

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
PUBLIC UTILITIES

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, May 21, 2025
2:10 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL DRISCOLL, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN JEFFREY YOUNG, JR., VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

BILLS: 250001, 250487
RESOLUTION: 250109

1 - - -

2 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: I

3 now note that the hour has come.

4 Ms. McDonald, will you

5 please call the roll to take

6 attendance. Members that are in

7 attendance, will you please

8 indicate that you're present when

9 your name is called.

10 THE CLERK:

11 Councilmember Brooks.

12 (No response.)

13 THE CLERK:

14 Councilmember Jones.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES:

16 Present.

17 THE CLERK:

18 Councilmember Phillips.

19 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

20 Present.

21 THE CLERK:

22 Councilmember Squilla.

23 (No response.)

24 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair

1 Young.

2 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:

3 Present.

4 THE CLERK: Chair

5 Driscoll.

6 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

7 Present. Thank you. A quorum of

8 the committee is present and this

9 hearing is now called to order.

10 This is the public hearing of the

11 Committee on Transportation and

12 Public Utilities regarding Bill No.

13 250001, Bill No. 250487 and

14 Resolution No. 250109.

15 Ms. McDonald, will you

16 please read the titles of the

17 bills.

18 THE CLERK: Bill No.

19 250001, authorizing the Procurement

20 Commissioner to enter into

21 agreements to purchase electricity,

22 natural gas and motor fuel for use

23 by the City in City facilities and

24 vehicles, including agreements that

1 obligate payment for delivery of
2 such energy supplies in future
3 fiscal years, all under certain
4 terms and conditions.

5 Bill No. 250487,
6 authorizing the Procurement
7 Commissioner, on behalf of the
8 City, to enter into an agreement
9 with the Philadelphia Energy
10 Authority to purchase electricity
11 and certain attributes and benefits
12 related to the generation of such
13 electricity from Abes Run Solar,
14 LLC, for use in connection with
15 City facilities, all under certain
16 terms and conditions.

17 And Resolution No.
18 250109, authorizing

19
20 the Council Committee on
21 Transportation and Public Utilities
22 to hold hearings to investigate the
23 potential locations of new
24 intercity bus terminals in the City

1 of Philadelphia.

2 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

3 Ms. McDonald, will you please call
4 the first panel we have to testify
5 this morning on Bill No. 250001.

6 THE CLERK: Madeline
7 Schuh.

8 (Witness approached
9 witness table.)

10 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

11 Good morning. Please state your
12 name for the record and please
13 proceed with your testimony.

14 MS. SCHUH: Good
15 afternoon, Chair Driscoll and
16 members of the committee. My name
17 is Madeline Schuh, and I serve as
18 the City Energy Manager for the
19 City of Philadelphia and the Office
20 of Sustainability, Division of
21 Energy and Climate Solutions. I'm
22 here in support of Bill No. 250001,
23 sponsored by Council President
24 Johnson and Councilmember

1 Richardson. This bill authorizes
2 the purchase of electricity,
3 natural gas and vehicle fuel for
4 the City and its facilities to be
5 delivered through Fiscal Year 2028.

6 In 2010, Council
7 authorized the City to make
8 electricity purchases for Fiscal
9 Year 2011 through Fiscal Year 2014.
10 In 2012, Council extended this
11 authorization to Fiscal Year 2015
12 and has continued granting
13 additional authorizations in
14 subsequent years. Executive Order
15 No. 6-10 authorized the creation of
16 a City Energy Manager and created
17 an Electricity Supply Advisory
18 Committee. This committee meets
19 quarterly to review the energy
20 purchasing strategies.

21 The City Energy Manager,
22 reporting through the Office of
23 Sustainability, serves as the
24 primary manager of the procurement

1 of all energy forums on behalf of
2 the City including, but not limited
3 to, electricity, natural gas and
4 vehicle fuel for the General,
5 Aviation and Water Funds.

6 The energy procurement
7 work is guided by the City's
8 Municipal Energy Master Plan and
9 through conversations with the
10 City's Finance Department, Water
11 Department and the Philadelphia
12 International Airport. The
13 Division of Energy and Climate
14 Solutions strives for the City's
15 energy procurement to be low cost,
16 to provide budget certainty, to
17 have transparent pricing and to do
18 so by increasingly using clean and
19 renewable energy.

20 Examples of projects
21 that provide greater budget
22 certainty through diversification
23 of the energy portfolio include
24 renewable projects such as Adams

1 Solar and energy conservation
2 projects such as the Philly
3 Streetlighting Improvement program.
4 The City government's electricity
5 costs are significant and costs for
6 all three funds, General, Aviation
7 and Water, average to 58 million
8 over the previous three fiscal
9 years.

10 The cost to the General
11 Fund, including streetlighting and
12 signals, for Fiscal Year 2024 was
13 approximately 28 million. The
14 electricity supply portion of the
15 total bill is about two-thirds of
16 the total electricity cost. The
17 City has successfully managed
18 supply costs by purchasing in the
19 wholesale electricity markets and
20 staggering purchases to limit the
21 risk of paying a premium for
22 electricity.

23 The proposed ordinance
24 would authorize the City to make

1 agreements for the delivery of
2 electricity through Fiscal Year
3 2028 through a state-regulated
4 licensed service provider. The
5 City's licensed service provider
6 was selected through a competitive
7 process and acts as the City's
8 agent in making purchases in the
9 regional electricity marketplace.

