
Committee Meeting

of

SENATE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

“The Committee will receive testimony from invited State and local government officials, transportation providers, and policy experts, and from the general public regarding the draft 2017-2026 Capital Plan, including the new Port Authority Bus Terminal, the Gateway Rail Tunnel, the PATH extension to Newark Airport, the redevelopment of Newark Terminal A, and other options to increase trans-Hudson capacity”

LOCATION: Bergenfield Municipal Building
Bergenfield, New Jersey

DATE: January 30, 2017
3:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator Robert M. Gordon, Chair
Senator Loretta Weinberg, Vice Chair
Senator Thomas H. Kean Jr.



ALSO PRESENT:

Patrick Brennan
Sarah A. Fletcher
*Office of Legislative Services
Committee Aide*

Mark J. Magyar
*Senate Majority
Committee Aide*

Erin Darreff
*Senate Republican
Committee Aide*

***Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey***



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Chairman

LORETTA WEINBERG
Vice-Chair

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COMMITTEE NOTICE

TO: MEMBERS OF THE SENATE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

FROM: SENATOR ROBERT M. GORDON, CHAIRMAN

SUBJECT: COMMITTEE MEETING - JANUARY 30, 2017

The public may address comments and questions to Sarah A. Fletcher, Committee Aide, or make bill status and scheduling inquiries to Shirley Link, Secretary, at (609) 847-3855, fax (609) 292-0561, or e-mail: OLSAideSLO@njleg.org. Written and electronic comments, questions and testimony submitted to the committee by the public, as well as recordings and transcripts, if any, of oral testimony, are government records and will be available to the public upon request.

The Senate Legislative Oversight Committee will meet on Monday, January 30, 2017, at 3:00 PM until 5:30 PM, and again at 6:30 PM until 9:00 PM, in the Executive Chambers of the Bergenfield Municipal Building, at 198 North Washington Avenue in Bergenfield, New Jersey.

The committee will receive testimony from invited State and local government officials, transportation providers and policy experts, and from the general public regarding the draft 2017-2026 Capital Plan, including the new Port Authority Bus Terminal, the Gateway Rail Tunnel, the PATH extension to Newark Airport, the redevelopment of Newark Terminal A, and other options to increase trans-Hudson capacity.

Issued 1/25/17

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SENATOR ROBERT M. GORDON (Chair): This meeting of the Senate Legislative Oversight Committee will come to order.

Good afternoon, everyone.

If you would all please rise and join me in the flag salute. (all recite pledge)

Let me welcome you all to this second meeting of the Senate Legislative Oversight Committee on the Port Authority's draft 10-year capital plan.

Before we get into that, I would like to, first, thank you all for being here. If anyone would like to testify and who has not signed in, we would appreciate it if you would fill out a slip, which I think will be made available to you.

I also want to just thank the Borough of Bergenfield -- particularly Mayor Norman Schmelz and the Borough Administrator, Corey Gallo -- for their hospitality and for facilitating this meeting.

Before we actually begin today's hearing, Senator Weinberg and I would like to announce that we are going to be working with Senator Michael Gianaris of the state of New York in drafting legislation that will bar the expenditure of any Port Authority funds for purposes that, in any way, restrict Muslim refugees, green card holders, or citizens from any country from entering the United States.

We consider President Trump's Executive Order to be unconstitutional, illegal, immoral, and antithetical to the principles upon which our nation was founded.

The Statue of Liberty, with Emma Lazarus' famous invitation to refugees yearning to breathe free, literally stands at the very center of the

Port Authority District. And we believe it would be unconscionable for the Port Authority to, in any way, participate in a heinous policy that arbitrarily discriminates against persons on the basis of their religion or their nation of origin.

We will be meeting with, and working closely with, Senator Gianaris of Queens in developing legislation which will be introduced in both states. They will be identical pieces of legislation. As you know, identical bills need to be advanced in both states for something to become law and affect the Port Authority. (applause)

Thank you.

We'd also like to comment on related actions taken by the Governor of New York. As many in this room know, we don't always see eye-to-eye with Governor Cuomo on Port Authority issues and priorities. But we would like to applaud his efforts to stand up for our fundamental American values.

Senator Weinberg, would you like to add any comments about this project of ours?

SENATOR LORETTA WEINBERG (Vice Chair): No. I think this is our second or third attempt to do a piece of legislation in conjunction with the New York Legislature. And let's hope this one is a little bit more successful; and that we will get two Governors to sign this legislation, and we get it through our respective houses.

So we are looking forward to working with our New York counterpart, and we will be announcing something together as soon as the bill is actually drafted.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

And just one other housekeeping comment: We will, in all likelihood, not be joined by other Senators this afternoon. It's certainly not because of any lack of interest in the subject matter. We felt it important to get this hearing scheduled before the Port Authority takes action -- if, in fact, they do -- on February 16. And there were not many days available to us to do that. And unfortunately, today -- which worked for this Committee -- unfortunately does conflict with a number of other hearings that are being held in Trenton simultaneously -- the Budget Committee hearings, Commerce Committee hearings dealing with important bills. And so our colleagues were not -- had made commitments to those committees, and will not be able to join us this afternoon. Although I believe Senator Kean and, possibly, some other Senators will be joining us at 6:30 for the second phase of this hearing, which will be focused on comments by commuters.

This afternoon's hearing, however, offers an opportunity for New Jersey Transit officials, and transportation experts, and advocates to offer their perspectives on the Port Authority's 10-year capital plan. As I said, this evening we will have a separate hearing to listen to the Port Authority's customers, the commuters.

The draft plan includes a new Bus Terminal on Manhattan's West Side. As many of you are aware, this new terminal will replace the existing Port Authority Bus Terminal, which is nearing both maximum capacity and the end of its useful life. The proposed capital plan earmarks \$3.5 billion for the construction of the new terminal. Of the \$3.5 billion

earmarked for the project, \$500 million is anticipated Federal funding, which may or may not materialize.

There is widespread concern among elected officials, commuters, transportation advocates, and Port Authority officials alike that \$3 billion will be inadequate to ensure that the construction of the new terminal is complete, or nearly complete, by the end of the 10-year period. Any delay in construction will have long-lasting negative repercussions for a corridor state like New Jersey, whose economy depends on the ability to move people and goods in a safe and efficient manner.

While the Port Authority's capital plan includes such other transportation projects as the Gateway rail tunnel and rail connections to Newark Liberty and LaGuardia airports, funding must remain secure for bus commuters. According to the Port Authority's own study, bus ridership is expected to increase 50 percent by 2040.

It is also expected that Manhattan will add 300,000 jobs over the next decade, the vast majority of which will need to be filled by commuters. In order to keep New Jersey attractive and competitive, we must build and expand reliable transit connections in a timely manner. To effect that goal, we must assure that adequate financial resources are available.

We are also inviting testimony today on the adequacy of funding for the Gateway rail tunnel and other major priorities in the Port Authority capital plan. One is the PATH extension to Newark Airport, and its potential to spur economic development in Newark and to increase trans-Hudson commuter capacity through a park and ride facility.

Another key question is whether the capital plan should be amended to add PATH capacity by expanding from 8-car to 10-car platforms.

These and other issues, I'm sure, will be addressed today.

Senator Weinberg, any comments to add at this point?

SENATOR WEINBERG: No, thank you.

I see our representatives of the Port Authority (*sic*) poised and ready to go, so--

SENATOR GORDON: Well, the New Jersey Transit--

SENATOR WEINBERG: New Jersey Transit; sorry. (laughter)

MR. MAGYAR (Committee Aide): They're the good guys.
(laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: Well, I am not going to engage on that.

SENATOR GORDON: I should-- Just to provide a little--

MR. MAGYAR: I know; I was kidding.

SENATOR GORDON: --perspective on this hearing.

As I indicated at the opening, this is the second hearing on the Port Authority capital plan. At the first hearing, held on January 17, I believe, we heard from senior leadership of the Port Authority, who summarized the key elements of the plan and responded to questions. We also heard from a number of transportation advocates, who offered a more independent, objective assessment of the Port Authority plan. And today, we want to hear from other knowledgeable sources.

Today we will be hearing from several panels; the first, which is before us now, is from New Jersey Transit, and consists of Michael

Kilcoyne, Vice President and General Manager of Bus Operations; Richard Roberts, Chief of Trans-Hudson Projects; and Paul Wyckoff, Chief of Staff.

And just to provide an overview of this afternoon's hearing, we will also hear from Peter Palmer, Chair of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, who also serves as Chair of the Raritan Valley Coalition and is a Somerset County Freeholder. We will hear from Carol Katz, a representative of New Jersey's private bus operators, including Academy and Coach, which operate commuter bus service under contract with New Jersey Transit. We will hear from Hoboken Councilwoman Tiffanie Fisher, whose County ranks first in PATH riders and second in bus commuters. We will be listening to Len Resto, Chair of the Association of Railroad Passengers New Jersey, and also a Chatham Borough Councilman, who is here with us today. We will also hear comments from David Peter Alan, Chair of the Lackawanna Coalition; and from Jeff Tittel, the Executive Director of the Sierra Club of New Jersey.

This evening we will be joined by -- in addition to hearing from commuters, we will hear from Michael Phelan, the State's leading bus commuter advocate -- or one of the leading advocates -- through the New Jersey Commuters Action Network; and, again, he'll be here this evening.

Let's begin with New Jersey Transit. I don't know which of you gentlemen would like to begin, but I turn it over to you.

PAUL WYCKOFF: Thank you very much.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice Chair.

On behalf of NJ Transit Executive Director Steven Santoro, I'd like to thank you for providing us the opportunity to address the

Committee on this very important topic, and provide our perspective on the -- particularly the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

I am Paul Wyckoff; I'm Chief of Staff, now, in addition to being Chief of Government and External Affairs. As the Chairman noted, with me today are Michael Kilcoyne, who is the Vice President and General Manager of Bus Operations; and Richard Roberts, the Chief of Trans-Hudson Projects.

In a moment I'll ask Rich Roberts to outline our view on trans-Hudson bus service and the need for a new terminal.

But first, NJ Transit wants to express our thanks to Port Authority Chairman John Degnan, Governor Christie and, especially, to the legislators -- particularly those of you who we know have such an intense interest in this subject matter -- Senate President Sweeney, Minority Leader Kean, Senator Gordon, Senator Weinberg; along with Assemblyman Gordon Johnson, and a number of others. You have been tireless advocates to construct a new Bus Terminal on Manhattan's West Side, so that our customers' bus trips to and from Manhattan don't get longer and harder. And we very much thank you for that.

And just as an aside, I'll take this opportunity to also -- if I may, Senators -- I'd like to thank the staff of the Committees, who we have had a lot of interaction with the last few months. And I think it's been a very good and productive interaction, and I just want to thank the staff for all that they have done to help us get you the information that you need.

SENATOR GORDON: We appreciate them as well. (laughter)

MR. WYCKOFF: Now I will ask Rich Roberts to speak on the planning view, if you will, for PABT.

RICHARD ROBERTS: Thank you, Paul.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice Chair, members of the public.

As you know, the Port Authority Bus Terminal is one of the busiest terminals in the world and the largest in the nation. Almost 8,000 buses pass through the Terminal each weekday, carrying more than 230,000 customer trips.

About 160,000 of those passenger trips are made by New Jersey Transit customers on nearly 5,000 New Jersey Transit bus trips. New Jersey Transit serves about 70 percent of the total passenger volume at the PABT, with private carriers -- including our friends at Academy, Coach USA, Greyhound and others -- making up the balance.

We know that the Port Authority Bus Terminal is a critical part of the trans-Hudson transportation network. Over the years, the number of people utilizing bus transportation to access New York has grown to the point that buses account for the largest segment of trans-Hudson travel market.

A decade ago, NJ Transit ran 700 buses into the Terminal during the morning peak three hours, and out in the evening peak. Today, that number has grown to some 1,100 buses each peak. During the busiest hour of the rush, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. -- the *peak of the peak* -- that translates to an NJ Transit bus departure every 8 seconds.

We expect that growth to continue. By 2040, NJ Transit's daily bus passenger trips to the PABT could reach 200,000 or more. So we fully support the efforts of our partners at the Port Authority as they plan

for a modern, state-of-the-art Bus Terminal; one that can accommodate the needs of our customers, your constituents.

We whole-heartedly support constructing a new terminal on Manhattan's West Side. That is where our 80,000 New York bus market customers want to go each work day, as directly and smoothly as possible. And we at NJ Transit very much appreciate that fact.

The simple reality is, New Jersey Transit bus customers have a one-seat ride into Manhattan now. As we have seen from our rail customers, a one-seat ride is what transit customers want; and it is what transit customers deserve.

But as planning for a new bus terminal continues, we take very seriously the need to make the existing terminal work as efficiently as possible for our customers, within the serious constraints presented by the current terminal's outmoded design and capacity limitations. And working closely with our partners at the Port Authority, we have had significant success in this effort.

Now, I would like to have Michael Kilcoyne, NJ Transit's Vice President and General Manager of Bus Operations, tell you about the steps we have been taking to mitigate the challenges of the current PABT until a new terminal can be built.

Mike.

MICHAEL KILCOYNE: Good afternoon.

From an operational perspective, a smooth commute requires many things to work right, including traffic in and out of the Lincoln Tunnel, traffic on the surrounding city streets, and the flow of buses on the ramps and within the terminal.

The routing and management strategy used for many years to get buses to the terminal on weekday evenings actually ended up adding to congestion, rather than mitigating it. For example, during times of heavy evening traffic, instead of buses coming out of the Lincoln Tunnel and heading directly for the terminal ramps, buses would be diverted away from the terminal, contributing to traffic congestion in Manhattan, as buses had to snake their way around the city streets to get back to the terminal.

This was the bus equivalent of going around the block; but the line of buses would often be backed up all the way up 10th Avenue, spanning six blocks or more.

Of course, this diversion added extra time for the buses trying to get to the terminal, so New Jersey Transit began sending buses in earlier. But this, too, had the unintended effect of contributing to the problem, with early-arriving buses increasing congestion on the city streets and inside the terminal, as they circled around waiting for an open gate.

As a result, customers were seeing delays ranging anywhere from 20 to 30 minutes or more during a typical evening commute. Lines commonly wound from the gates, around corners, and down escalators, increasing wait times and leading to increasing frustration among our customers.

We saw and heard their frustration firsthand, and we heard it through feedback received via social media and our customer service points of contact.

So beginning in the summer of 2014, the New Jersey Transit bus management team took a number of steps.

New Jersey Transit, the Port Authority, the New York City Department of Transportation, and our Amalgamated Transit Union formed an operations working group to work together to improve movement and flow at the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

New Jersey Transit added gate agents to facilitate communication between the Port Authority's Bus Terminal starters -- who are New Jersey Transit starters -- who manage bus movements within the terminal and the customers waiting in line.

Extra buses were introduced and placed in nearby staging lots, so that they could be utilized by starters when service gaps arise on key routes and in key areas.

In addition, together with the Port Authority, we implemented a number of measures that work in conjunction with one another to improve movement and flow at the terminal -- a collaborative effort in which each of these pieces supports the others, and none can work alone.

The Port Authority committed to minimizing those bus diversions, I spoke about, at the New York side of the Lincoln Tunnel, reducing buses getting shunted into the traffic on 10th Avenue.

The Port Authority also stepped up traffic enforcement within the terminal, so that buses do not block traffic flow by stopping and waiting for open gates.

Meanwhile, New Jersey Transit managers made a rather counterintuitive decision. Instead of sending buses in early, due to the congestion, we reduced the number of buses going in at one time. That reduced the number of buses in Manhattan, allowing a better flow of buses entirely in to the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

To maintain the traffic flow within the terminal, we began to eject buses that arrived at the terminal too early, so that they don't clog up traffic within the building. Instead, we sent these early arriving buses to a nearby staging lot, at the bottom of the ramps, so that they can wait out of the flow of traffic until their proper time to approach the gate.

Then, New Jersey Transit worked with the Port Authority and private carriers to make more efficient use of the terminal's bus gates. This was needed to tackle the congestion that occurred due to multiple carriers with different schedules, and arrival, and departure times; all sharing common gates and platform areas.

Carriers were consolidated into specific areas of the terminal, making it easier for customers to find their specific carrier; and minimizing traffic conflicts; and improving flow to alleviate customer crowding on platforms. These gate changes offer a more streamlined experience, since most routes and personnel within a given area are from the same carrier.

At the same time, we've also improved technology and communications to boost our customers' experience at the Port Authority. We completed a radio system build-out inside the Port Authority Bus Terminal that has allowed us to offer Wi-Fi in the building, so that our customers can better access online travel information and use our mobile ticketing.

The expansion of MyTix, our mobile ticketing app, to New York interstate routes has helped to reduce lines at ticket vending machines and at ticket windows. Our customers have seen shorter lines, shorter wait times, and less crowding. On-time performance has increased from 85 percent, overall, to 93 percent this month.

And tellingly, our customer complaints regarding the Port Authority Bus Terminal have dropped by 50 percent.

Of course, every day is different at the Port Authority Bus Terminal, and things still do happen; delays are sometimes a part of the commute. But now when delays and backups do occur, our cooperative efforts with the Port Authority and our carrier friends enable us to recover much more quickly.

Now I will turn our presentation back over to Paul Wyckoff.

Thank you.

MR. WYCKOFF: Senators, Mr. Chairman, we're not at all finished looking for ways to improve, by any means. We are constantly looking for ways to maximize the efficient use of the existing terminal until a new terminal is built. And we value very much the ideas and suggestions of our customers and of you, the legislators; and of stakeholders, like the advocates and so on out there. The more in the mix, the better selection of ideas and suggestions we get.

So we're committed to making the Bus Terminal -- both the existing facility and its much-needed replacement -- work for our customers as best as possible. And we continue to be eager to work with the PA, and with you, and other stakeholders on this task.

So again, I want to thank you for providing us the opportunity to testify, and we will be happy to take any questions you have.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much, Mr. Wyckoff and gentlemen.

Could you tell us a bit about your working relationship with the Port Authority? How closely have you been working them in the planning

of a new Bus Terminal? I mean, obviously you have been working closely with them in trying to deal with the short-term issues. How much input have you had in decisions regarding the location of a new Bus Terminal, and the design, and the structural requirements, and so on? Could you comment on your interaction you've had with that agency?

MR. WYCKOFF: Yes. As you might imagine, Mr. Chair, we have a daily operational working relationship with the Port; and we have a staff-to-staff relationship and leadership-to-leadership relationship, that is quite frequent, on non-daily operational issues.

But in terms of the thinking and planning for a new Bus Terminal, we have been in -- I won't say *constant*, but *frequent* communication with our counterparts, both planners-to-planners, operational folks-to-operational folks. We were part of the-- They invited us over on several occasions when they were having the design competition.

SENATOR GORDON: I was actually about to ask whether you were involved in that earlier; I guess the 2015 -- March 2015--

MR. WYCKOFF: Right.

SENATOR GORDON: --initiative to-- It's an International Design Competition; there were about a half-dozen designs submitted.

MR. WYCKOFF: And as both of you Senators remember, Dennis Martin was Interim Executive Director at the time. And Dennis, of course, was the predecessor of Michael as VP and GM of Bus; so it was sort of an idea, fortuitous time for him to be going over as Executive Director to be part of that competition.

And certainly, you know, New Jersey Transit's perspective on where the Terminal should be located, the kind of design that would work --

the factors that we thought should be looked at to make the process as seamless and as smooth for our customers as possible during construction, for instance, were all communicated to the Port Authority and, I think, received by the Port Authority.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay.

MR. WYCKOFF: Received *well*, I should say.

SENATOR GORDON: You heard me mention that the Port Authority has projected a 50 percent increase in ridership between now and 2040. Do you show similar projections in the analysis that you've done? Have you, in fact, done an independent analysis of the ridership? I would assume so.

MR. WYCKOFF: Our numbers are a little bit smaller, but not, I would say, drastically smaller; well within the range of variations that planners and statisticians would -- I think would come up with. I think the important point is, I don't know of any organization -- whether it's a transit agency, a regional plan association, or anyone else -- who does not foresee significant growth coming. And Mr. Roberts can go into this in far more detail than I can, but over the last, oh, three decades, anyway, most of the growth in commutation into New York -- or by far the biggest tranche of growth of commutation into New York -- has been from west of Hudson, which means New Jersey, and some from Rockland and Orange; many of whom come down on buses; some of them come down on our rail lines, as you know -- they come though Bergen County.

Westchester and Long Island started flattening out a few decades ago; they still have growth, but it's not as much. So New Jersey

and west of Hudson has really been the epicenter of growth, and we all see that continuing solidly.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes, our concern -- and I've voiced this on a number of occasions, as have Senator Weinberg and other colleagues -- we have seen the growth west of Hudson. We were also keenly aware that if that commute across the Hudson just becomes so onerous, and if people are spending so much of their day commuting and having such an impact on the quality of their lives, that those 300,000 jobs I referred to may be filled by people who just decide, "I just can't deal with this New Jersey commute anymore." And that's why all of us on this Committee -- and I feel confident saying this -- we want to support New Jersey Transit in any way to try and improve the quality of service and give you the resources you need. Because otherwise, those people will go elsewhere.

I just received a very thoughtful letter from a constituent from Paramus. A 29-year-old attorney, who was offering a number of suggestions, complained about how the nearest bus stop to his home was a three-quarter-mile walk, and that it was an hour and 20 minutes if he took the bus from that location. Instead, he drives to Hackensack and takes another route.

But the key point he made in his letter was that his friends -- people in their late 20s, early 30s, who are beginning to start families -- are really concerned about what the commute -- if they're going to move from the city where they are now, to the suburbs, the quality of the commute is a huge factor for them. And we don't want that factor to drive people to other parts of the metropolitan area.

