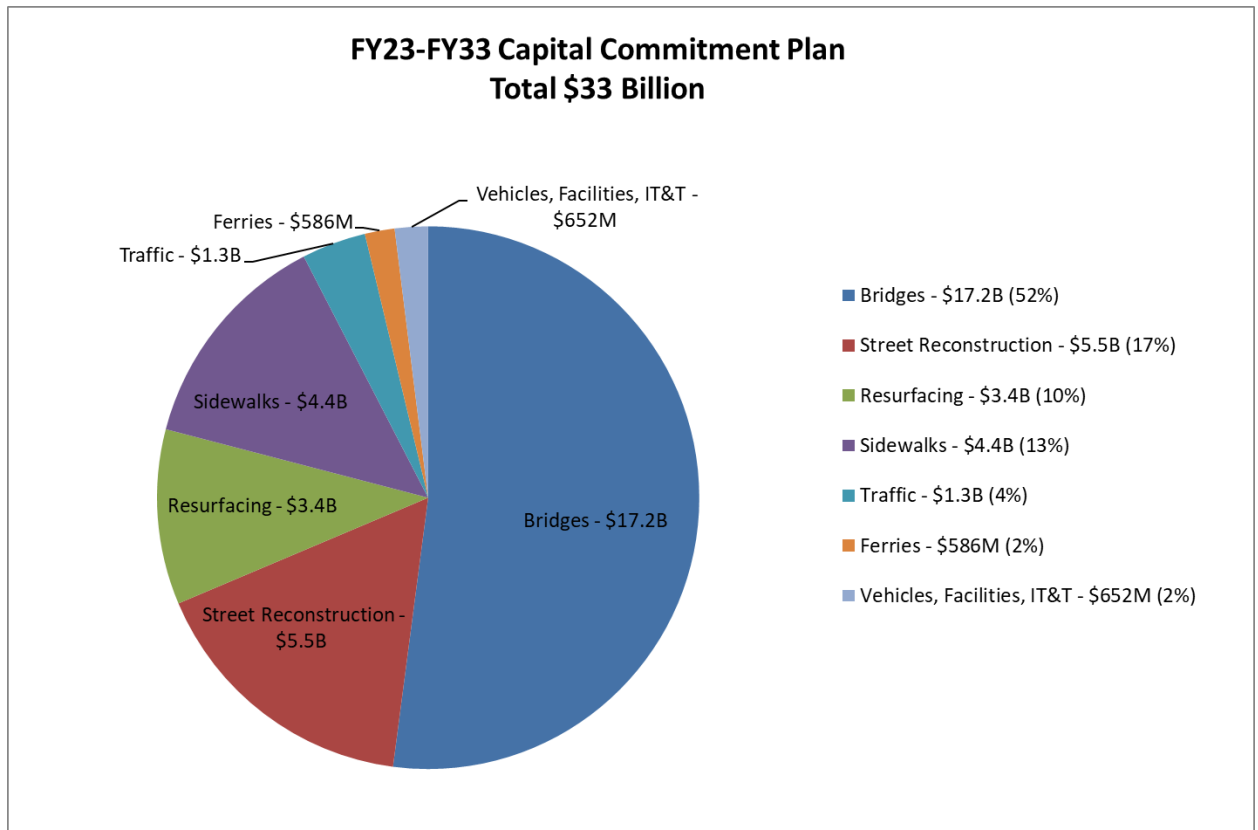
- \$111 million for bridge maintenance and inspection;
- \$129 million for ferry operations and maintenance;
- \$228 million for roadway maintenance;
- \$299 million for other DOT operations and administration, including sidewalk management and inspection;
- \$448 million for traffic operations, including signals, streetlights, automated enforcement, and parking; and
- \$187 million for transportation planning and management, including installation of street signs and roadway markings.

FY24 Expense Budget in Millions - Total \$1.4B



DOT's proposed \$33 billion FY23-FY33 Capital Plan includes the following:

- \$17.2 billion for bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation;
- \$5.5 billion for street reconstruction;
- \$3 billion for resurfacing;
- \$4.4 billion for sidewalk and pedestrian ramp repair and reconstruction;
- \$1.3 billion for streetlights, signals, and automated enforcement;
- \$586 million for the Staten Island Ferry; and
- \$652 million for the facilities and equipment needed to support DOT's operations.



Vision Zero

This Administration is committed to Vision Zero and the safety of all New Yorkers remains DOT's number one priority. This is reflected by significant investments: DOT's current Ten Year Capital Plan (FY23-33) invests nearly \$4 billion in Vision Zero, and our expense budget invests an average of about \$250 million each year in Vision Zero.