10 In addition to
11 electricity purchases, the City
12 purchases natural gas and vehicle
13 fuel from the competitive market
14 for its largest buildings and
15 accounts. The City government's
16 competitively purchased natural gas
17 costs are significant, and the cost
18 for all three City funds were
19 approximately 4.1 million in Fiscal
20 Year 2024. The cost to the General
21 Fund in 2024 was approximately 1.4
22 million.

23 The City government's
24 vehicle fuel costs are also

1 significant and the cost for all
2 three funds, General, Aviation and
3 Water, was approximately 17.5
4 million in Fiscal Year 2024. The
5 cost to the General Fund in Fiscal
6 Year '24 was 14.3 million.

7 The proposed ordinance
8 would also authorize the City to
9 make agreements for the delivery of
10 natural gas and vehicle fuel
11 through Fiscal Year 2028 with state
12 and federally licensed providers.
13 The current providers were selected
14 through a competitive process and
15 act as the City's agents in making
16 purchases and energy markets.

17 In closing, I anticipate
18 that this procurement approach will
19 continue to provide budget
20 certainty for the City utility
21 costs, while allowing the City to
22 take advantage of competitive
23 pricing and a diversified
24 portfolio. It will also continue

1 to protect the City from cost
2 escalations and energy prices over
3 the next several years. Thank you
4 for the opportunity to testify
5 today and I would be happy to
6 answer any questions.

7 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

8 Thank you for your testimony.

9 Member Jones.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank
11 you, Mr. Chairman.

12 For the record, can you
13 give us the grid that we're
14 speaking of, the general
15 parameters, for which we are
16 purchasing this particular energy?

17 MS. SCHUH: Yes. So we
18 are in the PJM electricity grid.
19 And so, our grid stretches from
20 Pennsylvania down to North Carolina
21 and then all the way west to
22 Chicago, is the only part of
23 Illinois, so Indiana and then also
24 D.C. So it's 13 states plus D.C.

1 COUNCILMAN JONES: But I
2 meant the area in Philadelphia.

3 MS. SCHUH: Oh, sorry.
4 It's just for municipally-owned
5 facilities.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay.
7 And that is because we are in the
8 Center City grid that we separate
9 this for cost savings?

10 MS. SCHUH: Yes. So
11 this is just for the procurement
12 for electricity, natural gas, fuel
13 to run city-owned buildings. So
14 it's not for residents. We're not
15 purchasing on behalf of residents.
16 It's only for operating our city-
17 owned facilities.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: How
19 long have we been purchasing it
20 this way?

21 MS. SCHUH: Since 2010.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: And
23 help me with the reason why we
24 don't just get it from PECO?

1 MS. SCHUH: So we
2 purchase through third party supply
3 because we're able to hedge years
4 in advance. So we get budget
5 stability and then some cost
6 savings.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: I get
8 it. All right. Thank you.

9 MS. SCHUH: Yeah.

10 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:
11 And we appreciate the efforts for
12 the cost savings. Because as you
13 know, PGW, PECO and water rates are
14 all projected to go up this year.
15 And in a tough economy, this is a
16 time we really need to concentrate
17 on this. So thank you for your
18 testimony.

19 MS. SCHUH: Yep. Thank
20 you.

21 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:
22 Hearing no further questions from
23 the members of this panel and there
24 being no other panelists to testify

1 on Bill No. 250001, we will move on
2 to Bill No. 250487.

3 Ms. McDonald, will you
4 please call the first panel to
5 testify this morning on Bill No.
6 250487.

7 THE CLERK: Madeline
8 Schuh.

9 MS. SCHUH: Hello again.
10 So good afternoon. I'm Madeline
11 Schuh and I serve as the City
12 Energy Manager for the City of
13 Philadelphia and the Office of
14 Sustainability's Division of Energy
15 and Climate Solutions. I'm here in
16 support of Bill No. 250487, which
17 authorizes the City to enter into
18 an agreement with the Philadelphia
19 Energy Authority to purchase
20 renewable electricity on behalf of
21 the City from the Abes Run Solar
22 facility located in Clearfield
23 County, Pennsylvania.

24 The Division of Energy

1 and Climate Solutions is
2 responsible for implementation of
3 the Municipal Energy Master Plan,
4 which outlines four goals for
5 sustainable municipal operations.
6 Goals include: reducing greenhouse
7 gas emissions by 50% from the
8 City's built environment, reducing
9 energy use from buildings by 20%,
10 procuring 100% renewable
11 electricity and reducing or
12 maintaining costs all by 2030.

13 Through a competitive
14 RFP process, Abes Run emerged as
15 the only project that met all
16 compliance requirements while
17 offering competitive pricing.
18 Building on the success of Adams
19 Solar, it will increase the City's
20 total procured renewable
21 electricity to approximately 30%.
22 This project meets all of our
23 goals, delivering 20 megawatts of
24 clean energy for the City and

1 moving us 5% closer to our 100%
2 renewable energy target.

3 Additionally, it
4 provides a fixed rate price hedge
5 for 20 years, offering long-term
6 budget stability and protecting the
7 City from market volatility. If
8 approved, the owner-operator Oriden
9 Power, a subsidiary of Mitsubishi
10 Power Americas will design, build,
11 operate and maintain the 20
12 megawatt solar facility.

13 The City through PEA
14 will purchase 100% of the energy
15 and renewable energy attributes
16 produced from the facility. For
17 these reasons, we recommend the
18 approval of Bill No. 250487. Thank
19 you for this opportunity to testify
20 and I'm happy to answer any
21 questions.

22 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

23 Thank you for your testimony.

24 Member Young.

1 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
2 you and good afternoon. I just
3 have a question about this
4 particular ordinance. How was, I
5 guess, Abe's Run Solar selected?
6 Was it an RFP process? Can you
7 describe to us what that process
8 looks like?