So much for my little speech. (laughter)

A question about the plans for the new terminal. The option that appears to be getting the most support is to locate a facility one block to the west of the existing terminal. And as I understand it, that might make access to subways a little bit more difficult. Do you have any concerns about that?

MR. WYCKOFF: I think it's fair to say that in line, in fact, with what you just said about commutation and customer experience, we want the best location that will most efficiently serve the quality of life of our customers. And Manhattan presents incredible challenges, as you know, in terms of building, and logistics, and siting.

So within the constraints available, we'd like to have it as close to the subways as possible. But we will work with the Port Authority to make whatever works best for all the parties come to fruition; and again -- to your point, and Senator Weinberg's point -- in as expeditious a timeframe as possible. As you all know, mega projects take a long, long time. There's a reason they take a long, long time: they're very difficult, because they run onto these physical challenges, engineering challenges.

But the planners are certainly looking to work together to overcome those challenges as best they can.

SENATOR GORDON: Speaking of the length of time, we are greatly concerned that the funds allocated in the current draft of the capital plan -- the \$3.5 billion -- are not sufficient to build a new Bus Terminal within that 10-year timeframe.

First of all, have you folks made any estimates of what you think a new terminal will cost? I mean, we've asked the people -- like Steve

Plate at the Port Authority -- that question as well. Have you done any kind of independent analysis of the--

MR. WYCKOFF: No, we have not.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay.

MR. WYCKOFF: We have not.

SENATOR GORDON: You may not be able to answer this question. We're wondering whether the issue is just lack of resources to do all the things that the Port Authority needs to do now, or perhaps pressure from leaders who have a different set of priorities. Are you able to offer any opinions on that?

And I'll be happy to take your résumé. (laughter)

MR. WYCKOFF: No, I can't offer any opinions on that.

The only thing that I will say, Senators -- which you well know, both from this series of hearings and others, and your long-time interest in these issues -- is whatever transportation or transit projects we may be talking about at a given moment, the demand for transit services and transportation in our region, and particularly our state -- the most densely populated in the nation -- always seems to exceed our financial resources. So all of us have to work with -- together, which we have been, to dedicate those resources to serve the most people, the most efficiently as best we can.

But that's not a statement on the Port Authority; it's just a statement, if you will -- my personal philosophy from many, many years of looking at this. You know, it's a transportation system; and the more options we can offer people to get across the Hudson -- buses, one, certainly-- I mean, you heard the statistics earlier that buses actually carry more people across the Hudson than any other mode, in total. It

sometimes gets forgotten, if you will, in sort of the press scrum about other modes. But it's a very important mode, especially to those people who take it every day from Bergen, from Passaic, from Hudson, from the Route 9 corridor down in the central part of the state.

So there are funding challenges, and that's a given. But working together, I am confident we can all overcome them for our customers and our constituents.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

Let me turn to Senator Weinberg. I'm sure you have some questions, Senator.

SENATOR WEINBERG: I do; thank you.

You talked about how long it takes to build complex projects. Were any of you in -- are any of you involved with the Uptown Bus Terminal?

MR. WYCKOFF: I'm going to turn that over to Mike Kilcoyne and Rich. The George Washington Bus Terminal?

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes.

MR. WYCKOFF: Yes. Involved in the sense of design, or--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Involved in any way -- with the planning, the execution, the building, the whatever.

MR. KILCOYNE: Our limited involvement has been just making sure that we are consulted on things like the number of sawtooth platforms, accessibility, ADA accessibility. We've been through the terminal on a number of occasions and have provided comments to improve the terminal flow, which the Port Authority incorporated into our requests.

It's a pretty thoughtful design; but again, it's in limited space. And we just await for them to finish their design so that they can open. I think they're looking to open it some time--

SENATOR WEINBERG: In April, is--

MR. KILCOYNE: --around the summer, I think.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --the latest projected.

MR. WYCKOFF: April, ma'am? Yes.

MR. KILCOYNE: April; that's the latest-- Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: That's what we've been told.
(laughter) It doesn't sound like you've been informed of that.

MR. KILCOYNE: Well, I was; but I didn't want to overcommit because a lot of things can get in the way of that April opening, I'm aware.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Well, it's a great-looking terminal, and--

MR. KILCOYNE: Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --in some ways, it almost looks like an airport for buses, which is great. But it's two years overdue.

MR. KILCOYNE: Yes, ma'am.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So one of the explanations given when we had a tour very recently was, "Well, it's very difficult to build a facility while the current one is still in operation there." But I am assuming that everybody knew that before they started building.

MR. KILCOYNE: Yes, ma'am, that was part of the design going through -- was the ability to operate through there during construction.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay.

Let me just explore with you -- if I can, for another couple of minutes -- the idea of the one-block west. What will that mean for passengers coming out of the Bus Terminal, in terms of subway availability?

MR. WYCKOFF: Well, as the Chair, I think, noted, it will give them -- it would-- Depending on how that distance to the subways is structured, in terms of a passageway or a -- not an *alley*, but I think a *corridor*, if you will; whether it's open or enclosed, right -- and hopefully enclosed for weather protection and so on -- it will give them a longer walk, physically.

SENATOR WEINBERG: By longer, do you have any idea of what that means?

MR. ROBERTS: Yes, Senator.

It will be a few more minutes. It depends on where you get off in the Bus Terminal today, and it depends on how the new facility is laid out. So it probably will be a few more minutes; however, you know, if it's designed correctly -- which means a nice wide corridor, fairly straightforward, well signed -- the customers may actually have a more pleasant experience than some of what they've encountered in the past.

So yes, there will be a slightly longer walk, if that happened. But that would be the only thing you would be able to do if you move another block or half-a-block away from the subway lines that are below ground.

SENATOR GORDON: Has there been any-- Just to break-- Forgive me, to break in -- has there been any discussion by the MTA to establish another subway stop a little closer to the--

MR. ROBERTS: Yes, there has been. The trouble is, it would only be on one subway line. So the people, when they get to the Bus Terminal, divide up and go into a number of different subway lines. And just being closer to only one of those subway lines is interesting, and probably should be looked at. But it's not a panacea for more access for everybody to get wholly in the lines. Because they like to get over and to get on the various lines around 42nd Street. They disperse.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

I'm sorry, Senator.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay.

The capital plan has \$370 million for *something*, in terms of the Bus Terminal. Are you aware of that money in the Port Authority capital plan?

MR. WYCKOFF: Senator, we're generally aware of it, because -- I saw somewhere, relatively-- Well, it looked like a fairly complete list of the projects that comprise that \$330 million. I think everything from heating and ventilating units, to communications, and some concrete work and that sort of thing; a wide variety of facility maintenance, state-of-good-repair improvements. But I'm certainly not an expert on the \$330 million and what they plan on using it for.

SENATOR WEINBERG: You will be asked for your input on that, I would assume?

MR. WYCKOFF: I think, generally, in both the day-to-day and the longer term relations we have with the Port Authority, we bring issues to their attention regarding the facility because, as you know -- and I think

you and the Chair have observed, along with Assemblyman Johnson -- we're sort of in the position of tenants and they are our landlord.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, I was--

MR. WYCKOFF: But we have a good relationship overall--

SENATOR WEINBERG: But, just excuse me a minute. Just for the general public -- I don't know if people know this, but New Jersey Transit leases space from the Port Authority, and you pay for the use of that space. Do you--

MR. WYCKOFF: We pay very handsomely. (laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes; do you know what that figure is?

MR. WYCKOFF: I don't have that off the top of my head. You know, we pay a gate fee for every bus departure.

MR. KILCOYNE: We pay a license fee for the gates; and we pay departure fees for each departure, just like all other carriers that operate in that building.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes--

MR. WYCKOFF: And parking fees, too, for storage.

MR. KILCOYNE: And parking.

SENATOR WEINBERG: I seem to remember the figure of \$11 million. I don't know if I just dreamed that up, or I actually -- that was--

MR. KILCOYNE: I don't know.

MR. WYCKOFF: And of course, we also pay tolls. The buses pay--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Right.

MR. WYCKOFF: --about \$12 million a year in tolls, now, I think.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Which goes to the Port Authority.

MR. WYCKOFF: Which goes to the Port Authority.

But to answer your question. I think, Senator, the operations folks, the planners, I think, will bring to the attention of the PA facilities folks and their planners the needs at the Bus Terminal; some more near-term, some longer-term. And the PA takes that into account when they design their capital plan program, is our understanding.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay; I have one last question, and that concerns what was a little confusing at our last hearing about the extension from Wall Street to Newark Airport, and the stop in Newark -- the stop that wasn't there, that is there now. (laughter)

Have you been involved with that; or do you have any projection of ridership?

MR. WYCKOFF: No, we have not, we have not. I saw the -- I listened to the hearing, I heard that colloquy, and I saw the statements that were made afterwards. And there seemed to be a little misunderstanding on the part of some folks testifying as to what the Committee was referring to. But no, we have not been involved in, that I know of, the planning or the projections for that.

MR. ROBERTS: Not in the projections. We were involved in some of the earlier planning, because this project goes back a long way.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Would it have been just the project from the airport to Wall Street, or with this stop?

MR. ROBERTS: No, there's been talk about PATH going out to Newark Airport for -- going back to the 1970s. Some of us go that far back. (laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay. So you don't have a--

MR. WYCKOFF: No.

SENATOR WEINBERG: You couldn't make any projections--

MR. WYCKOFF: We don't have any insight into--

SENATOR WEINBERG: --about ridership?

MR. WYCKOFF: No, ma'am.

SENATOR WEINBERG: And what about-- If you listened to the hearing, the discussion about, perhaps, putting in a park and ride so that other commuters would have access to this stop, did you--

MR. WYCKOFF: We heard that; we have not, to my knowledge, had any input on that or reviewed that, as of now.

MR. ROBERTS: We did, earlier on, have some conversations with the Port Authority. There is, along the PATH system in Harrison, some reduction in existing parking, where people today go to -- drive, and they get on the PATH, because of the redevelopment around the Harrison Station. There's also, longer-term, not likely to be more parking around Penn Station Newark. And so there was some discussion with the Port Authority that if you went down there by the airport, maybe you wanted to think about some parking down there in order to deal with the inherent growth that there might be, or ambient growth, for people who want to drive to PATH and get on it; and because of what I said about the loss of parking in-house.

So our involvement is simply what I'm indicating -- is a conversation. We suggested some things to them in the context of trying to make sure that the system works correctly. What we don't want -- wouldn't want to see is hundreds more people show up around Newark Penn Station and further congest the streets around Newark Penn, which our buses need to use to get in and out of the bus facility there under Newark Penn Station.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay; thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Speaking of the Newark Airport, has there been any discussion about a bus staging area at Newark Airport, that you're aware of?

MR. KILCOYNE: Not that we know of, no.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay.

Are you aware of anything in the Port Authority financial planning documents, or budget, that would indicate that there's a toll increase coming over the next 10 years--

MR. WYCKOFF: I'm not aware of anything; no, sir.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay.

Could you just comment on whatever involvement you have now in the planning for the Gateway project with the Port Authority? Are you at the table?

MR. WYCKOFF: That I'll turn over to Rich, who's--

MR. ROBERTS: Yes, New Jersey Transit, right at this moment, is leading the federally required draft environmental impact statement for the Federal Railroad Administration. We are the agency that is responsible for managing that effort, and it's progressing according to a

schedule that's -- what is referred to as the *Hudson Tunnel Project*, which is basically two new tunnels under the Hudson River, plus rebuilding the two existing rail tunnels which were damaged in Hurricane Sandy -- Superstorm Sandy.

We also have been previously involved in the environmental work for the replacement of Portal Bridge; we call it *Portal North Bridge*. That environmental work was done; we did the design work, and we're working with everyone to seek Federal money so that that project can progress.

So we are involved; we work with the Port; we work Amtrak, who owns the Northeast Corridor.

MR. WYCKOFF: And as you know -- if I could just expand on that a little bit.

SENATOR GORDON: Sure.

MR. WYCKOFF: The Gateway Development Corporation -- which I think, now, is called the *Gateway Program Development Corporation* -- held their first organizational meeting some weeks ago at Transit headquarters, actually, as a convenience. And as you know, the New Jersey representative is Richard Bagger; New York has former Commissioner Cohen; there's a representative from U.S. DOT; and a representative from Amtrak. And Transit is also on what is now -- and I presume will continue to be, although things are still-- The organization is still shaking out from the broader-- As you know, the Gateway Program consists of the immediate tunnels project; and then the longer-term program to expand capacity at Penn Station and so on. Transit has a seat on the Executive Committee, which has all those other folks who I named, as we move forward.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay.

Any other questions? Senator Weinberg, or--?

SENATOR WEINBERG: No.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay. I want to thank you gentlemen, very much, for your presentation today. It's been very helpful to get another perspective from a transit organization; and certainly one that has so much interaction with the Port Authority.

MR. WYCKOFF: Thank you again, Chairman and Vice Chair,

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

MR. KILCOYNE: Thank you.

MR. MAGYAR: Yes, could we just--

SENATOR GORDON: Senator Weinberg, you had another question?

SENATOR WEINBERG: No, sorry.

MR. MAGYAR: We were going to ask for--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Hopefully, we can get the complete breakdown from you on what you pay to the Port Authority for the bus operations.

MR. WYCKOFF: Absolutely. Through the Chair, we'll be happy to provide that.

MR. MAGYAR: For the bus operations.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you.

MR. MAGYAR: We'll provide that as a follow-up question.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay, great.

MR. ROBERTS: Thank you.

MR. WYCKOFF: Thank you very much.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

Our next panelist is going to be Peter Palmer, Chair of North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority.

Mr. Palmer, are you here?

MR. MAGYAR: Yes.

SENATOR GORDON: Very good.

Welcome, Mr. Palmer.

P E T E R S. P A L M E R: Thank you, Senator

SENATOR GORDON: As I said earlier, Mr. Palmer serves, also, as the Chair of the Raritan Valley Coalition; and is a Freeholder from Somerset County.

Welcome.

MR. PALMER: Thank you very much. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Port Authority's 10-year capital plan.

You already mentioned what I do, so I don't have to repeat that.

The capital program is particularly relevant to the NJTPA, where local elected officials, such as myself, work with transportation agencies -- including the Port Authority -- to prioritize and approve Federal transportation funding for projects and programs throughout our region.

The Port Authority's capital plan is critical to this planning work that we do and to the future of the NJTPA region. In particular, transportation for both people and goods, moving them across the Hudson, is our region's highest priority. There is a very real and urgent need for tangible progress towards new trans-Hudson rail tunnels and a new Port

Authority Bus Terminal. Indeed, there are few projects of greater importance to our region's future.

The reason for this is simple. New York City is the financial capital of the world, and a global cultural capital as well. It is the central economic engine for northern and central New Jersey, and that means access to the City is utterly vital to our prosperity.

I often quote former NJDOT Commissioner Jack Lettiere, "Transportation is the game board on which the entire economy is played." He's absolutely right. Each day, 290,000 New Jerseyans commute to high-paying jobs in New York, while choosing to live in our region. This includes 218,000 daily rail and bus commuters. Our proximity to New York enhances our home values and provides enormous opportunity for our residents. Equally important, we New Jerseyans supply a significant portion of New York's workforce, plus access for New York goods arriving by both cross-country trucks and ships at our ports.

Thus the potentially fantastic economic future for all of us, on both sides of the river, is limited only by the constraints of getting across the Hudson. We all know that the Hudson River Tunnel Project is needed to allow the repair and upgrading of the existing century-old rail tunnels, and safeguard existing levels of rail travel. It is also a necessary prerequisite for expanding trans-Hudson rail capacity as part of a more extensive Gateway project.

Increased capacity across the Hudson is critical if there is to be any significant level of new rail service within New Jersey. Many rail expansion projects are waiting in the wings, including the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail; triple tracking the Lehigh Valley Line; building the Hunter

Flyover, the Secaucus Loop, and the Lackawanna Cutoff; extending the New York Susquehanna and Western, the West Trenton Line, and others.

For these to move forward, new tunnels and, ultimately, greater station capacity in New York City are critical. While Penn Station is officially an Amtrak facility and, therefore, mostly a Federal responsibility, we must all work together to achieve a comprehensive, long-term result. At the same time, the Port Authority Bus Terminal is facing an increase in passenger demand -- up to 50 percent increase by 2040 -- which simply cannot be accommodated by the existing terminal, which I guess is an understatement.

All existing trans-Hudson facilities have been serving us for generations. Whatever we do now will be expected to last for future generations. We have to do it right.

The Port Authority is to be commended for making multi-billion dollar commitments in its capital plan to the tunnels, the Bus Terminal, and other trans-Hudson projects. In doing so, the Port Authority is fulfilling its long-standing mission of guarding and promoting the shared interests of New Jersey and New York, whether it's trans-Hudson travel, Port operations, or the region's bridges, tunnels, and airports.

A good example of this commitment is the raising of the Bayonne Bridge. The region faced a potential crisis with new, larger cargo vessels potentially unable to reach our port due to limited clearance under the bridge. At stake was the economic competitiveness of our port, perhaps even its standing as the largest on the East Coast.

The Port Authority responded with an innovative, \$1.6 billion project to raise the bridge, and that work is now almost complete.

The Port Authority, through its capital plan, is now stepping up in similar fashion to see the trans-Hudson bus and rail needs can be met, while attending to auto and truck travel over its bridges and tunnels. No doubt there are plans and details to be worked out, and additional funding from other sources will be required -- another understatement. But there is little doubt that the commitments made in the capital plan represent a substantial and vital milestone in achieving these critically important projects.

As the Chair of the NJTPA and the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition, and as a Somerset County Freeholder, I look forward to working with the Port Authority and the Legislature on this and the other New Jersey transportation priorities.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to testify. I'll be happy to try to answer any questions you might have.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much, Mr. Palmer.

One question I have is, could you tell us about the extent to which your organization is working with the Port Authority -- Tri-State (*sic*); that is, the Transportation Planning Authority, rather?

MR. PALMER: Yes. First of all, the Board of the NJTPA consists of 20 members; one each from the 13 counties in the North Jersey region; one each from Newark -- the City of Newark, the City of Jersey City; and the other members of the Board are the Governor's Office, DOT, NJ Transit, the Port Authority, and the -- there is supposed to be a citizen rep; there isn't one right now. So that's how we're made up.

We not only meet as a Board, we have-- We meet as a Board every other month; we also have committee meetings in the alternate

months, where we vet all of the projects that come before us. So the Port Authority is -- has input continuously, as do DOT, and Transit, and so forth.

SENATOR GORDON: Have there been any situations in which you have recommended changes to Port Authority priorities, and they have actually responded?

MR. PALMER: I can't think of -- I can't think of any at this point; there probably have been some.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay.

One question I have is about trains going through the Raritan Valley Line. What would be the impact of a one-seat ride for the towns along the Raritan Valley Line?

MR. PALMER: Well, rather than speculate on that, I would just point out what happened on the Morris and Essex Line--

SENATOR GORDON: Right.

MR. PALMER: --when one-seat ride was started -- initiated. There was a tremendous increase in housing values in Maplewood, South Orange, Morristown, and Summit. And also a bit of, I guess maybe you would call it *evidence* -- is that what has happened-- What we see happening along the Raritan Valley Line is that there is a lot of transit-oriented development; as a matter of fact, if all the transit-oriented development takes places in our many towns along the line -- Cranford, Westfield, Union, Somerville, Bound Brook, Dunellen, you name it -- it would be actually a tremendous increase in population, and I assume also in property values.

But the fact is that it's -- that we really can't get rush hour service until the capacity is increased under the Hudson. I think you are probably all aware that right now every time slot during the rush hour -- and particularly in the morning, but also in the evening -- is taken up right now. There are no available time slots. One of the things that we, on the Raritan Valley Coalition, do is we meet with NJ Transit on a regular basis and implore them to give us some slots. Right now, we have mid-day direct service and evening direct service. We don't have any rush hour, either morning or afternoon. And we keep pushing, "Couldn't we do this, couldn't we do that?" We regularly are told why we can't do this, or that, or whatever.

But even though the service that we have -- direct service that we do have now is off-hours, it is received -- it's been very positively received by the people who are able to use it in off-hours.

But again, the evidence is there -- the direct service to Manhattan is a tremendous boost for any municipality or any area that has it.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay, thank you.

Senator Weinberg, any questions?

SENATOR WEINBERG: No, I'm good. Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much, Mr. Palmer, for investing some time in this today, and for sharing your insights.

MR. PALMER: Okay.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

MR. PALMER: You're very welcome.

SENATOR GORDON: We're going to do a panel, next, that will consist of Carol Katz, who represents a number of the private bus operators; and Councilwoman Tiffanie Fisher, if she's here.

I see her there; yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Mr. Chairman--

SENATOR GORDON: Senator Weinberg.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, if I may.

Welcome, both of you.

C A R O L K A T Z: Thank you.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Nice to see you, Carol, outside of Trenton.

MS. KATZ: It's nice to be outside of Trenton. (laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: Sorry if I took your first line away.

But just a special word to Councilmember Fisher--

C O U N C I L W O M A N T I F F A N I E F I S H E R: Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --who I first met, I guess, though Facebook--

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --messaging each other.

I just would like to compliment you for standing up on behalf of your residents, and having the discipline to see this all through by coming to Port Authority meetings in New York and, obviously, coming here. Since you are representing people who are very big users of these facilities, we hope that we could see more local officials like you who are willing to do more than just get a cursory look at what's going so.

So excuse me if I took that moment to give you a commercial, but it's well deserved. (laughter)

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: That's okay; thank you. I appreciate that.

SENATOR GORDON: Whoever would like to start.

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Thank you very much, for those kind words, as you said.