This commitment is working. As I testified last month, traffic fatalities in New York City dropped in 2022 for the first time since 2018, and pedestrian deaths were near record lows. New York City is defying national trends for pedestrian deaths, which are at a four-decade high across the country. These local trends are encouraging and show that the steps we are taking to make streets safer are working, including our commitment to the Safe System Approach. But as Mayor Adams has made clear, the only acceptable number of traffic fatalities is zero. We are committed to doing more.

DOT also remains focused on creating a more equitable city, where the transportation network meets the needs of all New Yorkers regardless of race, ability, or economic status. DOT is prioritizing street design investments in higher-need neighborhoods based on the Priority Investment Areas laid out in the NYC Streets Plan—while still being guided by data such as crash histories and slow bus speeds. We are also committed to robust community engagement and learning from community members, Council Members, and other elected officials about conditions on the ground.



Visit to Council Member Farias's District



Visit to Council Member Caban's District



Visit to Council Member Gutierrez's District



Visit to Council Member Bottcher's District

In 2022, DOT completed 111 Street Improvement Projects, including projects in higher-need neighborhoods as determined by the Priority Investment Areas. We also exceeded the Mayor and my commitment to improving 1,000 intersections by improving over 1,600 intersections with treatments such as turn calming, all-way stop signs, raised crosswalks, daylighting, and leading pedestrian intervals. Some 2022 project highlights include:

- Protected Bike Lanes and Pedestrian Safety Enhancements on White Plains Road from 214th to 226th Streets in the Bronx;
- Sidewalk extensions on 8th, 9th, and Lexington Avenues in Manhattan;
- Protected Bike Lanes on Schermerhorn Street in Brooklyn;
- Intersection upgrades at Homelawn Street and Grand Central Parkway in Queens; and
- Intersections safety improvements at Victory Boulevard, Brook Street, and Fremont Street in Staten Island.

In 2022, DOT completed over 26 new protected bike lane miles and reached 1,500 bike lane miles citywide, the largest bike network nationwide.



Celebrating 1,500 bike lane miles at the Bronxdale Avenue ribbon cutting

DOT also hardened 10 miles of previously delineator-protected bike lanes, and will harden another 10 miles this year. This will keep us on track to harden half of the city's delineator protected bike lanes by the end of 2023.

In another win for safety, DOT succeeded in getting authority from the State to expand the speed camera enforcement program to 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Since the launch of 24-hour operations in August, DOT has experienced a 25 percent reduction in violations, meaning less speeding.

I am happy to say that this budget invests \$81 million more in capital funding for School Safety street reconstruction projects. As I testified last month, student safety is a top priority for me as a parent, former teacher, and co-founder of two schools. Thanks to the Mayor’s investment, DOT and DDC will begin construction soon on several contracts for school safety improvements in Brooklyn, Staten Island, and the Bronx, and also start new projects for School Safety improvements citywide.



School Safety Project on Alexander Avenue in the Bronx

To give examples of the type of safety work this will fund, we enhanced safety on Alexander Avenue in the Bronx—a wide roadway that separates local NYCHA residents from schools on the other side of the street—by installing new signalized crossings and sidewalk extensions. These changes led to a 48 percent reduction in injuries overall, and a 67 percent reduction in pedestrian injuries. We look forward to bringing similar safety gains to more parts of the city with this new funding.

This budget also includes \$77 million in funding for new traffic signal installation, which will allow us to install 200 signals a year, up from 100. In addition, each new installation will include an Accessible Pedestrian Signal.

And we are also constructing about 1.6 miles of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway from Red Hook through Sunset Park. This will include a two-way, separated bike path on Hamilton Avenue and Third Avenue, raised crossings, and accessibility improvements.

Next year, we are planning to start design-build activities for the upcoming Citywide Raised Crosswalks contract. This project will build more than 100 raised crosswalks at high-priority intersections across the five boroughs. Raised crosswalks improve pedestrian safety conditions by calming vehicle traffic at intersections, while also increasing accessibility by providing a level street crossing.



Raised Crosswalk at East 5th Street and Fort Hamilton Parkway, Brooklyn

Thanks to the support of our city, state, and federal partners, DOT has won grants that will support our work to make streets safer. Last month, we celebrated the \$20 million Safe Streets for All Grant that will support safety enhancements on Delancey Street, which will begin construction next year, and a new pedestrian model and micro-mobility planning tool. And last year, DOT and Parks won a \$7.25 million RAISE grant to plan for the expansion of the greenway network.