9 MS. SCHUH: Yes. So we
10 issued an RFP through the
11 Philadelphia Energy Authority. I
12 forget the exact number, but a
13 number of companies responded to
14 that RFP with a number of different
15 projects that had varying lengths,
16 amount of power being offered and
17 different pricing. And so, through
18 that we evaluated all of those
19 attributes and came to Abe's Run as
20 the one that met all of our
21 compliance requirements and also
22 offered the competitive pricing.

23 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: For
24 this type of endeavor has the City

1 done something like this before?

2 And can you describe what the City
3 has done in the past versus what's
4 happening now?

5 MS. SCHUH: Yes. So the
6 City owns or the City buys the
7 energy from Adams Solar which is
8 located in Adams County,
9 Pennsylvania. It is also a solar
10 array. It's 70 megawatts and it's
11 the same contracting structure. So
12 it's a power purchase agreement
13 that the City, you know, has
14 through the Philadelphia Energy
15 Authority and that project came
16 online in early 2024.

17 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Okay.
18 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:
20 Member Phillips.

21 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
22 Thank you, Chair Driscoll.

23 I just want to know what
24 are the compliance items that you

1 were satisfied with that Abes
2 fulfilled?

3 MS. SCHUH: Yes. So
4 it's best and good faith efforts
5 project, so they outlined a --
6 sorry, let me pull up my chart --
7 an economic opportunity
8 implementation plan that outlined
9 best and good faith efforts, where
10 during their EPC contracting they
11 will include EOP targets for labor
12 participation and workforce
13 diversity into their EPC contracts
14 as best and good faith efforts.

15 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
16 Okay. All right. Thank you. And
17 then just out of curiosity, what
18 was your closest competitor to Abes
19 and why?

20 MS. SCHUH: Yes. The
21 closest competitor was another
22 solar fields that was located in
23 Ohio. However, they were not able
24 to commit to our EOP requirements

1 so they were disqualified.

2 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

3 Oh, wow. Sounds good to me. Thank
4 you.

5 MS. SCHUH: Thank you.

6 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

7 Hearing no further questions from
8 members of this panel,
9 Ms. McDonald, will you please call
10 the second panel we have to testify
11 this morning on Bill No. 250487.

12 THE CLERK: Katie
13 Bartolotta.

14 (Witness approached
15 witness table.)

16 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

17 Good morning. Please state your
18 name for the record and please
19 proceed with your testimony.

20 MS. BARTOLOTTA: Good
21 afternoon, Chair Driscoll and
22 members of the committee. I'm
23 Katie Bartolotta, Vice-President of
24 Policy and Strategic Partnerships

1 with the Philadelphia Energy
2 Authority or PEA. I'm testifying
3 in support of Bill 250487 to
4 authorize the City to enter into an
5 agreement with PEA to purchase
6 renewable electricity on its behalf
7 from the Abes Run Solar facility in
8 North Central, Pa.

9 PEA is an independent
10 municipal authority working to
11 build a robust and equitable, clean
12 energy economy in Philadelphia. We
13 enable project development for the
14 City and the School District and
15 run a variety of consumer and
16 workforce programs that support the
17 growth of our market and our
18 communities.

19 To date, we have
20 supported over \$1 billion in energy
21 projects and created 8400 jobs.
22 PEA works closely with the Office
23 of Sustainability or OOS to fulfill
24 its normal course of business,

1 evaluating and pursuing cost-
2 effective energy procurement
3 strategies that align with the
4 goals of the Municipal Energy
5 Master Plan.

6 In particular, PEA
7 provides capabilities the City does
8 not have on its own, including
9 holding long-term contracts for
10 energy procurement for projects
11 just like Abes Run Solar. PEA
12 provides energy, deal structure and
13 contracting expertise to support
14 the City's robust energy
15 procurement strategy that Maddie
16 outlined earlier.

17 Selected through a
18 competitive bid process, the 20
19 megawatt Abes Run Solar Power
20 Purchase Agreement or PPA will
21 constitute 5% of the City's
22 electricity supply. A PPA is a
23 common structure used to develop
24 and finance solar projects. The

1 City commits to buying electricity
2 from the array from a third party
3 owner who handles construction and
4 all operations and maintenance of
5 the system over the term of the
6 20-year contract.

7 This, as mentioned
8 before, the City's second utility
9 scale, PPA, after the 2024 Adams
10 Solar project, which was a great
11 success. Through this procurement
12 contract, the City will purchase
13 electricity at a fixed rate,
14 resulting in increased budget
15 stability and reducing risk
16 exposure to volatile energy
17 markets.

18 PEA supports the Abes
19 Run Solar project is a key
20 procurement strategy to ensure that
21 the City's energy supply is clean,
22 cost-controlled and affordable for
23 the long term. For these reasons,
24 we ask for your support of Bill No.

1 250847 -- sorry, 250487.

2 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

3 Chair recognizes Member Young.

4 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
5 you. Just out of curiosity, if the
6 Adams Solar project was such a
7 success, where did they -- what's
8 the difference between that project
9 and this project for them to not be
10 the selected, I guess, the selected
11 vendor for this?

12 MS. SCHUH: So it's not
13 necessarily an issue with the Adams
14 Solar project, but we just need to
15 bring more of these projects
16 online. So there's different
17 developers, different locations.
18 It depends on planned availability,
19 who's willing to build them. But
20 as Maddie mentioned before, this
21 was our compliant and cost-
22 effective proposal from the bunch.
23 So this is another opportunity for
24 Philadelphia to move toward its

1 100% clean electricity goal.

2 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Okay.