Interestingly, I would say people in Hoboken are not only, just, big users--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Is your microphone on?

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Sorry; I don't know. Is it -- is the microphone on?

SENATOR GORDON: I think maybe it's the other one.

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Sorry; does this one work better?

SENATOR GORDON: Patrick, can you--

MR. BRENNAN (Committee Aide): That's the recording for the transcript; this one--

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Oh, this one?

MR. BRENNAN: This one (indiscernible).

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Okay. So this is the closer one. All right; thank you.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay, that's better.

SENATOR GORDON: That's better.

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Not only are Hoboken residents users of all of the Port Authority assets, and New Jersey Transit;

but Hoboken, as a community, kind of sits in the crosshairs of all of this. When something goes sideways, alternative paths for commuting into the City come through Hoboken in one way or the other. They either go into the train terminal; or they will, somehow, impact the Lincoln Tunnel; and we're just, kind of, sitting in the middle of it.

So I think some of my comments, interestingly, will reflect both on us as users, as well as just being in a community that's often affected when things go sideways with traffic.

So thank you for-- I'm going to read this; some of it you've heard at the recent Port Authority Board meetings, but--

So thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important session. For those unaware, my name is Tiffanie Fisher; and I am here as a recently-elected Council member and a 22-year resident of Hoboken in Hudson County.

I would say that I am here testifying not only on behalf of my neighbors in Hoboken, but for all residents in New Jersey -- especially across the Hudson, and our neighboring Bergen and Essex Counties, in particular, that equally rely on Port Authority assets for travel and commuting options.

As I mentioned in my testimony at the most recent Port Authority Board meeting, when I ran for election in the fall of 2015, I knocked on many doors and I asked people if there was an issue that would get them to come out to vote. And the one issue that came up most frequently had to do with transportation. My ward, in particular, is in the northern end of Hoboken; so a little further away from the PATH train and more heavily reliant on New Jersey Transit buses. So I mostly heard things like, "I have to wait in line forever, and watch several buses go by before I

am able to get onto a bus,” and “Why aren’t there more ferries available to cross the river to help alleviate the road and public transportation traffic?” and “Now the ferry lines are so long, that I actually have to wait for the next ferry,” which is something that’s recent.

However, I also heard from the people travelling south in Hoboken, to the PATH -- that the PATH trains are too crowded and unsafe.

Honestly, if I had to rank the issues people raised with me, expanded transportation sources was second only to the long-awaited repaving of Hoboken’s Main Street. And even that is still a transportation-related issue. Thankfully, at least, that issue can be solved at a local level.

Hoboken -- like many other communities that border or are in proximity to Manhattan -- has seen significant population growth with no like growth in capacity of our arterial transportation modes. Hoboken -- for people unaware, Hoboken’s population has actually grown 30 percent since 2000. So, in the last 15 years, we’ve gone from about 40,000 people to 52,000; and that was, actually, in 2013; we don’t have current population numbers, but it’s growing rapidly.

You may or may not be aware, but Hoboken, basically competes with Jersey City for allocation of PATH trains. Hoboken’s train terminal not only serves the local Hoboken population, but also is a critical juncture for commuters who use New Jersey Transit overland trains and the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail to get into New York City.

Last year, Hoboken lost one PATH train per hour, as the Jersey City line saw greater growth than the growth in the riders coming though

Hoboken. And this tug-of-war will continue until we can find a way to expand capacity of the lines.

As I'm sure you have heard from representatives from other towns reliant on New Jersey Transit buses, in Hoboken bus lines are long in both directions, with commuters often waiting 30 to 45 minutes in line for availability. We are told we cannot increase the number of buses due primarily to the lack of capacity at the Port Authority. And my guess is, not unlike what is occurring with Jersey City and the PATH, that at some point we will also be competing for a current allocation at the Bus Terminal, as communities around us continue to grow as well.

As I mentioned at the Port Authority Board meeting, much of the population growth in our area is driven by the increasing lack of affordable housing in Manhattan. As Manhattan grows, so do we; and by *we* I mean the towns in the next concentric circles around Manhattan. This captures all of Hudson County, and most of Bergen and Essex as well. And this trend will only continue to escalate as we see urbanization continue. People are being priced out and are flocking to the next-best alternative. Even Hoboken, like many other towns in surrounding areas, has seen a significant rise in housing costs; which has further driven development and population growth, which further puts pressure on solving transportation needs.

In advance of this session, I sent out, via e-mail and social media, a request to solicit input from my neighbors on the Port Authority's 10-year capital plan; as well as just general -- I put it in quotes, because these are the words I used -- "thoughts, concerns, and experiences relating

to the PATH, the buses, the tunnels, the airports, or just getting to the airports.”

As you can imagine, I got e-mails this long (indicates) on all of those topics and more -- on every road and traffic situation in Hoboken, which is all good.

So in response, I heard from about 40 neighbors, in short order. The feedback I received echoed what I heard while campaigning. And to my own surprise, many of those who responded actually read through the entire capital plan. The positive takeaway is that it seems like many of the issues that concern my Hoboken neighbors, and I know concern many of you, are already included in the plan -- at least topically within the Port Authority capital plan. Projects that, once completed, will result in improving and expanding service in and out of New York -- projects like the Gateway project, expanded capacity on the PATH systems, a new Port Authority Bus Terminal, and extending the PATH to Newark.

Of note, I'd like to add that although the focus of this phase of the Gateway project is the tunnels and tracks, I believe incorporating a stop or a station in Hoboken would actually provide a lot of trans-Hudson commuting relief to, basically, people in the area, due to -- of people in Hudson and Bergen county via a link to the Light Rail, which would be a great alternative. It's not currently in the plan, but I think they're going to have a shaft; and maybe there's -- at some point, they can actually make it a station.

So the negatives -- the main, obvious ones mostly relate to the delayed timing and underfunding for the Bus Terminal. If the terminal is really expected to--

(loud train goes by)

Sorry.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Wait a minute.

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: It's like it was on command.

SENATOR GORDON: It's a CSX.

MR. MAGYAR: This is good.

SENATOR WEINBERG: It's only a little (indiscernible) oil going by; don't worry. (laughter)

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: I'm just talking about the Gateway; it's like, perfect, right?

The negatives -- the main obvious one mostly relates to the delayed timing and underfunding for the Bus Terminal. If the terminal is really expected to cost \$10 billion, then how can they include it in this plan if, according to their words on page 7 of the plan, "if in the Board's judgement, there is not sufficient capital capacity to complete a project, construction will not begin, or projects can be deferred, eliminated, or modified." So it almost seems like it's just a placeholder and not really a concerted effort to build the Port Authority Terminal.

The other negative that many of my neighbors raised, that may or may not be obvious to you, is the coordination of all of these projects on our side of the Hudson, and the impact of each, if not all, on existing commuting and travel passages. The plan calls for proper detour and rerouting plans; but I cannot stress enough the significance of this. This is where Hoboken's surrounding towns -- not unlike Fort Lee, as it relates to the GW Bridge -- becomes a critical link, and even a partner, and ultimately a potential disaster concerning any of the proposed projects.

Redo the Lincoln Tunnel Helix? Really? Oh, my gosh. Where do we think all that traffic is going to go? More overland trains into the Hoboken Terminals to get on already-filled-to-capacity PATH trains? More people on buses to a bus terminal that has no internal capacity? Unlike the Pulaski Skyway, which has multiple feeder points into the Holland Tunnel, there is only one main path into the Lincoln Tunnel; everything else is local roads. So once that Helix starts being replicated, there needs to be a massive, massive plan to address where all those cars and those people are going to go.

What about rebuilding a new Port Authority Bus Terminal without a designated location and, ultimately, having to redirect all of the traffic roads in New York City to accommodate? What will that do to all traffic, whether exiting New York City or coming into the Port Authority Bus Terminal during this time?

Just so you have some minor color on why I am raising -- other than what you see in Fort Lee each time something happens on the bridge, or if a toll lane happens to be closed. We recently had a Hudson County project on the north side of Hoboken -- so, literally, in my backyard -- on what is known as the *Park Avenue Bridge*. This is one of two entry points into Hoboken on the north end, and that is a critical access way for commuters -- not just for Hoboken residents, but for many coming from Central and South Jersey who travel through Hoboken, to get into the Lincoln Tunnel and points north. The platforms on this bridge needed to be replaced.

Well, the first day of the project, last July -- when I say it felt like our own Bridgegate, I would not be underestimating it. That day,

commuting times doubled for everyone who was in line to go through that area -- yes, doubled -- in each direction. And all that happened was, the two outbound lanes out of Hoboken were reduced to just one. So a tiny little bridge exiting a tiny little town.

Thankfully, Governor Christie stopped all infrastructure projects a couple of days later. I'm sure you do not hear that phrase very often, but we were very thankful. (laughter) So we had time to recalibrate; and once the work started again in October -- a couple of months later -- the work schedule moved to being only done at night and weekends to minimize this disruption to commuters, at a significant financial cost.

So the takeaways are that although we are thankful that the Port Authority is planning to address many of the necessary infrastructure needs, the ones that relate to the Hudson side of New York are critical; and not only need to be fully funded, but also linked; and therefore need a more cohesive staging plan threading through all of them. And that doesn't seem to be currently contemplated.

So thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I'm looking forward to continuing to engage in this process and bring more New Jersey voices into the discussion.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

Senator Weinberg, any questions?

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, can we have a copy of your testimony?

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Yes; would it be okay if I just e-mailed it to you? I have some additional handwritten notes that I'll write--

SENATOR GORDON: Certainly.

And along those lines, I think it would be very helpful for us if you could send us the e-mails that you obtained from you constituents, so we can include them--

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Sure.

SENATOR GORDON: --in the record.

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Sure; absolutely.

SENATOR GORDON: I had a couple of questions.

You know, one idea that we're talking about is -- we've seen it as, relatively, an easier way of expanding trans-Hudson capacity than building some of these other large projects -- and that is to expand the size of the platforms in the PATH station so they can accommodate 10-train car sets, as opposed to the 8. I think there is something like \$400 million budgeted for that.

Others have said that the stations are already at capacity now; and even if you were to increase the through-put by 20 percent, those people just have no place to go within the physical space of the station. As a local, can you comment on whether you think that's a feasible idea?

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Yes. I mean, in Hoboken, during commuting hours, especially in the morning, they're literally packed for -- you have to wait upstairs and then walk down the stairs to get in a crowd of people. I mean, the stations themselves are packed.

My understanding, too -- and this is totally anecdotal, because I've heard this before -- is that some of the stations can't easily be expanded, for some reason, to accommodate the expanded trains. And that in order for them to be operative, you would have to have all of them -- or some way to get from the last couple of cars into the forward cars. And I

know there's not-- And maybe that's just the way to accommodate it, but I understood that that was difficult.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay. Well, we're continuing to look at that.

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Good; that would be great.

SENATOR GORDON: Just a more general question for you, as a Hoboken official.

If the current capital plan is implemented, and a new Port Authority Bus Terminal is not operational until the next 10-year period, and we don't -- we see growing ridership continuing to press against a facility that just can't accommodate any more capacity, what does that mean for Hoboken?

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: You know, I mean, it will be bad for Hoboken. We would have to find some sort of additional relief in one of the other transportation modes. You know, we're right on the water; we have the New York Waterway ferry that -- you know, you look outside and you think it's a big river and there are only a handful of ferries. And you'd think that there would be a way to expand -- as part of an overall plan for New Jersey or the Port Authority -- to expand, to have more waterway services between New Jersey and New York. It seems like it's an untapped resource.

But for Hoboken, it would be really problematic. You know, we have a traffic issue already. If people are going to have to rely on their own cars either to get into the City, or just rely on other sources -- or working outside of New York, and relying on cars to get out there, or just-- We have a growing population that already is filled to capacity on all of our

existing transportation routes. So not being able to expand, I think, will put a big damper-- Not damper, but it will change the environment within Hoboken. It will make it very difficult to live there; not *live*, but live *there*.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay.

At this point, if Senator Weinberg -- if you don't have any questions, let's turn to Carol Katz and hear about the private--

MS. KATZ: This is not like Trenton, where red means go. Can you hear me? (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

MS. KATZ: Good afternoon, Chairman Gordon and Majority Leader Weinberg. And I want to thank you and your able staff for inviting me to come speak to you today.

I'm Carol Katz, from Katz Government Affairs, and I am here today to speak on behalf of the Bus Association of New Jersey. The Bus Association represents our state's private motor bus operators. The private bus industry has historically been, really, a key component of New Jersey's transportation sector. We estimate that we provide more than a quarter of scheduled bus transportation in the state.

And so, like New Jersey Transit -- we're private providers of public transportation, but we're providers of public transportation.

Routes that we serve are operated, in some cases, under our own route authority; and in other instances, under contract with New Jersey Transit. And we provide thousands of good jobs to men and women who live, and work, and pay taxes in New Jersey.

It's our goal to provide comfortable, efficient, and on-time transportation to the thousands of commuters and other passengers who we serve every day.

Our ridership -- as you heard from New Jersey Transit -- our ridership continues to increase. And with new developments underway on the West Side, and a Bus Terminal that's near-to-bursting at its seams, we think that a new and improved transportation center is a must. Bus riders need and deserve a new terminal that is large enough to anticipate future needs, is flexible enough to adapt to changes in bus sizes and configurations that are likely to happen, and is on the West Side of Manhattan so as to afford commuters the one-seat ride to Manhattan that they have now and that they want very much to hold onto.

As you heard from New Jersey Transit, over the past few years the private carriers, New Jersey Transit, and the Port Authority have worked together to find and implement efficiencies in the current Bus Terminal. So we have consolidated gates so that carriers and buses are located near to one other, rather than dotted all over the terminal; and we have implemented the use of newer technologies that allow us to reduce the headway, which is the time allotted between departure from New Jersey and arrival at the terminal. So that, ideally, a bus arrives at the terminal at the time that the gate opens up so it doesn't have to wait either in the terminal, blocking traffic, or go around the block, as we heard -- which is not necessarily just a block -- and create more traffic on the surface roads.

So that -- we've done that, and we've taken other, similar measures to try to make the current terminal more workable for now. But

there is an urgent need for a new, state-of-the-art transportation center on the West Side to serve our growing number of bus commuters.

A basic prerequisite for that terminal, we believe, is to be on the West Side of Manhattan. If our passengers had to disembark in New Jersey, many of them would choose other transportation operations -- as you heard from the Councilwoman -- maybe even driving into the City. So that's not a good option.

There are also a few other features of a terminal that would enhance the commuting experience. We believe that the new terminal should be, of course, larger, to handle not only increased ridership that we can foresee, but maybe increased ridership that we can't necessarily foresee.

But because of the increasing ridership, the buses themselves are likely to change; so they may be longer, or they be higher, or they might even be articulated. And the new terminal should be flexible enough to handle those various configurations that may come down the pike.

We would ideally like the new terminal to be able to handle parking for extra buses. And the reason this is important is because of that headway -- that time that you allot between New Jersey and the terminal. Because if you know you have a couple of other buses stationed at the terminal, then you can reduce -- you don't need to add an extra cushion to that headway to make sure that you get on time and then possibly cause a backlog. You know, you have the bus there that can come into the gate at the right time, and then you can, sort of, use the parking for the bus that arrives a little late. So that would be ideal.

And then, I should also mentioned that a number of our members provide long-distance inter-city bus transportation. Those buses --

this is like from Boston to New York, Washington, etc. -- and those buses -- or to Ridgewood and places in New Jersey too -- those buses don't have the use of the current terminal, so very often pick up and discharge elsewhere; and ideally the new terminal should be able to accommodate that as well, really, in order to be able to serve those passengers as best as we can.

So those are, sort of -- in addition to the one-seat ride and being on the West Side of Manhattan, those are the other considerations that we think would really make for a state-of-the-art, really great Bus Terminal in the future.

And with that, I'll thank you again for inviting me. And I'd be happy to answer what questions I can; and what questions I can't, I'd be happy to get information for you.

SENATOR GORDON: Just based on the conversations you've had with the members of the Association, what's the likely impact of not having an operational terminal within the next 10 years?

MS. KATZ: Well, I haven't had any, sort of, formal conversations. I do know that after your last hearing, which I went to and reported on, that I got some individual responses that were like -- that that's quite a long-- It was maybe longer than they hoped. But that's not really an official-- Officially, as an Association, we haven't really -- I haven't gotten any formal feedback on that. But I have heard that we really do need a new terminal, and that we're-- You know, we're working to make this one work, but it's not going to work forever.

SENATOR GORDON: Right.

Senator Weinberg.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Carol, how many passengers do you carry on a weekly--

MS. KATZ: You know what? I don't-- Because of our diverse membership, I maybe know one carrier or the other. I can try to tally that for you and get it to you after this--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay. Do you represent just the New York-New Jersey, or do represent any interstate carriers?

MS. KATZ: So we don't have-- So our membership is a lot of the companies that you know well -- Academy, Coach and its subsidiaries, Trans-Bridge, DeCamp, and a number of other commuter lines; but basically, New Jersey -- companies that handle the New Jersey-New York commuting. But also, we do a lot of local transit work, especially in Hudson and Essex counties, sort of corner-to-corner stuff. And so we have -- we're not just those four companies; we have a number of members, some smaller. But we don't have the Greyhound and those folks, if that's--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay. Do you--- What percentage of your business is subcontracted with NJ Transit? Do you know that?

MS. KATZ: No, but I can try to find that you for you, too.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay.

MS. KATZ: A lot of it is under our own authority, because these are routes-- A number of these were originally family-owned companies that then consolidated. So some of them have had route authority for decades.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So then you pay lease dollars to--

MS. KATZ: Yes, absolutely, absolutely--

SENATOR WEINBERG: --the Port Authority, and gate--

MS. KATZ: We may even, under contract-- I'll find that out. Because basically, when we're under contract, it's not a subsidy. We bid for the right to run the route, and then we are paid a certain flat -- an amount by New Jersey Transit and then, basically, we run the route. So it's not cost-plus or anything like that.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay. So will you get those figures for us?

MS. KATZ: So I'm going to get you the number of riders, total, if I can.

SENATOR WEINBERG: What percentage of your business is subcontracted.

MS. KATZ: Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: And the fees you pay to Port Authority; the leasing rights, I guess.

Okay?

MS. KATZ: Okay.

MR. MAGYAR: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Senator Gordon, if I may.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: As I sat here, and thought about the first question you asked -- about the terminal and how crowded they are.

I just want to revise my response and say they're crowded, and people are waiting, and they'll miss a train, and -- not miss it, but a train will go, and they weren't able to get on. So I feel as though adding capacity

-- if you were to add a couple of cars to the end of it, you're going to absorb more of that crowd. So although they're crowded right now, it may alleviate it, and just allow more people to go through, even with the same crowds.

SENATOR GORDON: Right--

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: So I just wanted to amend that.

SENATOR GORDON: --and get them off the platforms

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: Yes, exactly.

SENATOR GORDON: Right; okay.

COUNCILWOMAN FISHER: So thank you; sorry.

MS. KATZ: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Again, thank you both very much.

Our next panel will consist of Len Resto, Chair of the Association of Railroad Passengers of New Jersey; and David Peter Alan, Chair of the Lackawanna Coalition.

Gentlemen.

Okay, whomever would like to--

Welcome, gentlemen.

LEONARD RESTO: Great.

DAVID PETER ALAN: Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Resto requested to go first, and that's fine with me.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Resto.

MR. RESTO: Good afternoon, Senator Gordon, Senator Weinberg; and thank you for this opportunity to be able to address the Committee. We very much appreciate it.

Again, my name is Len Resto; I am the President of the New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers. We are a railroad advocacy group that's been in existence since 1980, promoting the interest of the rail commuter in New Jersey.

And I'm also a Councilman in Chatham Borough, who has a sewer authority meeting this evening at 7:00 p.m. And hopefully, the wind is blowing from the west and not the east.

So I wanted to read our statement. And we go by *NJ-ARP*, because it's easier to go by.

We did go through the capital plan, and we have a number of issues.

As *NJ-ARP* has noted numerous times, unlike the 20th century, we are a regional economic engine whose peak is only going to be constrained by the ability of the largely unintegrated public transit systems to move people within the region. Thus, it is with dismay that *NJ-ARP* noted that the planners at the Port Authority continue to apply 20th century transportation fixes to deal with 21st century challenges that cry out for out-of-the-box solutions.

During the 20th century, Manhattan was the economic engine to which people commuted to work. In the late 1950s and 1960s, the construction of the interstate highway system allowed America to become suburbanized. And then major companies, enticed by tax breaks and increasing crime in the cities, began to move out to the suburbs.

The result today is that vehicular traffic -- heading east to New York City, and west to the employment hubs of Morristown and Parsippany; or traffic headed north to New York City and east of Jersey

City, Hoboken, and Bayonne, or south to the employment centers of New Brunswick, Bridgewater, and Piscataway -- is just as crowded in either direction, each and every day.

But a funny thing happened to the public transit system; it remained largely unchanged. The rail system remains, as it is today, New York-centric. There is inadequate service out of New York to the employment centers of New Jersey. And this especially affects Bergen County, which is largely bus-dependent, with not enough rail service.

Many of the trains arriving at Penn Station New York are dead-headed at Sunnyside Yards in Queens, awaiting the evening rush. Similarly, buses headed to the Lincoln Tunnel or George Washington Bridge facility bringing people to New York, rather than returning to New Jersey in revenue-generating runs -- to get New Jersey workers to where they want to go, instead of to where buses want to go -- are instead idled for the balance of the day, awaiting the evening rush.

So there is something wrong with this picture. The economy has become regional and has catapulted into the 21st century, while the Port Authority is stuck in the 1950s, solving problems with a 20th century mentality. And a large market of what are dubbed *the reverse commuters* are left untapped.