Celebrating the Safe Streets for All Grant on Delancey Street

We will be kicking off the public engagement process soon for the landmark community-driven study to reimagine the Cross-Bronx Expressway, thanks to a \$2 million RAISE planning grant we won in partnership with New York State DOT and DCP.



Mayor Adams kicking off the study to reimagine the Cross-Bronx Expressway

We will also be continuing our BQE Vision engagement, pursuing once-in-a-generation federal funding for a long-term fix for BQE Central and developing projects to reconnect neighborhoods along the corridor including South Williamsburg, Red Hook, and Sunset Park.

We have a team hard at work tracking federal funding opportunities and identifying projects that best fit each one. Thank you to all the Council Members and other elected officials for your support in going after these grants. USDOT values local support, and we will continue to call on you to help us make the case for why these projects are so important.

Mobility and Accessibility

DOT also continues our work to make it easier and faster to travel around the city for all New Yorkers regardless of race, ability, or economic status. In 2022, DOT installed Accessible Pedestrian Signals at a record 494 intersections citywide to help New Yorkers who are blind or have low vision navigate the city. This budget also includes over \$3 billion in capital funding over the next 10 years to continue pedestrian ramp installation and upgrades citywide.



Accessible Pedestrian Signal at Court Street, Brooklyn

And to speed up buses, last year, DOT implemented Transit Signal Priority at a record 781 intersections to reduce the time buses spend stuck at red lights. We improved the lives of 400,000 daily bus riders with projects that have made bus service faster and more reliable. One great example is our work with MTA at Pelham Bay Park Station in the Bronx. There, one-tenth of a mile of bus lanes will save two and a half minutes per trip for thousands of daily bus riders and improve the connection to the subway.



Pelham Bay Park Station Transit Improvements

This budget includes \$62 million in new capital funding to make improvements on Jamaica Avenue from Sutphin Boulevard to Merrick Boulevard. Thanks to the support of Speaker Adams, Council Member Williams, Council Member Gennaro, and Borough President Richards, this project will revitalize this central neighborhood corridor by introducing a number of sidewalk and streetscape improvements, building off changes allowed by the new permanent busway. The project will reconstruct the avenue’s sidewalks and introduce curb extensions, sidewalk expansions, and raised crosswalks at priority intersections.



Jamaica Avenue Busway, Jamaica, Queens

This budget also provides \$16 million to fully fund a project along Kings Highway, Flatlands Avenue, and Pennsylvania Avenue. This project will include expanding the existing median bus stops for the B82, adding bus pads, resurfacing the roadway, and constructing pedestrian safety and accessibility improvements, including pedestrian islands, new raised and planted medians, raised crosswalks, median extensions, and curb extensions. We plan to start construction on this project later this calendar year.

Reimagining the Use of Public Space

Turning to public space, this Administration continues to reimagine the use of public space. All New Yorkers should have access to safe, welcoming, and attractive public spaces close to where they live, and DOT continues our work towards this goal.

In 2022, DOT continued to grow the largest Open Streets Program in the country with over 200 Open Streets on 430 city blocks. We celebrated the completion of the 34th Avenue Open Street redesign, a groundbreaking project that transformed 1.3 miles of 34th Avenue into a pedestrian and cyclist priority corridor, including a new plaza and shared street blocks centered at schools. This project enhanced safety, accessibility, and created vibrant programming space for the seven schools within a block of the Jackson Heights corridor.



34th Avenue Open Street Redesign, before and after

I also joined Council Member Farias to celebrate the completion of the Morrison Avenue Plaza project in Soundview in the Bronx. DOT, in partnership with DDC, DEP, and Parks, increased pedestrian space and amenities at a busy intersection under the Morrison Avenue-Soundview subway station, while also adding critical safety elements.



Morrison Avenue Plaza, Bronx

As the Mayor announced in his State of the City Address, this Administration has committed \$375 million to improve public spaces. This includes \$63 million added in this budget for reconstructing Flatiron Plaza. This funding will allow us to start design on projects to connect Madison Square to Herald Square between 21st and 33rd Streets as part of the Broadway Vision plan. These projects will include improved pedestrian spaces and amenities as well as safety elements such as grade separation of the plaza, landscaping, improved road markings, dedicated bike lanes, and expanded median islands.

The Mayor's State of the City commitment will also allow us to make permanent upgrades to Open Streets on Willis Avenue between East 147th Street and Bergen Avenue in the Bronx, Minthorne Street in Staten Island, and Woodside Avenue in Queens. Applications are currently open for the 2023 Open Streets program. Please help spread the word to community groups in your districts.