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

5 Hearing no further questions from
6 members of this panel and there
7 being no other panels to testify on
8 the bills before the committee, we
9 will now transition to our public
10 comment session on Bill Nos. 250001
11 and 250487. If you will be giving
12 public comment on Resolution No.
13 250109 regarding the bus terminal,
14 please sit tight.

15 Ms. McDonald, will you
16 please call the first person making
17 public comment we have to testify
18 this morning on bills before this
19 committee today.

20 THE CLERK: There are no
21 names for public comment.

22 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: So
23 I'd like to thank all of our
24 witnesses for joining us today and

1 that will conclude the hearing and
2 we'll now go into the public
3 meeting.

4 There being no further
5 questions from members of the
6 committee and no other witnesses to
7 testify on Bill No. 250001 and Bill
8 No. 250487, I will ask if there's
9 anyone else present in this hearing
10 whose name we have failed to call
11 and that wishes to offer testimony
12 on the bills being considered
13 today.

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:
16 Hearing none, I want to thank the
17 panels and the witnesses for their
18 participation today. We value your
19 opinions. We will now go into a
20 public meeting to consider the
21 actions to be taken on the bills
22 before this committee today before
23 returning to the public meeting to
24 discuss Resolution 250109.

1 Ms. McDonald, will you
2 please call the roll to take
3 attendance. Members that are in
4 attendance, please indicate you are
5 present when your name is called.

6 THE CLERK:
7 Councilmember Brooks.

8 (No response.)

9 THE CLERK:
10 Councilmember Jones.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES:
12 Present.

13 THE CLERK:
14 Councilmember Phillips.

15 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
16 Present.

17 THE CLERK:
18 Councilmember Squilla.

19 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
20 Present.

21 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair
22 Young.

23 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:
24 Present.

1 THE CLERK: Chair

2 Driscoll.

3 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

4 Present.

5 Chair recognizes

6 Councilmember Squilla for a motion

7 on Bill No. 250001.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

9 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 I move that Bill No.

11 250001 be reported from this

12 committee with a favorable

13 recommendation and further move the

14 rules of Council be suspended as to

15 permit first reading of this bill

16 at the next session of Council.

17 (Duly seconded.)

18 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

19 The Chair notes for the record that

20 Councilmember Jones seconds this

21 motion. It has been moved and

22 properly seconded that Bill No.

23 250001 be reported from this

24 committee with a favorable

1 recommendation and further moved
2 that the rules of Council be
3 suspended to permit first reading
4 of this bill at the next session of
5 Council.

6 All those in favor of
7 the motion signify by saying aye.

8 (Aye.)

9 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

10 The ayes have it. The motion
11 carries.

12 Chair recognizes
13 Councilman Squilla for a motion on
14 Bill No. 250487.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

16 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17 I move that Bill No.
18 250487 be reported from this
19 committee with a favorable
20 recommendation and further move the
21 rules of Council be suspended to
22 permit the first reading of this
23 bill at the next session of
24 Council.

1 (Duly seconded.)

2 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

3 The Chair notes for the record that
4 Councilmember Young seconds the
5 motion. It has been moved and
6 properly seconded that Bill No.
7 250487 be reported from this
8 committee with a favorable
9 recommendation and further move
10 that the rules of Council be
11 suspended to permit first reading
12 of this bill at the next session of
13 Council.

14 All those in favor of
15 the motion will signify by saying
16 aye.

17 (Aye.)

18 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

19 The ayes have it. The motion
20 carries.

21 This concludes the
22 public meeting of the Committee of
23 Licenses and Inspections regarding
24 Bill Nos. 250001 and 250487. We

1 will now resume the public hearing
2 on Resolution 250109.

3 Ms. McDonald, will you
4 please call the roll to take
5 attendance. Members that are in
6 attendance, will you please
7 indicate that you're present when
8 your name is called -- oh, okay.
9 I'm sorry.

10 Let me note for the
11 record Public Transportation. This
12 concludes the public meeting of the
13 Committee of Public Transportation
14 regarding Bill Nos. 250001 and
15 250487.

16 THE CLERK:
17 Councilmember Brooks.

18 (No response.)

19 THE CLERK:
20 Councilmember Jones.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES:
22 Present.

23 THE CLERK:
24 Councilmember Phillips.

1 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

2 Present.

3 THE CLERK:

4 Councilmember Squilla.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

6 Present.

7 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair

8 Young.

9 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:

10 Present.

11 THE CLERK: Chair

12 Driscoll.

13 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

14 Present. Thank you. A quorum of
15 the committee is present and this
16 hearing is now called order. We
17 have over 20 panelists here to
18 testify on this resolution so we
19 ask that written testimony be
20 summarized when possible and that
21 repetitious comments be limited.

22 Ms. McDonald, will you
23 please call the first panel we have
24 to testify this morning -- this

1 afternoon on Resolution 250109.

2 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:

3 Mr. Chair, before we --

4 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

5 But before we start, I'd like to
6 recognize Member Young.

7 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
8 you, Mr. Chair.

9 And I want to thank
10 everyone in advance for being here
11 to give us your testimony on what I
12 think is a very important issue.
13 We're going to hear a lot of
14 testimony from you, from the public
15 about the importance of having the
16 intercity bus terminal.

17 And we wanted to do this
18 to hear from you because we have
19 some very important, important
20 events coming up in our city in
21 2026. I think this resolution
22 calling this hearing is so
23 important that every single member
24 of City Council signed off on this

1 resolution to hold this hearing
2 because it is that critical to the
3 future of our city.