When the Port Authority announced that it needed over \$10 billion to rebuild a modern Port Authority Bus Terminal farther west in Manhattan in order handle longer and wider buses, NJ-ARP questioned its wisdom, and ran an OpEd -- which ran in the online edition of the *Asbury Park Press* -- to which we received many calls. We questioned a project at such an exorbitant price, when the Lincoln Tunnel today operates at 115

percent capacity -- and that's Port Authority figure, that's not ours. The Legislature was persuaded by the Port Authority to support the project to preserve the one-seat ride to Manhattan, and the Port Authority believed that they had saved the day.

But they really haven't, because the seat-change is happening in Manhattan. What passengers really value is time.

And so NJ-ARP proposed -- and still proposes -- a smaller-scale Port Authority Terminal in Manhattan, coupled with a new Port Authority Bus Terminal in Secaucus, and an extension of the No. 7 subway to Secaucus. The No. 7 subway, according to a 2013 Parsons Brinckerhoff study commissioned by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, would run a train every two minutes and make the trek from Secaucus to Grand Central Station -- the coveted East Side access that many passengers would like to have -- in under 20 minutes. Given a choice of an hour on a bus, or a shorter time taking a ride on a subway, we believe that people would select the shorter time.

This project -- combined with Gateway, and modernizing the original Hudson River tunnels, the modernization of Penn Station, the subsidy and increasing of ferry services, and re-working train and bus schedules on the New Jersey side of the Hudson -- would allow for a much better transit option that addresses the region holistically, instead of in silos.

Governor Chris Christie stated that it is a priority, in the last year of his Administration, to have PATH spend \$1.7 billion to extend PATH 1.2 miles from Newark Penn Station to Newark Liberty

International Airport. This was an idea floated some 35 years ago. This idea does nothing for the region, and should be a non-starter.

The devil is in the details. This extension of PATH -- as you wisely questioned on January 17 -- does not go to Newark Liberty International Airport; rather, it goes to Haynes Avenue in Newark, where you can change to the Port Authority's *Disney Monorail people mover* (laughter), and pay an additional fare of \$5.50 to the Port Authority for the privilege of getting you to your terminal.

Some have asked if development around Haynes Avenue wouldn't make the project worthwhile; or if the garage proposed to be built would allow passengers to be drawn to the PATH. But our response reveals the crux of the matter. If you go back 50 years, when downtown Jersey City was virtually a wasteland with little population -- and I should know, I lived there; so I gave away my age -- PATH was talking about shutting down the Pavonia Avenue Station. Today, PATH is running at 95 percent capacity, and PATH trains headed to 33rd Street in Manhattan are so crowded by the time they get to the Pavonia/Newport stop, that riders need to let several trains go by before they can get on a train.

PATH's recent weekends shut-down to install Positive Train Control will allow for additional trains, but the capacity gains will be nearly unnoticeable to the average rider. And Senator Gordon, you've already addressed the issue of the extra cars, so I won't go into that.

If you add the configuration of the PATH system, you'll see why the extension to the airport is so illogical. If you board the train at Newark Airport, that train is headed to the World Trade Center. Chances are, the person is headed to Midtown Manhattan. That means I have to

change trains at Journal Square, Jersey City, or at Grove Street in Jersey City. So if you have a family of four with luggage, getting onto what is essentially a subway car with no luggage racks, I cannot envision somebody going through that trouble to save on a taxi or bus fare.

And then to put the cherry on top of the cake -- extending PATH from Newark Penn Station to Haynes Avenue is an exact duplication of what currently exists with New Jersey Transit and Amtrak; and New Jersey Transit's bus route No. 62, and the Carey private service from Manhattan. It would limit the application of funds that would provide new ridership for public transit and would help to install better rail ridership and expand Hudson-Bergen Light Rail in Bergen County. PATH's extension would be the most colossal waste of Port Authority funds in its history, and there have been some doozies. (laughter)

Which brings me to a digression on the Port Authority's Disney Monorail -- I couldn't resist. (laughter)

At the time it was proposed, most groups urged either heavy rail or light rail service connecting the terminals. The Port Authority opted for the small, cramped, inadequate, and expensive monorail people mover. The Port Authority now says that the monorail needs complete replacement, because 20 years was its useful lifespan. This is totally mindboggling. Disney World has a monorail, which has been in operation since the opening of its park and has yet to be replaced. How an iron rail and heavy-duty cars can become obsolete in 20 years is unforgivable, especially when one considers that the monorail technology and its manufacturer was already a proven technical disaster in another implementation in Sydney, Australia. Yet, the Port Authority went ahead

with it anyway. The proverbial canary in the coal mine never came back out; yet, the Port Authority walked in to go get it. (laughter)

So here comes the same Port Authority with yet another scheme to waste precious funds. NJ-ARP requests the New Jersey Legislature introduce sanity into the Port Authority budget request. Ask them to go back to the drawing board; and to think regionally and work with the partners across the region to collaborate to come up with real solutions for the problems we face.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much, Mr. Resto.

As you know, we share some of those concerns about these trains-to-the-plane proposals in the capital budget. And, you know, we're--

MR. RESTO: You asked excellent questions on January 17.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you; we had good staff providing those questions.

MR. RESTO: Yes.

SENATOR GORDON: But as I may have said then, we have concerns that if these projects fail to qualify for Federal funds, that those pushing the projects may find (*sic*) the money elsewhere. And given the fact that there's an indeterminate start date for the Bus Terminal project, the funds may be cannibalized from the Bus Terminal project, which would set it back even further.

MR. RESTO: Understood.

SENATOR GORDON: So we're pressing for more data on these projects to--

You know, I remain open to be convinced that this is a good project, particularly if it has -- there is some economic development potential for Newark. But I'm not there yet.

Mr.--

MR. ALAN: Alan.

SENATOR GORDON: Alan; I'm sorry.

MR. ALAN: Yes, sir.

SENATOR GORDON: Please.

MR. ALAN: Thank you, Senator.

I am David Peter Alan, A-L-A-N; I am Chair of the Lackawanna Coalition, the other rider advocacy organization in this region. We began in 1979, representing the riders and the communities along the Morris and Essex, and Montclair and Gladstone lines. And we have since then expended our purview to include all connecting transit which, essentially, means the entire North and Central Jersey region, going to New York City, and as far south as Trenton and the Shore.

I am Chair of the Coalition; I have held that position since the year 2000. And to introduce myself a bit more to you, I have been an advocate for 32 years, beginning with the Essex County Transportation Advisory Board in 1985. I am now the Senior Member of New Jersey Transit Senior Citizens and Disabled Residents Transportation Advisory Committee, having been a member since 2003; and have been Vice Chair in the past. And nationally, I am on the Board of the Rail Users Network -- RUN -- which advocates for better rail transit and an improved Amtrak everywhere in the country.

I will be spending most of my statement talking specifically about the Port Authority's capital program, as revealed in the 107-page document we received.

Although we agree with much of what Mr. Resto said about trans-Hudson transportation in general, there are some differences we have not endorsed: the No. 7 to Secaucus plan; and we have not endorsed Gateway in its entirety.

However, for more than 20 years, I have been involved with improved transit across the Hudson River. I was on the original Regional Citizens Liaison Committee 20 years ago, for both the ARC project and the Portal Bridge project. We don't have anything comparable today for Gateway; that's a situation that, as you may know, I have been complaining about for quite some time.

I attended the organizational meeting on January 12 for the Gateway Program Development Corporation and, specifically, requested that the riders -- possibly through their known advocacy organizations -- and you have the representatives of two of them right in front of you -- have a genuine seat at the table. Because we will be the people who will be using these services, if and when they are ever built.

I also warned that there may be changes in transportation infrastructure policy coming from Washington. I do not know if all of Gateway will ever be built. Rural interests were very strong in the last election, and the Republican Party now controls both the Executive and the Congress. We don't know what they'll do; it's too early to tell. But I warned that it is not a good idea to absolutely assume that there will be enough money to build every bit of Gateway.

If we get two new tunnels into Penn Station, and an operating plan that improves capacity and through-put because of those tunnels; and one new bridge span to replace or possibly augment Portal Bridge, we may be doing well to get just that. And I believe we must be open to such a possibility.

Referring to the document we were given, I reviewed the portions of it about PATH, the Port Authority Bus Terminal, and Gateway. It contained absolutely no detail of where any of these funds would come from; it is not a statement of sources and uses; and the parts of the document that dealt with partners -- we don't know who these partners are or who might contribute.

SENATOR GORDON: You're talking about private partners.

MR. ALAN: Yes, sir.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

MR. ALAN: Or maybe public too. Because for instance, if the Federal Transit Administration started funding PATH in any way, that could change the legal regulations concerning the relationships between PATH and its infrastructure, and between PATH and its riders. I don't think I mentioned that I live in South Orange -- on the Morris and Essex Line -- and I have been practicing law for over 35 years. So I am always on the lookout for legal issues.

There is an inherent lack of transparency in the document that I reviewed, which should come as no surprise. Because going back to the early days of ARC, in 2003, there was a major investment study that was 1,603 pages in length; it was a partnership of New Jersey Transit, New York's MTA, and the Port Authority. The Port Authority buried it. It is

still secret, to this day; we have not been able to find anything beyond the 32-page summary that the Port Authority issued many years ago. We are sure that that study has valuable information that could still be of use today. We'd be delighted to see it, and we think you'd want to see it too.

SENATOR GORDON: We'll see what we can do to acquire it.

MR. ALAN: See what you can do to find it. That would be of great service to the public.

Next, my statement to the Gateway Development Corporation -- as *Exhibit A*, so you will be able to see that. And I have also annexed one of the most interesting statements in the capital plan -- the last paragraph from page 82; that's *Exhibit B*. And that says, essentially, that, "Spending estimates are subject to change." Well, I'll say they are. Let's make a case in point. The new station that PATH is using in the Financial District. That was budgeted to cost \$2 billion; the overrun alone exceeded the original budgeted cost; it cost \$4.2 billion to build it. And for that kind of money, the Port Authority could have paid for a tunnel into Penn Station, which would have relieved a lot of the congestion that we fear when the original tunnels are taken out of service to be repaired because of the damage from Hurricane Sandy.

Now, the old station -- which was in use as a temporary station for about 10 years -- was not glitzy, it was not big, it was not something that architects would brag about. But it enabled people to get to PATH. And if the Port Authority had left it alone, we might have been well on the way to having a third tunnel, and maybe well on the way to having a fourth one now.

But what is the Port Authority pledging toward Gateway? Take a look at page 46 of the capital plan; I've annexed that as *Exhibit C*. If we look at the paragraph labeled *Purpose*, it gives some indication that the \$2.7 billion in question may be used for paying off principle; if we look at the next paragraph, the paragraph labeled *Scope*, it mentions only debt service, which means only interest. In short, we don't know, and that's a problem.

There are also no clues in this document about participation along with New Jersey Transit or with New York's MTA. And while Gateway is really an Amtrak infrastructure project -- even though the main beneficiaries would be New Jersey's riders more than Amtrak's riders, who could still be serviced with one tunnel -- there is absolutely nothing there about the NEC future process, which is the infrastructure project that Amtrak is pushing for the entire NEC; or the AIRNet-21 project, which is an alternative view -- a privately funded infrastructure management organization that would take over the Northeast Corridor infrastructure and manage it.

So we see a very locally centered document that does not necessarily address issues that are broader in scope and should be addressed.

One thing that we have been encouraging, at the Lackawanna Coalition, is commuting to Hoboken using the Morris and Essex, and connecting lines to get to Hoboken, and then PATH into New York. And I could say the same thing for the lines here in Bergen County -- for the Pascack, the Main-Bergen, and the Port Jervis lines. Yet, the PATH line has very troublesome operations. We have constituents who have missed the last train of the night on the Pascack Line because PATH didn't provide

proper connections. PATH has talked about killing the overnight service. Fortunately, they backed down on that.

While there is much here in spending for PATH, the most important thing PATH has to do is increase capacity. I remember, 50 years ago, there was much more service between Hoboken and both 33rd Street and downtown New York -- the old Hudson terminal -- than there is today. We need more capacity on PATH. It's the main thing they need to do, and we need more service to Hoboken. Our weekend service on the M&E is only (*sic*) two hours; it should be hourly.

Regarding the PATH extension to Newark Airport: Mr. Resto said, very articulately, that it has problems; well, we find it highly questionable at best. It seems like a waste of money to build this extension -- which parallels New Jersey Transit -- and replace what Mr. Resto called the *Disney-style monorail* -- and, yes, I've been on monorails in other places. They're interesting transit oddities, but this is not Wuppertal, Germany, or Chongqing, China, where the geography demands it. We don't need it.

What we do need between (*sic*) downtown Newark -- both the Broad Street station, where our constituents go, and Penn Station -- is a good shuttle bus system. The capital cost of running that system is zero. And running buses, to get people a one-seat ride from where they get off the train in Newark to their terminal at the airport, would be more useful; and it would free up more money for the tunnels under the Hudson that we need so desperately -- and perhaps, for some improvements to the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

Now, we are rail people, primarily; we do care about our bus riders. We want to see improvement to the Bus Terminal. We have not

considered a statement to make regarding it. But it seems to me, as someone who has ridden a lot of transit, that moving it further west is not a good idea -- just as Penn South has the disadvantage of moving New Jersey's commuters further from their offices; and the old ARC project -- the deep cavern that it morphed into -- would have taken them a lot further from their offices.

So we want to see an improved Penn Station; we don't know what's planned. We're disappointed that there are so few details about that in this plan; so we can't address it, but we do understand the need.

In short, there is little we can do with the Port Authority, and we know there's little you can do. We know about the effort that every legislator in New York and New Jersey made to reform the Port Authority; every Democrat, every Republican, from Rouses Point, to Niagara Falls, to Cape May. Everybody in all four chambers wanted to reform the Port Authority and improve it. The Governors vetoed it. We hope more can be done in the future. But if you can't do much, we sure can't. And the only thing I can advise you or anybody else at this point -- when it's up to New Jersey Transit, Amtrak, and New York's MTA to improve our mobility locally and across the Hudson, we will do everything we can to help. But at this point, I would be reluctant to think of anything the Port Authority does as other than a gift.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay; thank you very much.

MR. ALAN: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: It is very helpful for us to have the outside perspective and the historical perspective that you both bring.

Senator Weinberg, any questions you'd like to pose?

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, let me follow up on questions on the No. 7 subway.

What is the capacity of that? Is it at capacity right now?

MR. RESTO: The No. 7 subway, if it were extended to Secaucus, would be the beginning of the line. So when that train would head out of Secaucus to New York -- and its first stop would be Times Square, then 5th Avenue, then Grand Central -- it would be running -- discharging passengers who are getting on in New Jersey, getting off at Times Square, getting off at 5th Avenue, and getting off at Grand Central. Because the No. 7 line runs out to Flushing Queens. So what it's doing is, it's bringing many, many Queens workers into Manhattan, so the bulk of the people who are coming in the morning are coming into Manhattan from Queens. But our New Jersey residents would be going into the city from New Jersey, and the reverse of that in the evening. So there would be plenty of capacity on the No. 7.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Do you have any idea of what -- how much would that cost in the capital plan?

MR. RESTO: You know, I've heard some people say something like \$7.5 billion, \$8 billion. But I never trust people giving me estimates, because whenever they say \$7.5 billion, \$8 billion, it tends to go a lot higher.

It's thinking of it regionally, then thinking of it in silos; and, you know, doing simple things. Like, for instance, just yesterday I found out that the No. 76 bus that goes to Hackensack, without having a map -- New Jersey Transit does not have a map of its buses -- the last stop on the No. 76 is, literally, three blocks or so from Fairleigh Dickinson, where I'm

going for a graduate degree. And I've been driving all this time. So there are a lot of improvements that don't cost money, but, you know, that's the way it is.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay; thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay; thank you both.

MR. RESTO: Thank you; I'm sure you're hungry.

SENATOR GORDON: We appreciate your testimony. We look forward to continuing to hear from you as we get into these issues. We appreciate your input and your time.

MR. RESTO: Thank you for the opportunity.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

MR. ALAN: No questions for me?

SENATOR GORDON: I don't have any questions. You were pretty comprehensive in your assessment of the budget.

MR. ALAN: Well, thank you for the opportunity.

SENATOR GORDON: We would -- we are interested in looking for that document that you referred to.

MR. ALAN: Anything we can do to help, we will.

MR. MAGYAR: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

We have one person who has signed -- one other person who has signed up to testify -- Mr. Allen Kratz -- who we believe is simply representing himself; which we're happy to hear from him.

And we would be interested in anyone else who wants to testify.

Mr. Kratz.

A L L E N W. K R A T Z: Thank you, Mr. Chairman; thank you Madam Vice Chair.

I'm Allen Kratz; I am a constituent of Tiffanie Fisher. I live in Hoboken; I've lived there for 40 years, and use the bus service into New York City every day. I use it to go to work, I use it on the weekend to go to church, and I've been using it to go into the city for protest marches. So I think that will be continuing for the next several years as well. (laughter)

The Port Authority Bus Terminal is essential to my way of living; and it is way under capacity.

I don't have a prepared statement, but I'd like to answer the questions that you raised about both the subway and the planning for the Port Authority Bus Terminal --- the location of it.

I think it's very essential that the Port Authority Bus Terminal remain in its current location, because it is ideally located to, at least, the old IND line; the A-C-E subway line. Senator Weinberg, you asked about the distance if it were moved one block west -- and that would be a significant disadvantage to people commuting because, you'd be walking not one long city block, but two long city blocks to get to the 1-2-3-7 trains; the Q-R-N-W trains; and the shuttle to Grand Central.

So I think it's essential that the planning for the -- and I have read the capital plan -- I think it's essential that the Port Authority Bus Terminal remain in its current location.

I understand that presents operational difficulties during construction. I'd like to point out that -- I'm not representing, here, the Hoboken Public Library; but I am President of the Board. And we are completing a rehabilitation project on a property where we have absolutely

no swing space. We did do our three-year project, maintaining operations throughout, by finding swing space nearby. And I think that that's a good example for the Port Authority to use as it does its capital planning, and really thinks about how it will maintain operations for those of us who rely on bus service into the city.

The question I would have about that capital plan is, what are the plans for high-speed or moving sidewalks? Will the current location be kept in the place? If there is a plan to move it, if it has to be moved to the west, will the Port Authority retain property rights so that it can have moving sidewalks, underground passageways, weather protection for those people who need to get, not only to 8th Avenue for the current subway stops -- but I would encourage that the project be expanded to include access to the 7th Avenue and Broadway subway lines as well.

The other comment that I would make -- as a citizen, as a taxpayer -- relates to the other items that the two of you mentioned, and that is the Port Authority's plans to have -- I guess it's called *trains-to-the planes*; the Newark-- I think we can just say it's *trains-to-Haynes*, and dispense with it that way. I don't think it's a very worthwhile project; I think it's a huge amount of money spent to duplicate something that already exists. And Mr. Alan and Mr. Resto -- certainly Mr. Alan made the point that there are capital non-intensive ways of doing this.

My final comment would be that, as this planning proceeds for the Port Authority Bus Terminal, I think it's very important -- and again, I'm using the example of what we did with what the Hoboken Public Library -- having completed one project, we're now onto our next capital plan. And in putting out a request for competitive proposals for experts to

do that plan for us, we decided we would not look just for an architect, or just for an engineer; if you hire an architect, you get an architectural plan. If you hire an engineer, you get an engineering plan. We went out and we requested proposals from a team that had 12 areas of competency, including finding additional funding.

So I hope that the Port Authority, in doing its work, will be as comprehensive as we were, with the Hoboken Public Library, in looking, in a very holistic way -- of finding good stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Thank you very much for your time.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much for your excellent statement.

Sir, could you just identify yourself for the record?

B I L L B R E N N A N: Sure; my name is Bill Brennan. I live in Wayne.

I came here to talk about the Port Authority Bus Terminal. But I want to echo the sentiment that is pretty much universal -- that the extension of these trains to Newark Airport is a diversion of resources that we can't afford right now. And I want to be on record as opposed to that.

And I really don't understand how we got to the place where we're looking at putting the Port Authority Bus Terminal further west than it is now. My girlfriend rides the 197 every day from Wayne; and she has to walk a full block to get the No. 7 to get to Grand Central, adding-- And it's not just one block, depending on where you get off in the terminal. If they move it one block, you could end up at 10th Avenue instead of 9th Avenue, and have to walk to 7th Avenue. You're adding 20 minutes to

somebody's morning and somebody's afternoon, and that's going to affect property values.

But there's an obvious solution that I haven't heard anybody talk about today. Madison Square Garden's lease is up in five years. They have to go, unless the Governors of New York and New Jersey, and the legislatures of New York and New Jersey, drop the ball. But Penn Station is functionally obsolete and structurally deficient, and in need of rehabilitation and repair. They're talking about putting a Penn South underneath the Moynihan Post Office, and renovating the existing Penn Station. There is absolutely no reason not to put the Port Authority on 33rd and 7th; and between 33rd and 31st, between 7th and 8th.

Now, what this gentleman was talking about is resolved. All the IND lines go there; the A, the C, and the E. The No. 7 has been extended to Hudson Yards; it could easily go there as well. So now you're not losing the A, the C, the E, and the No. 7 connections. You're picking up the 2, the 3, the 1; the N, the R; and all the 7th Avenue connections that people are walking to now.

So the reason they were built on two different footprints is because they were competitors and they were built at a different time. The Pennsylvania Railroad is out of business. We call it *Penn Station*, but it's a public project.