Minthorne Street Open Street at Car Free Earth Day, Staten Island

Mayor Adams also appointed the City's first-ever Chief Public Realm Officer. DOT looks forward to working with Ya-Ting Liu and our sister agencies to continue to create public spaces that can be enjoyed by all.

Continuing Operations and Maintaining Infrastructure in a State of Good Repair

Turning to our critical operational work that keeps the city running. This includes our work to maintain the city's roadways, sidewalks, and bridges in a state of good repair and to operate the Staten Island Ferry.

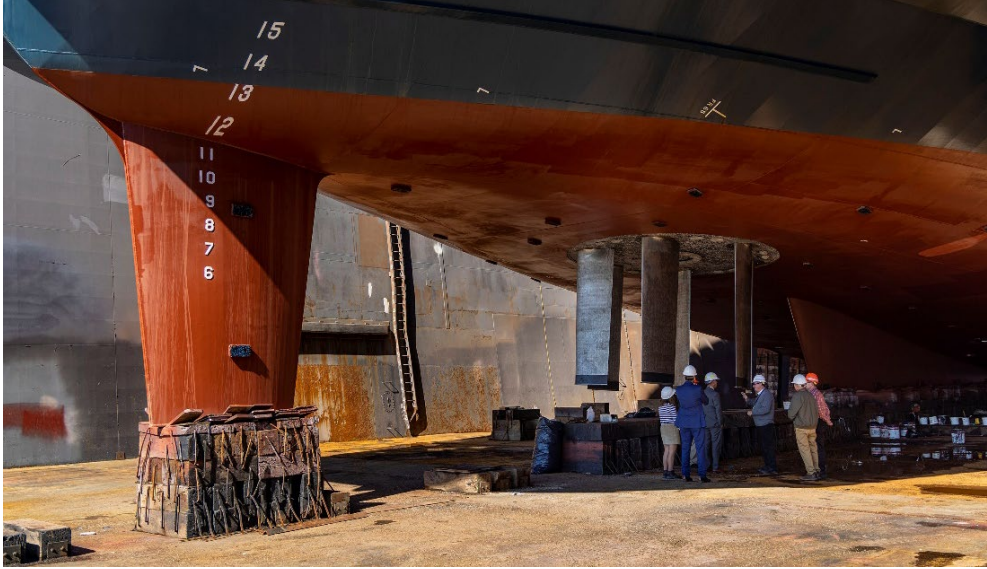
As I testified last month, DOT faces staffing challenges that are in line with many sectors of the economy and municipal governments across the country. We are aggressively working to hire and creating a pipeline for future transportation professionals. DOT recently hosted an Engineering Job Fair from which DOT made 50 conditional offers to enthusiastic engineering college students. We also attended the DCAS citywide job fair in partnership with DC 37 where we made a number of offers, including to 20 Apprentice Inspectors. We are also working with DCAS to expand the qualifications of hard to recruit job titles to increase the number of diverse candidates.



DOT Engineering Job Fair

DOT also created a new Director of Workforce Development position to focus on recruitment initiatives and targeted outreach. The Director has been collaborating with executive staff and hiring managers to develop recruiting strategies to attract and retain a diverse workforce. The Director has also been conducting outreach to organizations that represent underrepresented populations in various agency titles, and pursuing opportunities to partner with citywide agencies, such as the Mayor's Office for Talent and Workforce Development, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities.

On ferries, this budget includes \$46 million in capital funding for Ferries dry-docking and reconstruction of ferry maintenance facility piers and wharves. This reconstruction is necessary to ensure DOT can maintain ferries to U.S. Coast Guard regulations and comply with the American Bureau of Shipping’s classification requirements.



Staten Island Ferry at a Dry Dock

This budget includes \$36 million in new Capital funding to fully fund the Harper Street Asphalt Plant. This plant is a key piece of DOT’s operations, producing more than three tons of material for our resurfacing crews. We are so glad we are funded in the baseline to resurface 1,100 lane miles and up to 50 miles of bike lanes.



Harper Street Asphalt Plant

DOT maintains nearly 800 bridges. 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. We will also be beginning work on the 5th Avenue Bridge over the Long Island Railroad and subway tracks and work on Boston Road over the Hutchinson River.



East River Bridges

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Council for the opportunity to testify before you today. This investment, along with our legislative agenda, will lead to a safer city for all New Yorkers. I look forward to partnering with the Council as we work together to make this city safer, more equitable, and accessible for generations to come. We would now be happy to answer any questions.