4 Our city is the largest
5 city in the country that does not
6 have a bus station, an intercity
7 bus station for its passengers. If
8 we're looking for people to come
9 here to celebrate the
10 Semiquincentennial, right, the
11 250th birthday of our country, we
12 must roll out the red carpet. But
13 instead of rolling out the red
14 carpet on these buses, you're
15 rolling out dirty concrete and we
16 don't want visitors from all over
17 the region and our country and the
18 world to have to see that. We want
19 to give them something to look
20 forward to in 2026 as they come
21 here.

22 We'll have the TED
23 Democracy flagship event. Of
24 course, folks know about FIFA World

1 Cup, NCAA March Madness, MLB All
2 Star Game, PGA championships and
3 typical Wawa Welcome America that
4 we have to really celebrate the
5 birthday of our nation, so we don't
6 want things to get swept under the
7 rug here. We want to be proactive
8 as we invite the world to our city,
9 and we want to make sure that our
10 city can extend its best hand to
11 those folks.

12 These intercity bus
13 terminals serve the most vulnerable
14 populations, the low income, the
15 disabled, the elderly, and we have
16 to ensure that our most vulnerable
17 populations have the means to
18 travel safely throughout this
19 country.

20 And so, I look forward
21 to hearing the testimony of you all
22 and how we can move our city
23 forward to be the 21st century
24 city, to be that world class city

1 that I know Philadelphia can be,
2 because I personally visited the
3 site where the buses are. I mean,
4 I go to the cleaners that's right
5 there in that plaza a couple times
6 a month. And for me, I'm
7 embarrassed by it. And I want to
8 make sure that our city gets it
9 right for the future, and listening
10 to you all will help us make sure
11 that we get it right. So thank you
12 for being here.

13 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

15 Member, thank you for your
16 leadership on this and thank you
17 for those insightful comments.

18 Ms. McDonald, will you
19 please call the first panel for
20 testimony.

21 THE CLERK: John
22 Mondlak. Available for questions
23 is Nicola Mammes from the Office of
24 Transportation and Infrastructure

1 Systems and Richard Montanez from
2 the Streets Department.

3 (Witnesses approached
4 witness table.)

5 MR. MONDLAK: Good
6 afternoon, members of the Committee
7 on Transportation and Public
8 Utilities. My name is John
9 Mondlak. I'm the First Deputy
10 Chief of Staff in the Department of
11 Planning and Development. I'm
12 joined by Kathleen Grady, Deputy
13 Strategic Initiatives and Executive
14 Administration in the Department of
15 Planning and Development; Mason
16 Austin, Director of Transportation
17 Planning at the City of
18 Philadelphia Planning Commission.
19 Nicola Mammes, Transit Fares
20 Program Director; and Richard
21 Montanez to my right, Deputy
22 Streets Commissioner. I'm here to
23 testify on the ongoing work by the
24 city staff to help improve

1 conditions for intercity bus
2 passengers in Philadelphia and to
3 secure a long-term facility to
4 support intercity bus travel.

5 First, I'd like to give
6 a brief overview of how we arrived
7 at our current position for more
8 than 35 years. Up until the end of
9 2025, the majority of regularly
10 scheduled intercity bus trips in
11 Philadelphia stopped at the
12 Greyhound station at 1001 Filbert
13 Street. In 2023, Greyhound
14 terminated its lease on that
15 building in keeping with its parent
16 company's business model of
17 divesting itself of real estate
18 holdings and obligations. Meaning,
19 they sold their real estate assets
20 and they canceled their leases
21 wherever possible and they've done
22 that nationwide.

23 Peter Pan Bus Lines,
24 Martz Trailways and Fullington

1 Trailways, which were subtenants to
2 Greyhound, also ceased operations
3 at 1001 Filbert Street at that same
4 time June 2023. Following an
5 initial move to 6th and Market, the
6 City shifted operations to Spring
7 Garden in November of 2023. The
8 shift was based on the availability
9 of manageable curb space, access to
10 public transit and interstate
11 highway on and off ramps, the
12 ability to flexibly accommodate a
13 facility of this size near Center
14 City.

15 In spring 2024, Mayor
16 Parker charged staff with --
17 charged us to provide real short-
18 term improvements to bus riders of
19 the neighborhood, identify options
20 to increase capacity for 2026 and
21 develop a thoughtful long-term
22 solution of which Philadelphia can
23 be proud. Intercity bus carriers
24 are currently operating curbside on

1 Spring Garden Street between North
2 Front and North 2nd in Northern
3 Liberties, with several carriers
4 permitted curbside on Schuylkill
5 Avenue between Walnut and Chestnut
6 Streets and University City.

7 The City of Philadelphia
8 contracts with DRWC, Delaware River
9 Waterfront Corporation, to supply
10 personnel referred to as
11 ambassadors to greet and orient
12 arriving and departing intercity
13 bus patrons on Spring Garden
14 Street, to provide safe, clean and
15 comfortable bathroom facilities
16 located on Noble Street, south of
17 spring garden between Front and
18 North Beach.

19 Staff with the Office of
20 Transportation Infrastructure
21 Systems, OTIS, and the Streets
22 Department, Managing Director's
23 Office are working to improve bus
24 operations on Spring Garden. Goals

1 include providing additional and
2 more easily-accessible amenities
3 while addressing the safety and
4 security concerns of intercity bus
5 passengers, and the broader
6 community by moving all or most
7 operations out of the right-of-way.
8 We are in the process of developing
9 options based on available
10 off-street locations for community
11 and intercity bus carrier review
12 and feedback.