Now we're on the cusp of doing something terrific, or something horrific. Because moving the Port Authority -- it's the mindset of somebody who rides in a limousine. It's just, let the commuter spend a little extra time every day; it's no big deal to them. You know what? It's a big deal to add another full block to somebody who is already walking a full

block. And especially when you have the resources and the technology now to put it all in one place. Remember, the Port Authority Bus Terminal, if it's built at 11th Avenue, comes out of one pocket, one agency's budget. But if you combine the two facilities, you get to add New Jersey Transit rail operations' funds, Amtrak funds, New York City Transit funds, Long Island Rail Road funds, and, ideally, you'd add a Metro-North connection so that the Grand Central passengers also have access to Penn Station.

I'm convinced that this is born, not of incompetence, but corruption. I'm convinced that, based upon what happened with Todd Christie and the land deals that he made around the Harrison Train Station, that people have decided that property values are going to go up, or down, or change, or fluctuate based upon this project. I'm convinced that there are people in government who make money on contracts; and the more contracts that they incur, the more kickbacks they can get.

Because there's no rational reason, no reasonable person can tell you that it makes more sense to put the Port Authority Bus Terminal between 10th and 11th Avenues, than it does to put it between 7th and 8th Avenues. We have the place now.

The seamless ride that I'm talking about -- from the Long Island Rail Road to a New Jersey Transit bus, or to an over-the-road Greyhound; or from a Greyhound to an Amtrak train -- all these things should be in one modern facility with a shared concourse. We have the ability to do this now. Don't let small-minded people or corrupt people make a decision that is going to hamstring public transit for years, and years -- decades and, maybe, centuries to come. This is a once-in-a-lifetime

opportunity to do something great. And if we lose this opportunity, we won't get it again in our lifetime; and it's going to be a sad thing.

So this is one of the reasons -- one of the many reasons that I'm actually running for Governor -- to make sure that the people of the State of New Jersey have a say in what goes on with their commutes, because there is nobody looking out for us.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Brennan.

And I want to thank you for raising what I'll call these *out-of-the-box* ideas. I really think the debate is greatly enhanced by hearing alternative views. We all know that bureaucracies -- I'll assume they're not corrupt, but they develop their mindsets and ways of thinking. And it's important for people with, just, fresh views to present these ideas. We're certainly -- I think there are a number of ideas here that I find intriguing, and I appreciate your raising them with us.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR GORDON: We wish you luck in your endeavors.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you so much.

Listen, if anybody can come to me and tell me that the logic I've presented is flawed somehow, I'm happy to admit when I'm wrong. And I haven't heard anybody give me a legitimate opposition to putting the Port Authority Bus Terminal and the Pennsylvania Railroad in the same place.

And I saw this gentleman here nodding his head when I talked about the connections of the 7th Avenue subway and the 8th Avenue subway. And in a roomful of transit experts, I didn't hear anybody say,

“Let’s go west.” I’d like to be the first one to say, “Go a little east.” Madison Square Garden started on Madison Avenue; it moved west. So if 11th Avenue is good enough for the Port Authority, it should be good enough for Jimmy Dolan and the Rangers. Because the Port Authority commuters of New Jersey are more important than the hockey and basketball fans in New York City. And you can put me on the record for that.

Thank you. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

You know, I will just--

SENATOR WEINBERG: We’ll quote you on that, Bill.
(laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: You talked about opportunities that are lost.

I’ve had the opportunity to read the Caro book, *The Power Broker*, on Robert Moses. And there’s a passage that I actually marked, because it struck me that in the early 1950s the -- I think it was the MTA facilities -- were throwing off so much toll revenue that there were sufficient funds available, at that time, to renovate the Long Island Rail Road, build a rail beltway around New York, and really build a world-class mass transit system at the time.

And instead, all that money went into highways, which became congested--

MR. BRENNAN: Robert Moses. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: --shortly after they were built. And generations of commuters were condemned to bumper-to-bumper traffic for decades.

So I think it's really important for us to take a fresh look at the way we do things and consider alternative approaches. Which is one of the reasons why I wanted to have this hearing and get some alternative views.

And thank you both for appearing here.

Senator Weinberg, any questions?

SENATOR WEINBERG: No, thank you.

MR. KRATZ: You're welcome; thank you.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Take care.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

I'm not going to adjourn the meeting; we're really going into recess; because in about 45 minutes or so, we have invited commuters to come and testify. And so we'll just take a recess, at this moment, for a little dinner; and then we'll come back.

I want to thank you all for appearing here, to those who testified.

Thank you very much. All this information will be conveyed to the officials of the Port Authority.

Thank you very much.

(Committee recesses)

(Committee returns for recess)

SENATOR GORDON: Good evening, everyone.

I'm Senator Bob Gordon, and I am the Chair of the Senate Legislative Oversight Committee.

And this evening we are holding the second meeting of hearings this Committee has held on the Port Authority's draft 10-year capital plan.

On January 17, at our first hearing on the subject, we heard from the senior leadership of the Port Authority, who presented the key elements of the plan, and were subjected to questions on that proposal from the Committee.

We also heard from a number of transportation advocates and other stakeholders.

We reconvened in this chamber this afternoon to hear from one of the major users of Port Authority's facilities -- New Jersey Transit -- from a number of key leaders there. And we heard from a number of transportation advocates as well.

This meeting this evening, for me, is a key hearing because I think it is essential that, for a plan that has such a tremendous impact on our region -- I believe it's essential that we hear from the customers of the Port Authority, the people who are using the facilities every day.

And so we thought it important to hold a hearing in close proximity to Port Authority facilities here in Bergen County to hear your views.

Before we open up the program to your testimony, I would like to make a brief announcement.

I am announcing that Senator Weinberg and I are introducing legislation -- developing legislation with Senator Michael Gianaris of New York state, that would bar the expenditure of any Port Authority funds for

purposes that, in any way, restrict Muslim refugees, green card holders, or citizens from any country from entering the United States.

We consider the President's Executive Order to be unconstitutional, illegal, immoral, and antithetical to the principles on which our nation was founded.

The Statue of Liberty, with Emma Lazarus' famous invitation to refugees yearning to breathe free, literally stands at the very center of the Port Authority District. And we believe it would be unconscionable for the Port Authority to, in any way, participate in a policy that arbitrarily discriminates against persons on the basis of their religion or their nation of origin.

As I said, the legislation has been introduced with Senator Gianaris. The legislation will be identical in both states, and we are hopeful that it will be passed by both chambers and become law.

We would also like to comment on related actions by the Governor of New York. As some in this hearing know, we don't always see eye-to-eye with Governor Cuomo on Port Authority issues and priorities. But we would like to applaud his recent efforts to stand up for what we consider fundamental American values.

With that, Senator Weinberg, Senator Kean -- any statements you wish to make? (no response)

Let me provide just a brief overview of the Port Authority capital budget and some of the key issues we're concerned about.

The draft plan includes a new Bus Terminal on Manhattan's West Side; and, as many are aware, this new Terminal will replace an existing Port Authority Bus Terminal, which is nearing both maximum

capacity and the end of its useful life. The proposed capital plan earmarks \$3.5 billion for the construction of the new terminal. Of the \$3.5 billion earmarked for the project, \$500 million is anticipated Federal funding, which may or may not materialize.

There is widespread concern among elected officials, commuters, transportation advocates, and Port Authority officials alike that \$3 billion will be inadequate to ensure the construction of the new terminal is complete, or nearly complete, by the end of the 10-year period. Any delay in construction will have long-lasting, negative repercussions for a corridor state like New Jersey, whose economy depends on the ability to move people and goods in a safe and efficient manner.

While the Port Authority's capital plan includes such other transportation projects as the Gateway rail tunnel and rail connections to Newark Liberty and LaGuardia airports, funding must remain secure for bus commuters. According to the Port Authority's own study, bus ridership is expected to increase 50 percent by the year 2040.

It is also expected that Manhattan will add 300,000 jobs over the next decade, the vast majority of which will need to be filled by commuters. In order to keep New Jersey attractive and competitive, we must build and expand reliable transit connections in a timely manner. To affect that goal, we must ensure that adequate financial resources are available.

We are also inviting comments today -- your views on the adequacy of funding for the Gateway rail tunnel and other major priorities in the Port Authority capital plan. One project of interest is the PATH extension to Newark Airport, and its potential to spur economic

development in Newark; and to increase trans-Hudson commuter capacity through a park and ride facility.

Another key question is whether the capital plan should be amended to add PATH capacity, by expanding from 8-car to 10-car platforms at PATH stations.

And of course, we are interested in any ideas you might have that are not to be found in this capital plan, but, based on your experience with your daily commutes, you think are projects or programs that need attention.

And so, with that brief introduction, I am going to open up our meeting to testimony.

The first person who is going to testify -- and he was unable to make our afternoon session -- is Michael Phelan from the New Jersey Commuters Action Network.

Mr. Phelan.

And I think what we'll do is we'll do a panel with Bergen County Freeholder, Mary Amoroso.

Freeholder, would you like to come up as well?

Thank you, Mr. Phelan. Would you like to begin?

MICHAEL PHELAN: Sure.

Thank you, Senator Gordon.

My name is Michael Phelan of Leonia, New Jersey. I'm Co-Founder of the New Jersey Commuters Action Network, a grassroots group of commuters which first gained attention back in 2014, after the Super Bowl, by using a social media hashtag, #delayedonNewJerseyTransit, which got the attention of journalists and legislators. On the back of frustrated

football fans, myself and several dozen commuters sort of stood up and waved and said, “Hey, we’ve been having these challenges for several months.” So while that Super Bowl issue was unfortunate, it sort of anchored our efforts and got us some attention on issues for New Jersey commuters.

I’d like to start by thanking Senator Gordon and all the Committee members for holding this hearing tonight. It’s very welcome and much needed.

In the years that followed that Super Bowl episode, scandals coming out of the Port Authority have embarrassed our state while diverting the Port Authority’s attention and resources from its core mission. These last several years have also been disappointing because they’ve not seen a thoughtful transportation policy or strategy from our Governor, making your leadership in the Legislature on these issues even more crucial and appreciated. So again, I thank you for that.

Regarding some of the items off of the capital plan: I’m speaking for myself, but I’m also speaking for the several dozen commuters I interact with on a weekly and monthly basis, hearing their concerns. So I’ll use the personal pronoun “I,” but “we,” as well, from time to time.

Regarding the Bus Terminal interim improvements: Because of its proximity to the George Washington Bridge, Leonia is a community that has bus routes that can use either of the two bus terminals that are in Manhattan; and there are two, for those who aren’t quite aware. There’s one up at the George Washington Bridge, currently being rehabilitated -- we have access to that, fairly quickly, on good days -- as well as, of course, to the Midtown terminal.

That the Midtown terminal is being built scalable to meet the needs of the future and continued demand that's expected -- at the time, after the construction -- is a huge plus from a design perspective as far as meeting the needs of future commuters. But as construction of the new terminal -- the new Midtown terminal continues to be planned, today's bus riders also want to be assured of continued safe and efficient operation of the two existing terminals. Combined, they serve more than 250,000 passengers on a weekday; and we want to ensure that they remain a priority, and that the Port Authority can multi-task once the new Terminal plans take off.

If the GWB terminal's history can be used as a guide, the several years leading up to the reconstruction of that terminal resulted in the property being virtually ignored by the Port Authority. The facility was far from properly maintained, retail and other tenants left, and the space was left empty. Spaces were shuttered; there was an unsightly and unsafe environment for several years -- with no police presence -- despite Port Authority Police having a space within that facility.

With the GWB terminal nearing completion, bus and rail riders are expecting that that reconstructed terminal will provide additional bus volume to take some pressure off of the other trans-Hudson crossings. We're hoping that the Port Authority collaborates with their tenant, New Jersey Transit, to help -- as much as possible and practical -- put more volume in and out of that Bus Terminal.

Another common comment I hear from bus riders -- and I share myself -- is an insistence that both facilities not be short-changed for the future one. The Port Authority must be held accountable for these interim

plans and continue to provide clean facilities with proper lighting, regular police presence; in addition, safe and properly constructed stairwells, escalators, doors within these facilities; in addition to entrances and exits to and from the street. These are all issues that have constantly come up for folks who use Port Authority facilities. And as simple and easy as they sound, they're the ones that plague most riders. They're the ones that cause safety issues, delays, and unsafe conditions in the Terminal. A management plan to improve these basic needs must be developed for both existing terminals, as part of any interim improvement plan as the new terminal is being developed.

While bus riders do not need the extravagant glass and marble that now adorn the World Trade Center PATH station, they will continue to demand basic needs being met at these two terminals.

Moving onto the GWB construction and restoration: I understand that the purpose of today's hearing is to talk about capital spending. But as someone who lives in Leonia -- just over a mile from the George Washington Bridge -- I must express my personal frustration with the fact that even a minor accident on the George Washington Bridge, at any hour of the day, is enough to cause overflow and traffic problems into our community; and it happens several times a month. These regular delays affect the quality of life in a community that already absorbs over 20,000 cars a day being -- using us as a cut-through. So I just wanted to put that out there; I didn't want to lose today's opportunity to say that. It's a common concern of mine and other folks in Leonia, as well as neighboring communities that are not that far from the Bridge and suffer from manpower and other challenges around managing that traffic.

With the Gateway Tunnel: When I first met Secretary Anthony Foxx over the summer -- former U.S. Transportation Secretary -- he described the Gateway to me as, perhaps, the most important infrastructure project in the country. The reasons are simple: It's because of the geography; it's because of the economies affected between Boston and D.C. For us, it's about interstate commuting between New York and New Jersey. While full completion of the Gateway project includes a multi-billion dollar expansion of Penn Station, it's all much needed to meet rising demand.

There still has been little mentioned of the fact that there is significant flood damage to the two existing rail tunnels damaged by Superstorm Sandy. These are the tunnels built in 1910. If one of those tunnels were to fail before Gateway was completed, the impact on our region's roads, rails, and airports would be beyond significant. For that reason, a formal contingency plan must be created by all affected states, agencies, and transportation providers, along with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. If one already exists, I'm not aware of its existence, and I would hope that it would be shared with the public.

With that in mind, Gateway should not be considered an Amtrak issue, as many folks do consider it. It's a regional and a national issue because so many stakeholders rely on the Hudson rail crossings. Among those are many businesses of all sizes in New York and New Jersey that benefit from efficient transportation systems that move their products, help them provide service, and safely move their employees and customers. With that in mind, I'd ask that several more commitments of public-private

partnerships be explored at the Port Authority to help offset capital costs, while more effectively engaging the business community at the same time.

Capital projects and mass transit systems that we're discussing today can result in huge benefits to everyone in the region; but they're not self-sustaining. They require oversight and governance from folks like you and leaders at the Port Authority, but they also require engagement from the public and the corporate community. With the major projects that are in the pipeline, the Port Authority must expand their outreach to better meet their financial obligations by engaging with as many partners as possible -- to help those partners understand their mission and, of course, help them partner financially to get some of these goals reached.

Of course, the Port Authority needs to be responsible for the outcomes and results. But there are plenty of great resources out there and organizations that can work along with them.

New Jersey commuters are eager to work with the legislators and other stakeholders to promote viable solutions to New Jersey's transportation challenges.

Thank you again for your continued leadership on these long-term fixes to help our transportation needs.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much, Mr. Phelan.

Does anyone have any questions? (no response)

Let me just point out something that I failed to in my introductory comments.

I want to stress that this effort by the Legislative Oversight Committee has been very much of a bipartisan one. The issues related to regional transportation and the Port Authority are certainly not partisan in

any way. And I've been very pleased -- I think every member of this Committee has -- that we have really been able to work together quite effectively in representing New Jersey's interests in confronting some of these very important issues.

With that, Freeholder Mary Amoroso.

FREEHOLDER MARY J. AMOROSO: Yes; thanks a lot.

I am Mary Amoroso, Bergen County Freeholder; one of the new ones.

By the way, the idea of public-private partnerships -- we love that in Bergen County; great idea.

The old bus terminal no longer functions for the commuters who power the economic engine of New Jersey and New York. And failure to adequately fund the new Bus Terminal is blatantly disrespectful to New Jersey commuters and to Bergen County commuters.

As we've seen with Bridgewater, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey seems to consist of two gangs of bully boys who are there to serve their Governors, rather than the public. Port Authority projects seem to be divvied up, like tit-for-tat -- so much for New Jersey, and so much for New York -- rather than taking a holistic view of the commuting needs of the region.

I do beseech the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to get a grip and get a program to adequately finance this new Bus Terminal.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

Any questions?

Senator Weinberg.

SENATOR WEINBERG: No. Sorry, Mary, but I did smile at your (indiscernible). (laughter)

FREEHOLDER AMOROSO: I did see you smiling; yes, Senator.

SENATOR WEINBERG: And all that was on that card that you have there? (laughter)

Thank you for speaking out forcefully and bluntly.

The Chairperson talked about how this Committee has functioned in a bipartisan way; and, indeed we have. Our biggest problem is we're not always able to function in a bi-state way.

FREEHOLDER AMOROSO: Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So that what's happened here -- and I've described it a few times -- it's almost like a giant Monopoly-- You know, "You give me one PATH extension, I'll give you one Bus Terminal," or whatever -- which is not a way to run a regional transportation program.

We all know and we've heard -- I think we heard from NJ Transit this afternoon on how the larger majority of the users are New Jersey residents. Although I've been contacted by some people and some press up in Rockland County to remind us that there are New Yorkers who actually go across the river.

FREEHOLDER AMOROSO: That's true.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So how-- It would be helpful if we had two Governors who had the same goals in mind, but that doesn't apparently seem to exist right now.

And just a couple of comments to Michael.

I know Leonia very well; it's not only when a minor accident happens on the GW Bridge; if somebody sneezes on the Cross-Bronx Expressway (laughter), there is a backup all the way through the Borough of Leonia, back into Teaneck, and into Hackensack, as you go down Fort Lee Road in particular.

And I know it's not exactly on point, but we have reached out on behalf the Mayor and Council of Leonia -- which is this small town stuck between the Meadowlands there -- the wetlands, or the County Park and Fort Lee -- to ask them to provide some more resources, at least on those days when the traffic is horrendous. And you add to that all these wonderful apps, like *Waze* -- that when the main roads are backed up they, on your phone, direct you right through all the streets of Leonia--

MR. PHELAN: It's wonderful.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --causing no problems. (laughter)

We have to figure out if we can disarm that app (laughter), or at least take the name *Leonia* out of their directions

MR. PHELAN: We need a hacker.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So I thank both of you for being here. And it's not only that the larger majority are New Jersey residents; with all due respect -- I know Senator Kean is waiting for this next one (laughter) --

SENATOR KEAN: I know what it's going to be. (laughter)

SENATOR WEINBERG: Welcome to Bergen, again, Senator Kean. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: I committed that we're doing a hearing in Union County.

SENATOR KEAN: Yes, at some--

SENATOR WEINBERG: We promised we were going to Union County, and we will.

But a good portion of those New Jersey residents are from Bergen County.

SENATOR GORDON: Actually, the largest share of users of the Port Authority Bus Terminal -- over 28 percent of users of the Bus Terminal are from Bergen County.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So to provide a usable Bus Terminal -- it seemed to me that the very first town hall meeting that we had in Teaneck -- which was so well-attended, and they've solved some of the immediate problems subsequent to that -- but the fact that this Bus Terminal had never even been mentioned in the capital plan, before this current capital plan that's under discussion, was amazing to me. There are 230,000 bus riders in and out of there, each morning and coming home each night; and a big percentage of them come to Leonia, or through Leonia.

MR. PHELAN: If they can make it.

SENATOR WEINBERG: And the horror stories-- I mean, the lines-- They had to turn off the escalators because the lines would go down through the escalators.

As I say, some near-term fixes -- thankfully, due to John Degnan, and what I said -- the \$90 million they found in the couch, is the way I described it (laughter) -- went to improve quality of life issues. We've got a long way to go. And what I guess our collective problem is, is that we

need to know there's enough money in the capital plan to actually build that Bus Terminal before -- and not starting it 10 years from now.

SENATOR GORDON: Right.

SENATOR WEINBERG: So the engagement of the Board of Freeholders, and the engagement of regular transportation users, and the kind of group that I know you represent, Michael, is extremely important. And Mary, I hope you will be here to speak as forcefully and bluntly as you just did.

So thank you.

FREEHOLDER AMOROSO: No problem, Senator.

SENATOR KEAN: If I may--

SENATOR GORDON: Senator Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: --through the Chair.

And I agree -- this has been a bipartisan affair for a very long time.

And if we're talking about the funding of projects, through the Chair -- the Bergen Loop, which is instrumental; I know it's not, per se, the Bus Terminal, but the Gateway project is the first one that actually funds the Bergen Loop in the-- It's been on the books for a long time. But isn't it true that it's the first one in the plan that actually has a source of revenue?

And the second thing is, if we're going to truly fix the structure of the Port Authority -- which is the best thing we can do for commuters, and taxpayers, and faith in government institutions alike -- is passing a real structural reform -- that's passed New York already, on a bipartisan basis; and we need to do that in this state to make sure that the true transparency and accountability is there for all to see. And I would advocate, again, that

we get that structure through, because that's the one thing that will make sure that that is not two separate branches having six-and-six on different sides; where you can actually have it be a product of a whole for the best interest of the taxpayers throughout the region, and travelers throughout the region alike.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you, Senator.

All right; I'd like to bring up another two persons. And I should point out that we're going to make sure that-- As you can see, we're recording your comments; we're going to have a transcript of your comments presented to the leadership of the Port Authority. So your suggestions are going to get to the people who can act on them; I can assure you of that.

Our first two witnesses will be Deborah Bouchard and George Rath; I would appreciate if you could just come up here. And when you identify yourself, for the record, if you could let us know what mode of transportation you use, if you use the Port Authority facilities. I think that would be helpful to know.

G E O R G E R A T H: Okay, I'll speak first, because my remarks will be very brief.

My name is George Rath, R-A-T-H; I'm a resident of Tenafly.

And I suppose my first question -- and then I'll have a follow-up question -- but my first question is, based on what you've heard from the people at the Port Authority and at New Jersey Transit, what is your best expectation, you know, if this will be completed in my lifetime. (laughter)
I'm 77 years old--

SENATOR GORDON: You look very healthy to me.

MR. RATH: Well, thank you very much. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: Well, actually, this is-- You know, this is the issue that brings us here. Because their plan calls for a Bus Terminal to be funded -- \$3.5 billion between now -- over the next 10 years. But our assessment is that you really won't have a shovel in the ground or any really meaningful construction during that 10-year period. And, if anything, the balance of the funds required -- we've heard numbers up to \$10 billion; we've also heard as low as \$7.5 billion or \$8 billion. But the balance of the funds would be in that second 10-year period. And we find that unacceptable, because the Port Authority is at capacity right now.

MR. RATH: Sure.

SENATOR GORDON: And the Port Authority's own projections are calling for a 50 percent increase by 2040. So what happens between now and the time we have a ribbon-cutting ceremony at a new Bus Terminal?

And one of the things we've suggested is that the Port might consider building on a new site to accommodate the 50 percent increase in capacity, while keeping the old building in operation; and then shifting over to the old building and renovating that so that we could try to accommodate that increase in capacity in short order.

You know, we have not gotten much of a reaction to the idea; although they are referring to a project that is scalable.

I'm not answering your question--

MR. RATH: No, you are.

SENATOR GORDON: We're trying to put the pressure on this agency and on the decision makers -- including the Governors -- to reallocate resources from things that we think are lower priority projects, like a train-to-the-plane, which-- And they have relatively low ridership--

MR. RATH: Right.

SENATOR GORDON: --and don't have a regional -- the kind of regional impact that a Bus Terminal would.

And that's one of the objectives of this and the other hearings we've had -- to just try to focus attention to it.

I hope that, given your health, that it most certainly will be built so that you can come to the ribbon-cutting.

MR. RATH: I'd just like to say, in conclusion, that I realize that you're allies in this. And I'm one of the few people, I'm sure -- I personally don't mind paying taxes, as long as they are utilized for a good purpose.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

MR. RATH: And so I'm not one of these people saying, "Cut my taxes, cut my taxes." I'm happy to pay taxes as long as I can see some result that comes out of it.

And so I'd like to thank you for all your help.

And the last question that I have, actually, is, if you could, in a few words, describe for me what-- After you've heard all the input from the different places you go -- Union County, Bergen County, whatever -- what is the result of all of the deliberations?

SENATOR GORDON: Well, they're, in fact, beginning tomorrow, I believe -- the Port Authority will be holding its own set of

hearings to get public comment. And then -- and I have not heard anything to indicate otherwise -- they're scheduled to vote on this draft capital plan on February 16. We have been calling for a postponement of that of at least a month so we can look more carefully at some of these projects, like these rail projects to Newark Airport and LaGuardia, because we have serious doubts about whether the ridership is there to justify inclusion in this first 10 years.

If you look at the capital budget, in the fine print, as we have -- it's interesting to note that there is no start date or end date for the Bus Terminal; but there is a relatively short start date -- or recent start date for these rail projects. And we are getting the impression these are being fast-tracked.

MR. RATH: Right.

SENATOR GORDON: And it's not clear to us that they're going to be eligible for Federal funding, as the Federal government looks at the ridership numbers.

Commissioner Lipper of the Port Authority said, in a public meeting, that he was concerned about the fact that these rail projects could be real money losers, which would threaten the credit rating of the Port Authority bonds; and suggests that it might be more -- perhaps, tongue in cheek -- that it might be more cost-effective to simply give everybody an Uber car instead of building these rail lines. (laughter)

They've also been touted as economic development engines, and we're unclear about that. We just haven't -- we haven't seen the data; show us the data, and we can be, perhaps, convinced.

But what we do know is that a Bus Terminal is absolutely essential to the New Jersey economy. And as I've said on numerous occasions, if the daily commute to and from New York, from northern New Jersey, just becomes too onerous -- if it has such an adverse effect on the quality of life of New Jerseyans such that they're spending three hours a day, and people are not able to spend any time with their kids while they're awake -- at some point, those 300,000 jobs are going to be filled by people who move to Westchester County. Or, worse still, the companies that are going to create those jobs may decide that to attract the skilled people who they need, they're not going to locate in New York; they're going to move to Austin, or Denver -- some other place where the commute is less onerous.

That's why we think that this Bus Terminal is -- after the Gateway project, is the most important project, and should be a priority, and should benefit from the reallocation of resources.

MR. RATH: I couldn't agree with you more.

And I would like to thank you and the other two Senators for your time and your very sincere efforts on our behalf.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

MR. RATH: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

Yes; Ms. Bouchard.

DEBORAH BOUCHARD: Hi. Thank you again; thank you for the invitation to-- As Senator Weinberg--

SENATOR GORDON: If you could tell us how you commute, and--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Pull the microphones a little closer;
both--

MS. BOUCHARD: I'm sorry? Say that again.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Pull both microphones a little closer.

MS. BOUCHARD: Oh, okay.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Right.

MS. BOUCHARD: Is that better?

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes.

MS. BOUCHARD: All right.

I would like to thank Senator Weinberg and everyone for calling us. I'm one of those regular transportation users. I take the bus in and out of the Port Authority every day. But I also travel.

I'm going to just offer some comments and observations, if that's okay with this Committee?

SENATOR GORDON: Yes, sure.

MS. BOUCHARD: The Terminal has improved, but it's still in terrible disrepair. Whenever it rains hard, we end up finding buckets or garbage cans; and the ceiling that leaks -- there are hoses that go from the ceiling to the garbage cans. There was one other business that was actually harmed or damaged due to the rain that was coming down into their business.

This is not acceptable, obviously. There are holes in the ceilings; I noticed them--

Yes, please.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes, if you don't mind--

MS. BOUCHARD: No, of course not.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --my interrupting.

I remember quite well that the \$90 million -- part of that went to fix the -- I even remember the number -- 35 leaks -- coming in there. Because I said, "Well is there, like, a 36, 37, and 38?"

MS. BOUCHARD: Well, I did notice that there were less of them, which they have repaired some.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Well, but they obviously have not fixed--

MS. BOUCHARD: Repaired them all? No. And there's also, as you are going down the escalators -- there are holes in the ceilings. It's just sheetrock; this is maintenance stuff. This isn't going to take a million dollars; this is going to take some guy with some drywall to fix.

And it should be fixed, because not only do I commute there, but people travel around the world to come into New York City and visit the New Jersey Shore-- because we have some stuff, apparently, in New Jersey. Or whether they end up going to other areas of the-- And the Port Authority Bus Terminal is a hub to get there.

If I wanted to travel anywhere within the State of New Jersey, to go-- If I was in Bergenfield -- which I do live in Bergenfield -- and I wanted to go to Old Bridge, the only way I can get -- to commute from Bergenfield to Old Bridge is through New York City, which I find odd. And it's time that we think of our system a little bit better, because we should be able to get around ourselves within New Jersey, and not necessarily go into New York.

I understand that we're going to expand the building. I don't think -- I think your plan is a good one: that we maintain the building that

exists and start building another building. But we'll eventually need both of them together -- right? -- we all agree on that. It was during--

SENATOR GORDON: Or at least one-- The plan that -- the designs that we've looked at -- there would be one new facility on -- at a new site one block to the west of the existing site. And then the Port Authority would sell the building and the air rights at the old building to compensate itself, or reduce the net expenditure for the project.

MS. BOUCHARD: Is there any possibility the Port Authority would consider keeping that building and renting out those air rights, creating a bigger building on the existing site; and as we do with the World Trade Center, renting some of that out? Because apparently, it's prime real estate.

SENATOR GORDON: That may be what they actually have in mind.

MS. BOUCHARD: I do hope they do have that in mind.

SENATOR GORDON: You know, we haven't been able to get too much detail, at this point.

MS. BOUCHARD: Yes. Because we do need to expand, which brings me to the other point I was trying to make.

I was just discussing with one of the bus movers -- I'm not sure what you call them; I don't think he's a dispatcher. But tonight, maybe we'll call him a *dispatcher*. He stands in line and moves the buses into their locations so that everybody can board their buses, and keep timing, and know which bus to go where, and who is going to go out first.

He was telling me, just yesterday, they have moved a group of buses -- I think it's the Gate 212 -- they moved them to the 300 gates.

There is such pandemonium in the 300 gates now, because there are so many people that you can't find the end of the line. So you think you found it -- a few people will tell you, "Oh, yes, this is going to X, Y, and Z place," but when you actually get close to the bus, you're in the wrong line. Now you have to start again and find that line somewhere. There is just not enough space; we're going to need space. And as you know, we've overgrown those buildings.

Also, it is almost categorically -- on Fridays, you can't get out because buses can't get in, because there is traffic. Well, there's traffic every Friday; why isn't there-- But what we need to have is buses -- not just coming in from New Jersey, where they park -- but I think we need to park some more buses in New York. And we have a parking lot, which they use for cars. Now, I know we keep on wanting to make this Bus Terminal self-sufficient; I think one way is, again, building it higher and renting out some of those rooms. But I don't know if we need space to park buses; maybe a parking lot is not the best utilization of that space. Maybe we should put some buses there, so we don't have to wait in line, as Senator Weinberg has said -- we have to turn off our escalators; the line wraps three times down; we turn on our escalators; they go into the main hallways; they wrap down the hall three or four times down there. And that's just Friday. If there was an accident, I don't even want to say what it would look like down there.

So we do have to pay attention to how to better utilize things, and what we can do today to make it work for us all.

One other thing is, if we move that terminal further west one block, all the subways -- especially the No. 1, 2, and 3 lines, or the No. 7

line -- everybody has to take a subway somewhere else. I think maybe those -- what do they have at those airports; what do you call those walkers?

MR. RATH: People movers.

MS. BOUCHARD: People movers; I think we'll need some. Could you put in a word and have them, maybe, installed? Because people are going to need to get to their connections.

SENATOR GORDON: There will be a -- from what we heard today -- a longer walk to the subway. And I believe that people movers and other, like, covered walkways are, maybe, being considered.

MS. BOUCHARD: But to make people get there faster, because--

SENATOR GORDON: If I could ask everyone today to try to keep your remarks as brief as possible--

MS. BOUCHARD: Oh, I'm sorry.

SENATOR GORDON: --because I see we're starting to get some more people, and I want to give everyone a chance to speak.

MS. BOUCHARD: Of course.

One other comment is, I think the AirTrain line to LaGuardia is actually important. When I go traveling, I shop out where the tickets are, and sometimes the ticket is cheaper at LaGuardia. So then I was trying to figure out how do I even get -- I work in New York; I can leave right from my office -- how do I get from my office to LaGuardia? The only way to get there is by bus through New York City. Do you think that's a good choice? Never. So you end up just-- They do need a train there. So I don't think it's a tit-for-tat; I think it's a necessity. I'm not saying these projects don't all need to get done, because they do.

One last thing -- is if you can end up notifying the riders, as Mr. Phelan--

SENATOR GORDON: Phelan (indicating pronunciation).

MS. BOUCHARD: --had said earlier. We do have the GW Bus Terminal. I ride the A train; I ride it from downtown to the Port Authority. But if something happens in the Lincoln Tunnel, I could stay on my A train and go to the GW; instead of having to get off the train, go upstairs, find out there's a problem, pay for the subway again, and then go back uptown. Could we notify people while we're down there, "Don't go upstairs; go to the GW." It might be helpful to all of us. And then, this way, you are making less people get into the Port Authority with these crazy lines. Because everybody is going to have to wait for the next train or bus, which will take forever. Notify us down at the subway that there's a problem.

And again, I would just want to say thank you for letting us all make our comments, and I appreciate your doing this for us.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much. Those are the kinds of comments from people who are there every day that are very helpful.

SENATOR KEAN: If I may.

SENATOR GORDON: Senator.

SENATOR KEAN: If I may, through the Chair.

And to your point regarding the Bergenfield to Old Bridge, having to go through the least-direct route. That's a statewide issue in New Jersey frequently.

MS. BOUCHARD: I know.

SENATOR KEAN: I mean, no matter where you are, it doesn't seem like the bus lines or other entities are, right now, equipped or used in the way that's the most efficient travel patterns. And so that's one of the things we need to focus on, as we're talking about the air rights, as well as the parking lot; and then finally, to your point, where there are current efficiencies that can be done to make people's lives that much more -- in this knowledge-based economy, that much more knowledgeable on a real-time basis.

Your first point needs to be emphasized, regarding understanding how to better do that in this County, and also throughout the state, regarding New Jersey Transit.

MS. BOUCHARD: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Senator Weinberg.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes.

Something of a little delayed reaction to something that Michael Phelan said, too; and not quite on point. But with the GW Bridge Bus Terminal planning to open in a few months, hopefully -- I said a prayer this morning; in April is the last estimate we got -- there really should be a management plan for maintaining that. It has big escalators, community space, it will be open to the neighborhood because of the retail component, which will be a real, I think, help for that neighborhood.

But I think we should, through this Committee, also ask the Port Authority, with a brand-new facility, that there be a plan in place for maintenance, for police protection, for whatever else is needed there. I think that's a really good point. So we could add that into our input.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay; thank you both.

SENATOR WEINBERG: And thank you for the real-life adventures.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay, our next witnesses will be Miriam Taub; and I'm sorry, I can't make out the last name -- but Anne Marie from Bergenfield.

And again, if you could let us know if you are commuters, what mode you use.

MIRIAM TAUB: Good evening; Miriam Taub, T-A-U-B, Teaneck resident.

I commuted to New York for 20 years, 1989 to 2009. I lost a lot of brain cells in the Lincoln Tunnel, I'm sure. And I now commute only for pleasure. I took the 167 bus.

I've been following the Port Authority issue, going back to 1990, when it just happens I have an article here from the *Bergen Record* when there was a suggestion that there be a bus terminal built in the Meadowlands, and the No. 7 train be extended to the Meadowlands.

So earlier this afternoon, somebody made a comment about this was a good idea; this is an idea that has been kicked around for 28 years at least.

I hope I'm in good company here -- that everyone is in favor of a new Bus Terminal. And that's what I'm here to give my support to -- the Bus Terminal.

Those water buckets that collected leaks from the ceiling were there back in -- when I first started to commute 28 years ago. And so it doesn't appear that too much has changed. However, when the -- whatever can be done, as quickly as possible, to build a new Port Authority building,

I'd just like to comment that the buses -- there has to be accommodation so buses are not driving around in New York or going back through the tunnel in the evening rush; that they're there to get people out of the City quicker, reduce the traffic in that Midtown area.

That's it.

SENATOR GORDON: And I believe the plans of the new Bus Terminal include bus storage areas, so we don't have this cockamamie approach of empty buses going back--

MS. TAUB: Yes.

SENATOR GORDON: --across the Hudson to sit and wait for the evening commute.

MS. TAUB: Okay, thank you.

SENATOR WEINBERG: And as we heard further this afternoon, they pay tolls each time they do that. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

MS. TAUB: Yes.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes; Anne Marie, I'm sorry. I couldn't make out your last name.

A N N E M A R I E R O M A N O: The last name is Romano.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Bring both microphones up there.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: The other one too.

MS. ROMANO: Better? Two?

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes.

MS. ROMANO: How about that?

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes.

MS. ROMANO: I'm a commuter; I've been going to the Port Authority Bus Terminal for almost 30 years; 21 of those years from Bergenfield.

One of the attractions of moving here was the easy access to Midtown, though the Bus Terminal. Also, when I moved here, I used to take the bus up to the George Washington Terminal, which was really great. It was about 20 minutes to get there, and 20 minutes home, until New Jersey Transit really curtailed service there, and the frequency was terrible; and then I started going to downtown. That was also at the same time they instituted express bus service. So the 167 became the 177 express.

My real concern -- one of many concerns is, if the Port Authority underfunds the Bus Terminal, and then the only thing that's viable is to build a terminal in the Meadowlands. Which is a really terrible idea. Because they drop us off in the Meadowlands into trains, which are already at capacity. And that is really going to make this a less attractive place to live if you need to commute into the City, which I think many, many of us do.

Regarding the George Washington Bridge Terminal -- it's nice; they're building -- they've fixed it up and it looks nice. But if New Jersey Transit is not going to run service from there, then what is the point of having a nice, new terminal? They only have local bus service there from this area. You go all the way throughout Englewood, and Leonia, until you finally get there, and it's a really long commute.

The other thing I'd like to say -- I'd like to thank you for the focus you've put on New Jersey Transit and the Port Authority at the

terminal, because, for many years, we sat through lines that were 20 and 45 minutes long on the way home. So once Senator Weinberg and Senator Gordon started focusing and putting New Jersey Transit's attention to that problem, the lines have gotten much, much, much shorter; and the commutes a lot more--

SENATOR GORDON: We should tell you that we are going to have a hearing like this in two or three weeks, is it? In February, that will focus on--

MR. MAGYAR: February 23.

SENATOR GORDON: --New Jersey Transit. Because we have been focusing attention on safety issues and adequate investment and equipment at New Jersey Transit. As we did tonight with the Port Authority, we want to hear from users of New Jersey Transit as well. And that will be in a location accessible, I think, to the Pascack Valley Line. And at some point, we'll get a line in Union County. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: There are a couple.

SENATOR GORDON: I'm sorry I interrupted you.

MS. ROMANO: That's okay. That was about all I had to say.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay; well, thank you; thank you both very much.

MS. ROMANO: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay; our next two will be James Veach and Laura Vogel.

Mr. Veach.

JAMES VEACH: Would you care to go first?

LAURA VOGEL: No, go ahead.

MR. VEACH: I'm used to talking standing up, but I'll sit down and talk.

First of all, I want to thank all the Senators for holding this and giving us this opportunity to speak. It's very important you get into the public and talk to real, live commuters. And I'm one of them, and I really appreciate it.

First of all, I will be here in February for New Jersey Transit, because I have an earful for you on New Jersey Transit.

I've been commuting for 30 years, in and out, and always headed to lower Manhattan -- Water Street at the very tip of Manhattan. I usually take the train from Hackensack, and I go down to Hoboken. Sometimes I jump off in Secaucus and go to Midtown; and I experience the PATH station there. Sometimes I go all -- most of the time I go into Hoboken, I take the PATH; I sometimes go to Midtown, or I go into the Trade Center.

What I would like to talk about tonight a little bit-- First of all, I appreciate your comment about the three-hour commuter. Because I'm a three-hour commuter. Believe it or not, in Teaneck, New Jersey, by the time I drive to Hackensack, get on that train, get all the way to Hoboken, fight my way onto the PATH -- and it's cheek-to-jowl -- and get all the way into Manhattan, and get on another subway and walk to my office, it's an hour-and-a-half.

SENATOR GORDON: It's lost productivity,

MR. VEACH: And it's lost productivity. I mean, I work on the train, but still -- you fight your way in, and another hour-and-a-half to get yourself home -- that's three hours. And a lot of people who think about

moving to Bergen County, who hear these stories -- I think they're going to stop -- they're going to think again about moving to Bergen County. You know, you can live in Brooklyn, you can live a lot of places in Manhattan -- be a 10, 15, 20-minute subway ride from your office. Do you want to do that, or do you want to spend three hours of your life, every day, commuting under these conditions?

So I'm one of those people.

But I want to talk a little bit about something else. And that is design and architecture. I believe that good design is worth every penny, and I want to talk a little bit about what happened at the Trade Center. I lost a friend or two in the Trade Center, and I watched the process of everything coming back. And I saw the fights that went on -- about how we were going to rebuild the Trade Center. And the first concept for the rebuild was six, ugly 20-story buildings that Mr. Silverstein was pushing. And the public went ballistic over this. And eventually we had a contest. And out of that we had people competing like Frank Gehry, and Daniel Libeskind, and Norman Foster, and the very best architects in the world; and Libeskind won the contest. Now, it turns out that his site plan prevailed, but Foster got to build the Trade Center. But still, his site plan made a tremendous, tremendous difference -- Libeskind's site plan did. And then we got Calatrava, and he gave us the Oculus. The Oculus is an eye-opening thing. Now, I know it has a lot of marble in it, but the marble will last a long, long time. People already come to the Oculus from around the world; I see them, every day, walking through there. It's a destination location. People actually come to New York; they have to see the Oculus. They come down, they walk around.

I hope they don't go over to the Bus Terminal; because if they walk around the Bus Terminal, they'll think this is a third-world country, and go back home.

SENATOR GORDON: If I could just interrupt for a minute.

But the money spent-- I'm all for inspirational public architecture; I really am. I mean, I took Art 101, 102 (laughter); I've (indiscernible).

SENATOR KEAN: Did you get a degree in it, Bob? (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: No, but I got up at 8:00 a.m. in the morning to take that class. (laughter)

And I'm all for inspirational public architecture. But it's also -- you know, in a world with finite resources, money spent on marble over *here* is money that's not spent fixing the leaks over *here* or, at least, creating something functional. I'd like to think that you could do something beautiful and functional, that isn't opulent, that really spends the public's money in the most cost-effective way.

And if it's a destination, that's a wonderful thing. But it was paid for by people crossing over the George Washington Bridge.

MR. VEACH: Well, we're talking here, I think, about a public-private enterprise. Now, if we're talking public-private, I think the private money is going to things like Grand Central Terminal. A lot of people thought when they built Grand Central Terminal, "Oh, my God, look at this marble. It's so big." But what about Grand Central terminal? You couldn't put a price on it today. It's so valuable to New York City.