13 In preparation for 2026,
14 the Department of Planning and
15 Development in coordination with
16 OTIS, Streets and Commerce is
17 working to develop bus operations
18 that can accommodate the increased
19 bus volume expected, ensure that
20 they are centrally located, provide
21 welcoming and dignified amenities,
22 have easy access to interstate and
23 ADA-accessible transit and serve
24 until the creation of a long-term

1 facility.

2 Guiding criteria used

3 for the interim location are:

4 Sites that are near accessible

5 public transit, sites that have

6 space for waiting areas for riders

7 to include bathrooms and sheltering

8 from inclement weather, sites that

9 can accommodate onsite sales

10 ticketing, since not everybody buys

11 their ticket online, sites that

12 have easy access to highways with

13 minimal time spent on neighborhood

14 streets and sites that have

15 proximity to businesses such as

16 retail restaurants and cafés.

17 City staff have taken a

18 data-driven approach to identify

19 potential locations using a multi-

20 step process to determine the

21 feasibility of sites. First, staff

22 internally completed a GIS analysis

23 to create a potential universe of

24 sites that met certain criteria,

1 including within a quarter mile of
2 an offstreet SEPTA station in the
3 metro network or regional rail
4 station serving more than one line,
5 lots that are at least 7000 square
6 feet, sites that can accommodate or
7 able to create wide enough widths
8 for bus turning radius, sites that
9 are ideally owned by the City or
10 another municipal entity and sites
11 that can launch in time to meet the
12 2026 event needs.

13 Based on the technical
14 requirements, 120 sites were
15 identified. The list was narrowed
16 to six potential sites based on
17 programmatic goals, site
18 configurations and specific site
19 attributes. The City engaged a
20 consulting firm to complete a
21 traffic impact analysis for each
22 site.

23 The scope of work
24 includes driveway analysis, roadway

1 analysis, traffic impacts, bicycle
2 and pedestrian access, ADA access
3 assessment and an evaluation of
4 transit connectivity and
5 feasibility and recommendations for
6 drop-off and pick-up locations.
7 This work is underway and the
8 department expects the work to be
9 completed by (inaudible).

10 Using this information,
11 the City will continue to narrow
12 the list of feasible sites and
13 begin conversations with
14 communities who could be impacted.
15 The community engagement will
16 include potential neighbors to the
17 site, bus carriers and other large
18 institutions.

19 The City is also working
20 diligently to secure a site for the
21 development of a long-term
22 intercity bus facility. In support
23 of this effort, the Planning
24 Commission pursued and was awarded

1 a Transportation and Community
2 Development Initiative grant, a
3 TCDI grant, for planning to assess
4 potential sites and provide a
5 framework for final site
6 inspection.

7 City staff conducted
8 another comprehensive analysis of
9 parcels across the city using
10 similar criteria as the interim
11 site but with larger size
12 requirements that would accommodate
13 a more comprehensive facility,
14 either stand-alone or as part of a
15 larger development project. For
16 this search, staff looked at sites
17 that are currently vacant or in use
18 as parking service, parking lots,
19 including both publicly and
20 privately-owned sites near high
21 frequency ADA accessible transit,
22 among these sites locations within
23 or near Center City with safe and
24 well-amenitized pedestrian

1 environments and with reasonably
2 close highway access were
3 prioritized.

4 Lots with existing
5 development plans or with
6 prohibitively high cost of
7 acquisition were eliminated. The
8 top six sites on that list have
9 been provided to the TCDI-funded
10 consultant for further analysis and
11 feasibility impacts. As those
12 analysis proceeds, city staff will
13 work to conduct necessary outreach
14 both citywide and targeted to
15 neighborhoods directly adjacent to
16 potential sites.

17 Because staff want to
18 ensure that communities hear
19 directly from us and only after the
20 viability of sites are confirmed,
21 we will not be naming specific
22 sites at this time, but a first
23 round of engagement will be
24 underway this fall with another in

1 the spring of 2026. The consultant
2 report will recommend one to three
3 sites for further analysis,
4 planning and negotiation with final
5 selection planned for the following
6 year. Intercity bus travel is an
7 important mode of transportation
8 for the city of Philadelphia,
9 providing a low cost travel option
10 for Philadelphians and visitors to
11 our city.

12 We understand that this
13 work requires attention to the
14 needs of nearby neighbors,
15 residential and businesses, bus
16 passengers and carriers themselves.
17 Thank you for your time today and
18 I'm happy to answer questions that
19 you might have.

20 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

21 Chair recognizes Member Young.

22 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
23 you, Mr. Chair.

24 And thank you for your

1 testimony, Mr. Mondlak. I really
2 appreciate it. Those six sites
3 that are being looked at for the
4 short-term and the long-term, are
5 they the same six sites?

6 MR. MONDLAK: They are
7 not identical.

8 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: All
9 right. And can you tell us what
10 are the differences in -- I mean,
11 you went through the testimony but
12 what are the key differences that
13 would make you select those six
14 temporary sites versus the six
15 long-term sites?

16 MR. MONDLAK: One or two
17 differences would be the long-term
18 site would need to be larger
19 because we're anticipating the need
20 for a much bigger facility long-
21 term that would require a lot of
22 infrastructure improvement and
23 things like that. I think the
24 other difference would be the

1 availability needs to be perpetual
2 on the long-term site, but it
3 doesn't necessarily need to be
4 perpetual on the interim site. And
5 that's really what I can think of
6 now as a big distinguishing factor.
7 There very well may be others that
8 our consultants are looking at or
9 folks could add a little bit later
10 as they come up.

11 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: And
12 how do some of our peer cities I
13 guess generate revenue or charge
14 the bus facilities, the bus
15 operators for using some of those
16 facilities?