The private money in this enterprise is going to be smart enough, I hope, to go out and hire a world-class designer. You should have

a contest, and you should have the *Renzo Pianos* and the *Calatravas* and these other people bid on this thing; come up with something that's really amazing and interesting.

The buses that I take on the 167 -- you come off the 167 TRQ, you get out of the bus, and you're choking on diesel fumes. It stinks; it's dirty. You go down one flight, you go down another flight, you get out the front door, and what do you see across the street? Renzo Piano's New York Times building; it's a beautiful building. It's steel, it's glass, it's exciting, it's New York City. And behind you is this stinking Port Authority. (laughter)

Now, it's a good investment to bring thinkers, transit hub specialists, and architects into this project. I could see electric buses up out of the tunnels into gardens. I could see fountains. I could see glass canopies. I could see people looking to the Hudson, to Midtown, downtown, seeing the Trade Center. It could be an inspiration. It's worth the money.

I wouldn't just move it a couple of blocks over and build another ugly, three-story utilitarian piece of crap. I'd try to build something that's worth something. And it's worth the money.

So I know you have a lot of people here to speak, and I don't want to take up your time. I appreciate everything you're trying to do. I want to get rid of the water buckets and all those kinds of things. But don't short-change us on the design. We deserve better.

And as Ms. Amoroso said, commuters who go into town every day and work very hard -- and fight their way back over here to New Jersey to pay taxes -- deserve respect. And they should have a wonderful terminal

to get off in, in the morning. They shouldn't start their day and end their day in that hell hole Bus Terminal.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Veach.

Ms. Vogel.

MS. VOGEL: That was depressing. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: I think you can outdo that.

SENATOR WEINBERG: If any of you have been on the receiving end of Jim Veach's e-mails, we very often get a minute-by-minute rundown as he's going through one of these horrible commutes. So don't ask to get on his e-mail list. (laughter)

MR. VEACH: But I'll be here in February, okay?

SENATOR GORDON: Ms. Vogel.

MS. VOGEL: Laura Vogel; I'm from Englewood, New Jersey. And I represent a group of commuters, the Better Bus Alliance -- we're in the 3rd Ward in Englewood, and we suffer with no buses.

And we have approximately about 55 members so far on our list. I'd like to say I've been busy adding more, but I've been too busy dealing with rallies against our new President. Too much to do.

One word about commuting, about the Port Authority, about New Jersey Transit, is *shame*, absolute shame. I'm a commuter; I commute four to five days a week. And I was reading an article, published in 2015, by *Bloomberg Business Week* -- a scathing article about the Port Authority. And I'll just quote a couple of sentences. "What people outside New York" -- actually, the name of the article was "You think Bridgegate was bad?" -- "What people outside New York don't understand is that Bridgegate is

merely an extreme example of a chronic problem: the political infection of one of America's most important infrastructure agencies, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Christie and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo have used the agency to dole out patronage jobs and to steer money and resources from the disfavored to the favored." What went on with Samson, what went on with Wildstein -- it's an absolute disgrace. And I take it personally, because I go through hell commuting because of it, while they're blowing all the money on all sorts of stuff and favors. It doesn't make it easy for us who have to go to work every day -- who have to go to work.

We live in an area -- the Port District -- where, according to this article, at that time, it's a population of 18 million between this whole area, with the airports and-- It's 18 million, and a Gross Domestic Product of more than a trillion dollars. And we're dealing with this? We're dealing with this?

I used to take the George Washington Bridge terminal a bit, besides going down to the Port Authority, because I am in different parts of the City at different times. I had to give up going to the terminal, because I couldn't take the 77 steps anymore from the subway, up. The planning of that -- for commuters to be going through this for so long -- was atrocious; absolutely atrocious. What they put us through, and we're still-- They are going to have that Tappan Zee Bridge done sooner, and they don't need divers to build it. It's really a disgrace.

As far as the terminals -- yes, I'd like them to be a little bit nicer. But, frankly, I would just like to be able to get there without having to walk a mile-and-a-half for a bus -- because our local transportation is so

poor. It is so poor, and there are some days-- I have to tell you the truth, I've stood on the corner by my house and I watched cars go by. And if I saw somebody who didn't look too fishy or anything, I'd ask them, "Can you give me a ride up?" because it was icy or snowy, and the snow was piled up. And I couldn't get to the bus stop when my husband wasn't able to drive me, because he had to leave for work.

So I understand about the terminal; and New Jersey Transit has complained over and over again, "We can't run any more buses because we can't fit any more into the terminal." That's their problem, right? But yet this article cited that the commuter rails in the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey lost \$400 million at that time in 2000-- I don't know what it is now. Are they losing it because they don't have the ridership? Why are they losing that money? How about, we want to get to the bus; we want to get to the City -- but again, we can't even get to the darn terminal. Why not have more local buses that take us to the rails? We have a station in Hackensack that you can get onto; we have a station in River Edge. How about alleviating that way?

And our local people -- the Freeholder -- I think you should really look into more local transportation. Another -- the person who previously spoke, the young woman, had said that, "Why do I have to go to New York to go to somewhere in New Jersey to get a bus?" We need more of that. We need to be a little more respectful of ourselves here. It's just -- it's terrible.

New Jersey Transit, the Port Authority -- I see the money coming out of my same pocket. But they seem to be fighting each other so much. Why can't that be worked out? What about if New Jersey Transit

says, "Well, you know, we don't have the money for more drivers to run local buses." I've heard that excuse too. How about the Port Authority lowering their rent over there? I don't know; how much does the New Jersey Transit pay for their buses to--

SENATOR WEINBERG: We asked for that this afternoon.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes, they are going to provide that.

MS. VOGEL: They didn't provide it?

SENATOR WEINBERG: No.

MS. VOGEL: No?

SENATOR GORDON: They didn't have the data with them.

MS. VOGEL: Pardon me?

SENATOR GORDON: They didn't have the data with them, but they said--

MS. VOGEL: Oh.

SENATOR GORDON: --they were going to provide it to us.

MS. VOGEL: Well, I think that would be right off the top of their heads.

But how about lowering that a bit, so we can get to work; so we can get to work without suffering so much this way? It's very tiring.

Look, there are a lot of us middle-class folks in Bergen County. I'd like to retire at 65; but I don't think I'm going to be able to do it. You hear that?

SENATOR WEINBERG: You know--

MS. VOGEL: I don't think I'll be able to do it.

SENATOR GORDON: Senator Weinberg.

SENATOR WEINBERG: --following up to what you just said, let me just ask Jim Veach a question.

You take the train from Hackensack sometimes, yes?

MR. VEACH: Yes, Senator.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Is it -- are there seats when you get on there?

MR. VEACH: At the rush hours, you stand; at rush hour coming back and rush hours going in. If you wait for a later train -- if it shows up; sometimes it doesn't show up -- you can--

SENATOR WEINBERG: You have to go--

MR. VEACH: --you get a seat.

SENATOR WEINBERG: In other words, if she was able to take a bus to the Hackensack train station, would she be able--

MR. VEACH: I travel on the buses and the trains; and the trains are not as crowded as the buses. If Ms. Vogel could get to a train, she would be -- either at River Edge or at Hackensack--

MS. VOGEL: Hackensack, Essex, yes.

MR. VEACH: Essex -- she would have a much better shot at a seat.

MS. VOGEL: Why don't -- why isn't this considered, so we don't have to think about it? "It's only the terminal; it's only the terminal." How about we do that?

And I really feel so strongly that the Port Authority -- I just feel like they're in the real estate business. It's always renting to this one, renting-- Well, then, why is there not enough money? Why is there not enough? Where is it going? Well, I just read why. (laughter)

But please -- and I know you're going to oversee this -- make public service the first priority, please.

SENATOR GORDON: Well said.

MS. VOGEL: Please. That's what it was called once, remember? It wasn't New Jersey Transit; it was called *Public Service*.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Yes.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes, that's right.

Thank you both very much.

MS. VOGEL: Thank you.

MR. VEACH: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay, our next two -- Councilman Pat Fusco, of Leonia; and Alec Melman.

And again, if you are commuters, let us know what mode you take.

A L E C M E L M A N: I'll go first.

C O U N C I L M A N P A S Q U A L E " P A T " F U S C O: All right.

MR. MELMAN: Hello. I'm Alec Melman, I'm also from Leonia; I didn't write that down. We have a presence here tonight.

And actually I'm -- I don't know how few, but I bike to Midtown most days. And on the days that I can't, I take the bus.

And if I can just talk on behalf of the bikers for one second, which is getting more and more common, especially in Leonia, Fort Lee -- areas close to the Bridge. There's zero infrastructure once you get to the New Jersey side of the Bridge. I can ride from Midtown all the way to the Bridge on a protected, or at least a dedicated, bike lane. And the second

you get across the Bridge -- which is very pleasant to ride on -- it just dies, and there's nothing there at all. And to go east-west is putting your life in your hands on Fort Lee Road, which I sadly do most days.

So I don't know if that's something that's even the Port Authority's responsibility, on the Fort Lee side; or someone else's, or New Jersey's. But please, help us out there.

The other thing I wanted to bring up was, I know that Fort Lee has a shuttle to the ferry in Edgewater that, I believe, the Port Authority paid for -- or gave them two shuttle buses. And I would love, if that is possible, for that to be available to Leonia and Palisades Park residents as well. It's a low-cost investment, it gets people off buses, and makes more room for everyone else.

And I personally think, in defense of New Jersey Transit, the buses are clean, they're fast, the drivers are nice, and it's a pleasant ride. It's the Port Authority Terminal itself that's really the disaster part of the puzzle.

So the day that the Light Rail opens will be the last day I ever go into the Port Authority building, I promise you.

So please, let's get that--

SENATOR GORDON: Well, one of the side benefits of that Transportation Trust Fund gas tax we passed is that we have insurance that the Bergen-Hudson Light Rail system is going to be completed--

SENATOR WEINBERG: You're calling it Bergen-Hudson--

SENATOR GORDON: I'm calling it *Bergen-Hudson*, not *Hudson-Bergen*. (laughter)

MR. MELMAN: I'm ready; I'll pick up a shovel if I have to.

SENATOR GORDON: To as far north as Englewood Hospital.

MR. MELMAN: Yes, and I have been following that news very closely. And I am dying to see the environmental impact statement, and just get that rolling. It's part of the reason I moved to Leonia in the first place. I am one of the many ex-New Yorkers who moved to Bergen County. And the only thing that I had reservations about was the commute, because I knew I'd have to do it every day. Thank God I have my bicycle, and I love it. So hopefully, that will happen.

I don't know if it's possible to have an exclusive bus lane for the George Washington Bridge, if that's been considered. It works very well for the Lincoln Tunnel, and more people would use the GWB Bus Terminal if it had an exclusive bus lane. They're sitting in traffic with everyone else; it's like, "What's the point?"

And the last thing I would say is -- well, just, if we're going to talk to the Port Authority about the LaGuardia link -- the trains -- everything I'm reading is saying it's a terrible waste of money; that a bus -- a rapid transit system from the existing trains would work faster and cheaper. And it would save no time, so why are they building it? And if we have to horse-trade and get rid of the PATH extension -- to get rid of that and save \$3 billion -- that seems like a fine trade to me, sitting here on the sidelines.

That's all I have.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

Councilman.

COUNCILMAN FUSCO: Good evening, Senators. I appreciate you holding this hearing. It's long overdue.

And aside from being a sitting Councilman in Leonia, I am a commuter into New York from Leonia. And one of the reasons we moved to Leonia was the convenience. And 33 years ago, it was very convenient; and it's gotten progressively inconvenient, and difficult, stressful -- I'm sure all the adverbs (*sic*) that you've heard before.

And aside from being all these things, I'm also an architect, and I've done some urban planning in my career. So I see this-- In as much as I'd love to see a wonderful signature building between 40th and 42nd Street, we have a -- we don't really have an architectural problem here; we have a people-mover problem. We have a problem that can be easily solved with -- a lot easier-- Nothing can be easily solved; I'll take that back. But it could be addressed with a rail station -- an extension of the New York City subway station, or a connecting link into New Jersey.

The new hub for the Port Authority should be in New Jersey, where New Jersey Transit could disperse their passengers; people could go there -- a park and ride -- get on a link. Now, the link doesn't even have to be manned; you could have a link between New Jersey station and Times Square -- that's all you'd need -- on a continuous loop. You have people on the people mover -- whether it be a train, a subway train, or a PATH train type of link; but the link is needed. Once you're in Manhattan, you can go wherever you want.

The clog happens at the tunnel in the morning. With all the, what I like to call, the *sausage-link* bus lane, which is one continuous-- From Leonia, one can take a bus at 6:30 and be in New York at 7:15. If they take the bus at 7:15, they're in New York at 9:15. It's -- that's the clog.

Also, if we had a place -- a park and ride, if you will -- and in simplistic terms -- a park and ride in New Jersey where either the buses can drop people off, or people can get rides to, and then get on the connecting link into New York; then the bus service in New Jersey -- all those buses that go into New York, back and forth -- that can improve bus service in New Jersey. Because local bus service is desperately needed in New Jersey. We obviously don't have enough train service, we don't have any subway service. We need the bus service. And that would keep the physical element -- the buses -- that just go in and out, in and out -- where they do their service the best: on the Jersey side. The connection between New York and New Jersey should be a clean, automated rail line that has Point *A* to Point *B*. And then from Point *B*, those commuters can go wherever they need to go.

Also, from the standpoint of Leonia, we suffer from the backups from the George Washington Bridge on a daily basis. We've seen traffic accidents, we've seen pedestrian accidents. And I am here to implore you folks that when you do present your case to the Port Authority, for the billions of dollars that these people are going to put into their capital plan, we need some local support. We are strapped in terms of our budgets; we can't afford any more Public Safety Officers. We could use some help from the Port Authority. We are a critical neighbor to Fort Lee and to the GW Bridge. And I think it's important; and a good many commuters come from there.

So I appreciate your time and your efforts.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you both very much.

MR. MELMAN: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you; good ideas.

Our next-- We're going to hear from Karl Olszewski, a former Port Authority Police Officer, who I understand can offer some perspectives on security issues; and Mitchell Gluck.

KARL J. OLSZEWSKI: Hello; thank you for having me tonight.

Again, my name is Karl Olszewski; I'm a former Port Authority Police Officer of New York/New Jersey; I'm also a former combat vet out of Afghanistan.

And, in turn, I'm here tonight to speak to an issue that I think has been touched on in some ways, in respect to bringing the concept of equilibrium to the table. And when I say that, I echo your comments, sir, and the others on this panel; and those who very succinctly spoke before me, in regards to improving transportation, improving esthetics, but to a point where, in the equilibrium, will be that of security. Where you have one, and/or two, you have the other. Because without it, in this post-9/11 world we live in, we may just lose our transportation and our esthetics, considering what we face.

Therefore, this young lady (indicates Committee Aide Ms. Fletcher) was very kind to put a copy of an operation I wrote -- and I write quite a few, as is my training within the Police Department, but more so in the military -- called *Path to Life*. And its code name was Rapid-Rail-Response and Rescue. And if you haven't read it, I'd ask you, Senators, to please read it when you get a chance. Because it focuses on, from my perspective, the issue at hand that, unfortunately, not only the Port Authority, but that of New Jersey Transit rail and other agencies, haven't touched upon -- which is, within the course of the commute of the millions

of passengers who use the rail system, the tunnel system -- Lincoln, Holland, and the like -- and touching on bus terminals, where is the distinct definitive plan for response? Not only on paper, but on the ground -- so that when the bell rings, and we're faced, as commuters, with whatever threat we may be faced with, our first responders -- particularly the police; guns and badges -- are going to be able to negate the action of the bad guys and the terrorists so that we can go home to see our families once again.

They're not alone in this fight -- certainly they'd work in concert with the Fire Department, EMS, and the like. But the problem is that there really is no plan. And though, if you press these agencies to say they had one, they may say they do. They may show you something in written form. But yet, if you ask them the finer details of it, more than likely they would be hard-pressed to give you answers; and further, refer you to someone else for that answer.

Therefore, I would just like to touch upon a few things.

The many complaints you've heard tonight, I think, are based on the fact that there really is no operations and planning within these agencies; that is, they don't have a unit dedicated to the grievances that have been aired here tonight; and grievances rightly so aired here tonight. Further, what they need is SMEs -- Subject Matter Experts -- as you people, the Senators are; and frankly, as the people who sat here at this table are, in their own right. And if they could be brought up to speed with some form of certification respective to being SMEs, they could work in concert with the Senators to bring about these changes that they've discussed with you.

Operation Path to Life -- Rapid-Rail-Response and Rescue, in a nutshell, has to do with this. Bring the equipment indigenous to response

that's needed to save lives to the platform levels themselves. This is in deference to having the multitude of varied response vehicles -- police, fire, EMS, and the like -- responding from wherever they are and, in turn, stacking -- parking their vehicles, unloading them, bringing them down into a given terminus and/or up the stairs thereof. And in turn, unloading there -- let's say, on the subway platform -- onto the rail, moving to the train, loading the victims, and then bringing them out.

Now, given that fact, and all that I just described -- in about the half-minute it took me -- it's probably taken almost an hour for the same to happen in real life. And people, generally speaking, in situations of emergency response, don't have but more than an hour, respective to blood loss and shock.

So if you give the men and women -- the first responders -- the tools needed at the moment of crisis to respond, you will save lives. And in turn, they will have an operational plan to work with as well -- a database system, a START medical system, and direct links already pre-fabbed, pre-(indiscernible), so that hospitals know how many we have injured, and where they need to go -- so there are no hiccups or delays in saving lives.

Communications, equipment, database, structural mitigation -- so that any of the things or facilities we talked about here tonight have the apparatus in place, so if there is a fault in the ceiling, it can be handled and people's lives are not lost in the process. This means caches of equipment, strategically placed in these locations, to support the same structures you good Senators want to provide for the citizens of New Jersey, so they are lasting entities and protect the people while they travel.

Therefore, we must also have vetting in respect to response, so that if we are confronted with terroristic elements, we don't let the bad guys go, to return to fight again another day.

If you look at the history of Britain, Spain, Belgium, and the rest in regards to attacks, and our nation respective to the attacks that we have, unfortunately, been a part of, it is high time that operations and planning come into play so that the varied entities of first responders -- paramilitary and military -- come together to afford we, the people, the best protection possible, and our nation as a whole.

The capital planning of the Port Authority -- the billions they're spending-- I've read their plan. And yes, certain monies -- a lot of monies -- have to be allocated to certain things; there is no doubt about it. But I don't see much on security within their plan. Whether it be the plan prior to this one -- most recent -- or not, something must be done. Attention must be paid. And I think you, ladies and gentlemen, sitting in the seats of power that you have, can do something about that; you can sway these people in the right direction.

I'll say this: I've written a myriad of operational plans in my lifetime. And unfortunately, before 9/11, what we found was that there was no conjoining of different departments or agencies within even our own rank-and-file of government. We, as a State, should take up plans of operational alert and defend, wherein we conjoin the tri-state into one state, when need be, so that we're all on the same sheet of music for response. It's no good to have six generals at the scene of an event, wherein we only need one to do the job.

So if we take a look at these structures, we have rails, tunnels, bridges, airports, bus terminals -- these are hardened locations. They're not going anywhere. They stand as they do: four walls, doors, multiple floors. And people are using their facilities to travel, in one way or another. It doesn't take much to get people who are directed, and rightly so, to plan, organize, and then, with the backing of Senators, put into effect the security means that are needed and necessary -- again, in this post-9/11 world -- to safeguard our citizens.

And we can do it at the same time, of course, that we build beautiful buildings that people want to go to, and that are esthetically pleasing. But not at the price of security -- not at the price of security.

I've seen, as you have, the horrors of 9/11. And working down there for a year, I've seen my share of death; too much. I've seen my share of death in Afghanistan. So I say to you tonight, to please consider my words. Please consider what I wrote, respective to that three-page brief.

And please consider having me back again, for I would like to work with the Senators here in regards to operational planning and support measures.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Well, thank you very much for a very interesting presentation, something that we did not expect to hear tonight. But certainly security is a key element of infrastructure planning and everything that we need to do as we remake some of these facilities.

Interestingly -- at least for me -- before 9/11, I had an emergency management consulting firm, and developed emergency operations plans for municipalities and utilities. And I haven't been active

in the field for a while, but I suppose, with everyone else, I assumed that these plans were in place at the Port Authority. And certainly we're told that these plans are in place; perhaps not the approach that you're taking, which is -- as I understand it -- prepositioned resources--

MR. OLSZEWSKI: Yes, sir.

SENATOR GORDON: --for rapid response.

MR. OLSZEWSKI: For immediate and rapid response to save lives.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes; these are very interesting concepts and ideas that I think, in the post-9/11 world, we need to consider. I hope we'll convey much of what we learned tonight to the Port Authority. I think we probably have some follow-up questions; and I would like to have a follow-up discussion and see how we can address some of these issues that you raised.

MR. OLSZEWSKI: Very good; thank you, sir.

SENATOR GORDON: Anyone else on the Committee have any questions? (no response)

Mr. Gluck.

MITCHELL H. GLUCK: Yes. That's going to be a tough act to follow. (laughter) But I'll do the best I can.

I'm just here to make a few comments on my current bus trips in and out of the City, to see, hopefully if they can improve -- that they can be improved somewhat.

SENATOR WEINBERG: A little louder, please.

MR. GLUCK: In the morning, I travel on the bus anywhere between 6:30 in the morning and 7:00 to get into the City. The earlier bus

-- there is usually no problem getting a seat, and it's usually on time. Any bus that comes after, let's say, 6:39 at my stop -- which is Golf Court, or what you would consider Cedar Lane -- you either have to stand or wait for the next bus. So somewhere after that 6:40 bus, or 6:45 bus, could there be a way to add more buses -- that they run in tandem? Or if--

SENATOR GORDON: Could you tell us what town you're from?

MR. GLUCK: Teaneck.

SENATOR GORDON: Teaneck.

MR. GLUCK: --or the 177X -- if that bus is not completely full, maybe they can stop along Teaneck Road until they do get full and then onto the Turnpike. I think that will help with some of the overcrowding on Teaneck Road, from the Armory to Glen Point, in the morning. Because a lot of us do take the earlier buses; there's a group of us that do get on the earlier buses because it does take a shorter time getting into the City. Any time after 7:15, it could take anywhere from an-hour-and-a-half to two hours to get into the City. And I know that has to do with the bus lane and traffic and all that, but that's what we have to do to get in at a decent hour.

Coming back in the evening, the Port Authority just changed the design of how we get on to the buses at Gate 210 that come from 177X, and for the 167T and the Q.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Gate--

MR. GLUCK: Gate 210.

SENATOR WEINBERG: Gate 210 is famous.

MR. GLUCK: Yes.

SENATOR WEINBERG: You have your own (indiscernible).
(laughter)

MR. GLUCK: Well, I don't understand their reasoning for what they just changed. Because, at one point, they had the X and the T going up the one escalator; and there was one line coming down -- if it was overcrowded -- down the line and onto the second floor. And there was one line for the Q. So you only had two lines from the overcrowding from the platform going down to the second floor. And there was a certain way that everybody lined up to get on the stairs.

What they decided to do now is -- the X now has the front gate during rush hour -- and there's only one line coming down onto the second floor, down the escalator; and the T and the Q are at the back staircase; and they want two lines coming down, wrapping down onto the second floor.

To me, that makes no sense. So now you have three lines coming down to the second floor, as opposed to only two. To me, that's overcrowding downstairs; and people are very disorganized, because even going up the back staircase they want two lines. Sometimes you can't get two people next to each other on the same stairs.

So there's overcrowding; nobody knows where to go, at this point. And at night, the buses -- the starter, sometimes, doesn't, I don't feel, change the buses according to the overcrowding for the Xs, and the Ts, and the Qs. There has to be more -- he has to have more organizational power of how to change the buses, according to the schedule.

They say that there's a schedule for rush hour; but there's really no schedule. The starter has the opportunity to change how some of the buses run.

I just feel-- I mean, sometimes it takes me almost two hours to get home also, so I'm just trying to get home a little earlier.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay; thank you. Thank you both very much.

I see someone who has just entered the chamber. Assemblyman Tim Eustace of the 38th District is sitting in the back. We welcome him here.

I actually see that you're here to participate in the process.

So Assemblyman Eustace, if you would like to come forward and testify.

ASSEMBLYMAN TIM EUSTACE: Thank you, Senators.

First, I want to thank you for being here. It's great to see a Committee hearing up here in our home turf. It used to be your District, Senator; now yours, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Senator Kean, for being up here. I appreciate you being up here in our turf.

I want to thank you for actually bringing the process to the people; first of all, this is the way I think government should work. And you've heard my spiel about Route 3, but I'm going to give it you again.

We are just locked with traffic here in Bergen County. And we're never going to solve the problem until we can solve some of the commuter problems, and encourage New Jerseyites to use public transportation.

Most of you know -- and I'm sure Senator Kean is beginning to hear -- that the traffic of buses alone on Route 3 back up for miles every weekday morning. And that's because the buses can't get in and unloaded

in the Port Authority Terminal soon enough. I'm one of those people who think we need two; I know that you disagree. But that there is motion to make sure that the Port Authority does build a new Bus Terminal, I think bodes well for, certainly, the people of North Jersey, and for all of us who sit in traffic for hours on end.

I'm very lucky -- as you both know, and Senator will know now -- that I walk to work every day. But people need to get to my office every day in order for me to earn a living. And I hear the complaints endlessly about people not being able to get in and out of the City. And as a chiropractor, that adds to people's stress. (laughter) That works on one end but, at the same time, it infuriates our taxpayers.

I just wanted to thank you, and make sure that this moves forward. And if I can help at all, please let me know.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you very much.

These, I'm told, are our last two witnesses: Rob Denicola of Paramus, who took the time to write to me, a very thoughtful letter, which I've actually quoted at least once today -- I'm not saying you, specifically, but the 29-year-old lawyer from Paramus who walks three-quarters of a mile to a bus stop. (laughter)

We're also going to hear from Eugene Clements.

Mr. Clements is here; yes, Mr. Clements is with the Better Bus Alliance.

Mr. Denicola, would you like to begin?

ROBERT DENICOLA, Esq. Sure; thank you.

As you know from my letter, I moved to Paramus recently from the City, with my wife. And we moved here for all the benefits that New Jersey has: the great schools, safe communities, everything that's offered.

But I don't think we knew how hard it would be to commute. In the 2000s, I lived in Bergen County, at my parents' house, and I commuted for internships into the City. It was a lot better than it is now; it's definitely gone downhill since I was here last. We've been particularly surprised by the amount of restrictions on the ability to use the train stations in Bergen County -- Ridgewood, Oradell, River Edge. It's surprising; I don't think it has to be that way. I think there must be some kind of way to allow people from towns like Paramus, who have a train station, to park at these places.

You know, we're forced to drive, sometimes 20, 25 minutes to (Indiscernible) every morning to catch a train. If there's traffic anywhere -- in Paramus, Hackensack, Maywood -- we're going to miss our train. So it adds an additional level of stress to our commute.

So I think, generally speaking, there are ways to fix it, I would imagine; and I think a lot of that has to be through innovative solutions. For example, the one bus that is within a 20-minute walk of our house is the 168T express bus. And I use the word *express* loosely, because it takes an hour and 25 minutes to get to the City from our house. (laughter) An hour, 25 minutes; express bus. And that doesn't include traffic, that doesn't include any type of backups. That is just the schedule. It could take two hours easily; and Paramus is 20 miles from the City; 20 miles. I mean, if we were to run even just a handful of buses down Route 4, or through Hackensack, and again, the Turnpike -- you know, some type of 169R bus,

like the 165 has -- I think it would be helpful. Even just a few every morning would give people an additional means to get to the City. It adds up, you know -- the half hour, the hour, every morning. It's frustrating.

You know, I think other things that probably have been echoed a lot in the past few hours are better access to the George Washington Bridge Bus Terminal; I understand it's going to be a wonderful facility, but the only bus from Paramus that goes there right now goes down Route 4. There's no parking on Route 4. We can't get there. We can't walk along Route 4 to get there. And there are no park and rides, as far as I know. So encouraging towns to set up park and rides, or setting up new bus routes that go down local routes and give you access to the George Washington Bridge Bus Terminal will give commuters another options.

SENATOR GORDON: Or perhaps providing some subsidies to municipalities to just run shuttles--

MR. DENICOLA: Yes.

SENATOR GORDON: --to the point at which they can get on a bus.

MR. DENICOLA: And I have spoken to the Paramus Borough Council about this, and I think they are looking into it -- some type--

SENATOR GORDON: Fair Lawn has something like that.

MR. DENICOLA: Yes, right. I think Glen Ridge, New Jersey, has something like this; a few other towns.

And I understand it's very popular. So I think that could be a really important option. Because right now, there's just no access to a lot of the buses that would get us to the City in a reasonable amount of time.

And I think, also, the ferry terminals are very underutilized. But again, there are no buses to the terminals. We can't get there.

And to expect people to drive -- however long it takes, depending on traffic, to get to these places -- is unrealistic. And honestly, I think it's going to end up scaring away a lot of young couples who probably would love to move to New Jersey, but they're scared off. I've spoken to them. They've moved to Westchester, they moved to Long Island. They don't move to Bergen County because--

SENATOR GORDON: See, Senator Weinberg, this is the message that I've been delivering *ad nauseum*-- (laughter)

MR. DENICOLA: Right.

SENATOR GORDON: --and I think it's a genuine concern--

MR. DENICOLA: It's a concern.

SENATOR GORDON: --that people are just not going to come to--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay; you don't have to repeat it again. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: I just love to hear myself--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Every time he says it, I see Governor Cuomo in the background saying, "Good." (laughter)

MR. DENICOLA: Yes, absolutely, absolutely.

SENATOR WEINBERG: That's why I don't like him to keep saying that.

MR. DENICOLA: And I don't want that, you know. I want Bergen County to be a prosperous county for years to come. But unless we do something, I just-- I don't see people clamoring to walk through the Port

Authority every night to stand on long lines -- going down escalators, going down, you know, corridors that are poorly lit, the ceilings that are falling down -- to wait in line. I just don't see it happening. And it's scary for me, because we made a huge investment to come here, for everything this County has to offer.

And, you know, we really appreciate everyone looking into this and gathering public input. Because I think that's the first step in really figuring this out.

SENATOR GORDON: Well, thank you very much. I hope we can continue speaking about this. You've had some very -- I thought very useful suggestions to make--

MR. DENICOLA: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: --which we're going to pass on to the Port Authority.

MR. DENICOLA: Thank you.

SENATOR KEAN: If I may, through the Chair.

SENATOR GORDON: Senator Kean; sorry.

SENATOR KEAN: If you wouldn't mind, through the Chair, if you would share your comments--

SENATOR GORDON: Yes.

SENATOR KEAN: --the letter to the rest -- the other Committee members so that we can continue to--

SENATOR GORDON: Yes, my staff will make sure that that letter gets circulated.

SENATOR KEAN: I just wanted to make sure we're not breaking the Senator-constituents line of communication (laughter), and

OPRAing it in an inappropriate way. I'm just simply asking if -- some of your insights can be, I'm sure, of great significance.

MR. DENICOLA: Yes, I would appreciate that.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes, Thank you.

MR. DENICOLA: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Mr. Clements.

EUGENE R. CLEMENTS: Thank you for coming to speak to us, and to let us hear what your thoughts are, and so far as we have.

I'm here as an Englewood resident; my neighbor and friend, Laura Vogel, spoke earlier. We both are interested in the bus situation that we don't have in Englewood. We've been denied the service from the Red and Tan, who has essentially decided that no one in the pocket of the Northern Valley -- that they formerly serviced -- is worth bothering with any longer.

And when I was young-- My family has lived in Englewood for 170 years. So we have seen the trains come, we have seen the horses go; we are hoping, at some point in the future, to see the Light Rail -- our Mayor is very interested in that. But we can't get to these facilities from pretty much anyplace in the town. And that makes it very difficult.

As many of the people have mentioned, the access that is available, isn't available to everyone. And getting to that access is very, very difficult.

Now, I followed, on occasion, some of the small vehicles that are utilized for medical services and more emergency-oriented things. And a lot of those are very specific, where you call up and you make an arrangement, and so on and so forth. But they have a maneuverability and

a flexibility that a full-scale bus doesn't have. And if there were something, such as the Light Rail, ultimately built to expand the service into the City, how to get to that will be just as much of a problem as it is now.

So there should be a greater understanding and a greater development of a much more flexible, small scale, set of circumstances in some manner, to get to the facilities that already exist. And there has to be a curtailment of the removal of the existing services. The Red and Tan, you know, just-- When my wife and I first rebought a house near where I grew up, 30 years ago, there was a bus on the corner every half-hour, going in each direction. Ten years later, we bought another house on a parallel road, where there had also been buses going in each direction every half-hour.

Since -- in the time that we've been there, all those buses have been eliminated. There are now no buses of any sort on one of the roads that we live on; and on the other road we started out on, there's, like, one or two buses a day, and that's it.

And at night, Laura has complained to me often, that if she comes down Route 4, and has to get off in order to get into Englewood, she is three-and-a-half or four miles away from her house at night. And there's not even a sidewalk. So it becomes a question of danger and difficulty. And it just seems some wrong-headed thinking to eliminate the scale of buses that were formerly there -- that people expected to always be there -- bought their houses, invested in the towns, and suddenly, all of that access is removed, and you're just left adrift.

I myself haven't been on a bus since 1986. I have to say one of the main reasons I've not been on a bus is because the Port Authority-- I bought the story from the Port Authority that when the Statue of Liberty

had its 100-year anniversary, that they were going to provide lots and lots of buses. So we all went in, and were in there, and we stayed way too late. And we get back up to the Bus Terminal, and there are no buses. They got us in there, and they just left us there. We had to walk, you know; we had to walk all the way back. And there were thousands of people there, and riots in the 178th Street bus station. They were very irresponsible in that way.

And this has just been going on -- they have just continued that way of thinking. They really do not care about the people who utilize their service. And we're hoping that someone who is looking over their shoulder is thinking about it -- both New Jersey Transit and the Port Authority both. They don't seem to really care very much about the people who are taking advantage of what meager services they do offer. And they keep cutting them back, limiting the ridership further, and then using that as an excuse to cut them even further.

If you don't have the service that you can rely on, why would you be thinking you could use it? If you'd only take one bus in each direction a day, that's like having nothing at all because, you know, maybe you're not ready to go at that exact moment. It's totally unsuitable.

And there are solutions; there are very simple solutions. Where we live in Englewood, there are -- I forget the exact number -- but it is close to 60, 70 buses that travel on Teaneck Road just, maybe, three-quarters of a mile from one of the previous routes. And all they'd have to do is take a little loop, and they could pick up everybody who had formerly used the buses that were eliminated. And New Jersey Transit -- which we have spoken to several times, and have been to many of their meetings -- and

they just refuse to take that tiny little loop that could come off Teaneck Road, travel down through Englewood, get back on Teaneck Road.

And they don't have to use every bus; it would just be every now and then. And they have the express buses, the normally scheduled buses; many of them are empty; they just come one after another, empty. They go down the road, empty. All those things -- it's a question of scheduling, it's a question of planning, and of access; and we don't have it.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you.

SENATOR KEAN: How often-- If I may, through the Chair.

SENATOR GORDON: Senator.

SENATOR KEAN: How often -- because this is one of things-- Again, getting back to an earlier point regarding what's inefficient in your experiences. And if that's repeatable throughout the service area -- many buses on New Jersey Transit and otherwise -- how often do you see these plans updated, from a New Jersey Transit perspective? And if we can get that sense, through the Chair, not in your own experience, if you can just--

MR. CLEMENTS: I would really rather prefer if-- Laura, can you answer that question?

MS. VOGEL: (off mike) I didn't hear (indiscernible).

MR. CLEMENTS: Because Laura is actually, you know, much more--

SENATOR KEAN: I'm sorry. Just the -- one of the concerns that we talked about, I think, a little bit earlier is the repeatable nature of the experiences of an empty bus going by, or bus routes that are not up-to-date of the current needs, and the inflexibility of -- whether it be New Jersey

Transit or other service providers. If we can just get a sense of how frequently you get the updated schedules, or your experience in that regard would be helpful.

MS. VOGEL: (off mike) Well, usually, as far as updating the schedules -- usually they come out twice a year with a (indiscernible).

SENATOR WEINBERG: I think you need to speak into the microphone, if it's going to be registered.

SENATOR GORDON: Yes, please come up to the mike.

MS. VOGEL: (off mike) Oh, I'm sorry.

Usually every year they come out with an altered schedule. And they adjust it according, I think, to what the -- if they need more express buses, or they need more of the local -- the T or the Q.

But what's happened is, over the years -- that they force us to take just one line. So it's the 166, way over on the other side of Englewood, in the other ward; and then the other option is the 167. And if you live in between this here, it's a mile-and-a-half -- it's about two miles if you get off the 166 at Engle Street to where I am.

So what they've done is they've eliminated a lot of other lines, and they want everybody to go to the one. And this is why we're standing. This is why we're standing; and they've made it very, very difficult and uncomfortable.

And by the way, if you live in Englewood, you pay more to take the bus. The 166 is, I think, \$6 or \$6.50; the Armory bus -- you could practically draw a straight line across from where they would pick people up; it's just one is Teaneck and one is Englewood -- it's \$4.50.

MS. TAUB: (off mike) It's going by zone.

MS. VOGEL: (off mike) I'd like to know why that's okay.

MS. TAUB: (off mike) It's going by zone. It's how they zoned you.

MS. VOGEL: We're paying more, that's all I know. (laughter)

SENATOR KEAN: Well, that's-- If I may, I mean, that's part of what we're trying to get to. Because then you get the false analysis of what is peak, what's not peak; what's express, what's not express. And your ability to access that, because of an artificial zone or other data that New Jersey Transit is using, whether it's here or in other modes of transportation. And trying to get that in a much more appropriate analysis is just one of the areas we need to really drill down on, on New Jersey Transit, Port Authority, and others to make sure that they are actually using data that's helping the commuters, not hurting the commuters.

MS. VOGEL: I doubt that they're talking to each other. You know, I don't see that -- I don't see that happening. I just don't see it.

SENATOR KEAN: Well, that's part of our job.

MS. VOGEL: Yes; oh, please. Talk, talk, talk. (laughter)
Please.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Is there anyone else who would like to testify--

Thank you both very much.

MR. CLEMENTS: Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Anyone else like to testify this evening?

Please.

And if you could just, for the record, identify yourself and your hometown.

KATHARINE GLYNN: Sure. My name is Katharine Glynn, and I live in Englewood.

And just to pivot off a little bit of what my colleague said, I commute to Hoboken once a week. And in order to get to--

SENATOR WEINBERG: To Hoboken did you say, or from?

MS. GLYNN: To Hoboken once a week.

And in order to get to Hoboken, my husband has to drive me to River Edge to get the train to Hoboken; otherwise, it's a bus into the Port Authority, and a bus back out.

In order to park at River Edge -- or any of the Pascack Valley Lines -- there is a two-and-a-half year wait to get a parking space. So unless-- I mean, I'm just fortunate that I have someone who can provide that transportation to me.

But for a normal person, that's simply unacceptable. I mean, what do you do? There is no street parking, so it's a huge problem for all of us.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Okay; thank you very much.

I want to just thank everyone for your testimony this evening.

You know, we have heard from the so-called *experts*; we've heard from the leaders of the Port Authority and New Jersey Transit. But it's critically important for us to hear from the customers who are living with the services every day, and know what it's really like. And I am a firm

believer in holding hearings like this so that we can hear from our constituents directly on these things.

I can't promise you that we're going to turn these problems around overnight. What we are going to do is, we're going to feed this back to the Port Authority leadership. We, as an oversight committee, will continue our efforts to maintain oversight over this agency, over the capital budget process; keep the pressure on their leadership, on the two Governors who have total control over these organizations. And we're going to use every resource we have available to try and improve the quality of mass transit in this state. And that's a commitment I think we all make.

And we will do our very best to get the resources into these systems to improve the quality of your commutes.

Let me turn to Senator Weinberg and Senator Kean for any--

SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, I was trying to think of how long ago -- when we ran the first town hall meeting on this. Dylan, do you remember-- It's, like three years.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: (off mike)
(Indiscernible).

SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you very much. Three years ago; where we heard so much about the quality of life, and how the inefficiency, the terrible environment, really affects how people live -- how they interface with their families, whether or not they can get home in time to see their children before they put them to bed; or, as we heard in the past, whether they pay a lot of money for overtime at their child's daycare, because they can't make it back in time because of this two-hour commute.

I'm really a little disappointed to hear that some of these things that I thought had been addressed, like the leaks in the ceilings I said, a little bit jokingly earlier, I even remember the number -- it was, we're fixing 35 leaks; because I asked the question, "Does that mean that there are more than 35, or did 35 take care of it?"

Well, we heard about, obviously, 36, 37, and however many that are still there. So that's one issue.

The issue -- we heard from the gentleman from Teaneck about the long lines are still not cured, which I thought we had made great strides there.

The Englewood bus situation -- I know that my office has been working on this, not to any great conclusion. And we should continue, because something like the bus to the New Bridge Station -- it's really called the *New Bridge Station*; we like to show off our historic site there. That's what that station is named after; it's something to consider.

And certainly, bringing to the Port Authority the issue of, when this new Bus Terminal is built that its safety is considered into the basic plan.

And I guess the young man from Paramus -- you kind of summed up what this means for a young family or an older family. We have got to straighten this out. And the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has got to realize that we need the money in the capital plan to make sure that we will have this new Bus Terminal -- not beginning in 10 years, but by the end of 10 years. And we have got to be strong and continue lobbying. With all due respect, it would really be nice if we had a

Governor who is as engaged, as the New York Governor is on the opposite side, in what we believe in.

So we are going to continue needing your voices. And I can assure you, Senator Gordon and, certainly, Senator Kean has come with us -- we have gone to every one of those Port Authority meetings--

SENATOR GORDON: We have a meeting tomorrow night--

SENATOR WEINBERG: --way down in lower Manhattan, as well as in Jersey City. And we will continue doing that, on your behalf. But we need your voices; we need the voices of your mayors and councils to speak out on this. I've asked over the last year or so to get resolutions from mayors and councils to speak very strongly about what we need here. And I know we have people from Leonia, Englewood, Teaneck; hopefully, we'll -- Paramus -- you will ask for that kind of supporting backup. And I know we've devoted a great amount of time; and the one bright spot is, I say, "Well, we never have even had the \$3.5 billion before this capital plan was floated." So it's a big step forward, but not nearly as big a step as we need.

So keep on prodding, and we promise that we're going to keep on doing the same thing.

Thank you.

SENATOR GORDON: Thank you, Senator Weinberg.

Senator Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Safely home to one and all. (laughter)

SENATOR GORDON: I will just close by emphasizing a point that Senator Weinberg made.

Tomorrow evening there will be the first of two public hearings on the capital budget at the Port Authority. We will be there. And one of the things that I would like to do tomorrow is convey some of the things that we learned in the hearing tonight, and stress that this Bus Terminal is an absolute priority and a necessity if we're going to maintain any kind of quality of life in North Jersey.

So thank you all for being here, and we'll continue this fight together.

Thank you very much. (applause)

(MEETING CONCLUDED)