17 MR. MONDLAK: I can't
18 tell you how others -- I know folks
19 on the team and Rich may have been
20 to other cities. I know we've
21 toured other cities. I can tell
22 you that we are hoping to introduce
23 an ordinance that allows us to
24 codify a system of chargebacks that

1 we hope to introduce to have
2 conversations over the summer and
3 solidify what we are doing. But I
4 don't think I can qualify myself to
5 speak to what other cities are
6 doing by way of revenue generation.

7 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: So
8 can you describe to us what we are
9 doing as a city regarding the
10 curbside drop-off, the permits
11 necessary for the operators, any
12 fees they pay and things like that?

13 MR. MONDLAK: I'm sorry?

14 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Can
15 you describe to us what the current
16 situation is with the bus operators
17 regarding the curbside drop-off,
18 any fees they pay and any permits
19 that are necessary and things like
20 that?

21 MR. MONDLAK: Yeah. I
22 think if someone from OTIS can come
23 up they can give you a more
24 detailed answer. But we do have

1 agreements with some of the
2 carriers to provide compensation
3 for the work and we're looking to
4 renew those. I believe they've
5 expired and we're looking to
6 renegotiate those right now.

7 MR. MONTANEZ: Richard
8 Montanez, Deputy Commissioner of
9 Streets. All the carriers are
10 issued a permit to pull curbside
11 per city code. So as such, they do
12 pay a fee for that. We're
13 utilizing that fee to then pay for
14 the amenities such as restrooms,
15 the ambassadors and all that. So
16 it's a passthrough back to DRWC to
17 provide the amenities they're
18 providing.

19 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: So
20 it's just a curbside permit.
21 There's no additional charges they
22 have to pay in order to -- outside
23 of doing business in the city of
24 Philadelphia, there's no explicit,

1 you know, intercity bus operator
2 fee or something like that that the
3 City would charge them for the
4 privilege of using the public
5 right-of-way?

6 MR. MONTANEZ: Not
7 currently.

8 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: When
9 it comes to -- I guess most of my
10 questions are about other cities
11 and what we've done. So I'm not
12 sure if anyone can help answer. I
13 know the consultants are here that
14 can answer those questions. But
15 when we look at what other cities
16 have been doing like in Boston, you
17 know, particularly Boston, Boston
18 is the peer city that I think of
19 that is an older colonial city just
20 like Philadelphia, has some of the
21 same challenges that we have with
22 our streetscape and our grid,
23 things like that.

24 Can we talk about why we

1 are in this position now versus
2 what some of the other cities have
3 done in the past? Like, we relied
4 on a private entity like Greyhound
5 to be in charge of our intercity
6 bus terminals and other cities have
7 not? And could you just talk to us
8 about what that thinking is and why
9 we're left in a situation now
10 because of that private entity
11 decided to divest its assets?

12 MR. MONDLAK: I think
13 the only thing I could respond to
14 that is up until summer of 2023 it
15 was working. We had a system that
16 worked. Not without any
17 complaints, but it generally did
18 work. Most of the buses did go
19 through that location and there
20 would have been no point really to
21 create an alternative situation and
22 probably would not have been well
23 received by anybody if we did that.

24 And I also would note

1 that they had a legal right to
2 terminate their lease. That was
3 not the end of the term. And so,
4 it was a little bit surprising.
5 And I don't know, maybe y'all
6 remember, for a bit everyone
7 assumed that it was the Sixers that
8 kicked them out of that site. And
9 I read about that many times in the
10 paper and couldn't believe it. And
11 we went after the Sixers like,
12 well, you just bought another site.
13 And they're like, we had nothing to
14 do with it, they wanted out.

15 And then, sure enough,
16 we understood that bus carriers are
17 being bought up by investors and
18 their goal is to limit costs. And
19 so, if they had assets, they sold
20 the assets and took the money. If
21 they had leases, they terminated
22 and they had a legal right to
23 terminate this lease and that's
24 what they did. And so, I don't

1 know, should we have been more
2 proactively responsible to know
3 that that happened or to really
4 jump on that in 2023? Maybe, but
5 we didn't and this is where we're
6 at.

7 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: So
8 how did we come to -- when did we
9 find out that this lease was going
10 to be terminated and then how long
11 after was it terminated?

12 MR. MONDLAK: I could
13 only speak to myself that I found
14 out a month or two before the
15 termination. So I found out right
16 about when it happened. I don't
17 know if anybody has a different
18 answer.

19 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Yeah.
20 I mean, I just think they just left
21 us holding the bag essentially.
22 And now, we're here scrambling
23 trying to figure out what to do
24 when we have these literally world

1 class events coming to our city.

2 So I'm trying to figure
3 out how we as a city -- and that's
4 why I asked about the fees and
5 things like that. How can we as a
6 city hold some of those operators
7 accountable, particularly for -- I
8 mean, they left us again holding
9 this mess that we are dealing with.

10 MS. MAMMES: On the fee
11 component, I just want to add a
12 little bit of more detail there and
13 share -- so my name is Nicola
14 Mammes. I'm the Transit Fares
15 Program Director with the Managing
16 Director's Office and I meet
17 regularly with all of the carriers
18 so that we can have more
19 collaboration and awareness of
20 needs and issues.

21 And on the cost-sharing
22 piece, we certainly want to enter
23 into agreements with the carriers
24 to share the cost of operating the

1 intercity bus operations in the
2 immediate but also in the long-
3 term. And so, those are ongoing
4 conversations. We're working on a
5 cost estimate of what that's going
6 to actually cost to operate and
7 also plan for the future. And many
8 of them have already articulated to
9 me that they're interested in
10 partnering with us and that they
11 want to move forward with
12 agreements.

13 We just want to be
14 transparent in how we're coming up
15 with our cost estimates. We want
16 to make sure we're providing
17 additional amenities so that we are
18 addressing the concerns of the
19 community and also the bus patrons.
20 And then once we have a good idea
21 of what that's going to look like,
22 move forward with those agreements
23 and have that cost-sharing
24 structure in place.

1 And then as John Mondlak
2 indicated, we are also working on
3 introducing an ordinance through
4 legislation to have a more longer-
5 term solution so that we can start
6 thinking about how we as a city
7 provide a world class terminal for
8 folks to come to Philadelphia. So
9 all of that is in progress and
10 actively partnering with the
11 carriers to implement that moving
12 forward.

13 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
14 you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: I
16 just want to note the attendance of
17 Member Kendra Brooks.

18 And the Chair recognizes
19 Member Jones.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank
21 you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 I'm sitting here, Member
23 Young, having a flashback not about
24 myself but about my son, who went

1 to Florida A&M, and that's 1700
2 miles across the country. The
3 first couple times me and my wife
4 took him down it was a fun road
5 trip. Drove, stopped off in the
6 Carolinas, bought things,
7 fireworks, things like that. After
8 the fifth or so time, it stopped
9 being fun.

10 And so, his frequent
11 trips home we would often put him
12 on a bus which required him to
13 travel across the country. And I
14 put my son, my baby boy, on a bus.
15 And when he came home after
16 graduation, he was a grown man.
17 The trip actually was a part of his
18 growing up.

19 But what I remember
20 about that bus station often that
21 there was a mix of crossroads of
22 people. A lot of them were college
23 students just like him. Some of
24 them were more in need, poorer

1 people, that this their only means
2 to get from Point A to Point B.

3 And I ask now based on
4 the current system, back then you
5 had amenities. If you had to go to
6 bathroom, if the bus was delayed,
7 if it was inclement weather, if
8 those things happened, there was at
9 least a shelter to be warm.
10 Security another issue, because
11 everybody that comes to a bus stop
12 sometimes they have their reasons.
13 But if you were being harassed,
14 approached, sometimes predators go
15 there, you had security there to
16 take that responsibility.

17 I ask now on this
18 curbside pickups what happens in
19 inclement weather? What happens if
20 a bus is delayed? Who is
21 responsible for clearing the
22 pathway so that people don't slip
23 and fall and hurt themselves? How
24 does a city, how are we abdicating

1 that kind of role when everybody
2 doesn't get to fly first class?
3 There's a group of people that this
4 is their only means.

5 So I guess where do we
6 fall short in our policy not to --
7 do we assume that with any license
8 that wants to pick up curbside,
9 what are the responsibilities they
10 have?

11 MR. MONTANEZ: The
12 permit allows them to pull
13 curbside. The carriers -- again,
14 the City uses those funds to give
15 back to DRWC, who then maintains
16 the area, keeps it clean, keeps it
17 clear snow by using their own
18 gators and all that. So our
19 biggest partner in this will be the
20 DRWC, who's been assisting us and
21 cleaning the bathrooms, cleaning
22 the area, keeping the area free of
23 litter and things like that.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: What

1 happens when a bus gets canceled or
2 delayed significantly?

3 MR. MONTANEZ: So in
4 this case, a lot of them wait under
5 Spring Garden which keeps them out
6 of the rain, underneath I-95 at
7 Spring Garden. A lot of patrons
8 wait there at the SEPTA station.
9 Others, there is a small waiting
10 room for tickets. I believe it
11 holds about 10 people who wait
12 there to --

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: They
14 wait under the bridge?

15 MR. MONTANEZ: Yes,
16 underneath I-95 at Spring Garden at
17 the SEPTA stations.

18 MS. MAMMES: And just to
19 add a little bit to what Rich
20 Montanez shared, part of what we
21 want to do is -- well, we
22 acknowledge first and foremost that
23 it could be a lot better and that's
24 what we really want to move

1 towards, is improving conditions on
2 Spring Garden while we find an
3 interim and then a long-term site.

4 So as part of improving
5 conditions on Spring Garden, what
6 we really would like to do is move
7 off street into private property
8 that we lease and then that we have
9 placement of waiting room trailers.
10 So our goal is to have two waiting
11 room trailers so enough space for
12 all the folks using any of the
13 carriers to access in addition to
14 collocating a bathroom facility for
15 those folks, and all of that would
16 be ADA accessible.

17 I will say that Peter
18 Pan does lease space on Spring
19 Garden. It's a small space, but
20 they do let other folks use the
21 space. So if anybody does need to
22 sit down depending on their needs
23 that is available to them. But for
24 the most part, folks are waiting

1 under the overpass. And again, we
2 want to make that better and
3 improve that and that's part of our
4 planning work right now on Spring
5 Garden.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: In
7 any of their business models are we
8 a profitable stop? I don't know
9 how to classify that. Is Philly an
10 important stop to their business
11 model?

12 MS. MAMMES: I don't
13 speak for the carriers, but I will
14 say just in my understanding of
15 servicing Philadelphia it is a
16 really great market. It's on the
17 Northeast corridor, you know,
18 between D.C. and New York City.
19 And so, it is certainly important
20 and they want to see us make
21 investments and they want to
22 collaborate with us on making
23 investments. So I would say yes,
24 but I also defer to the carriers to

1 speak to that from a business
2 standpoint.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: I
4 just want to thank Member Young for
5 kind of elevating this issue,
6 particularly in light of our
7 celebration coming, that everybody
8 doesn't get to come in the
9 Philadelphia airport first class.
10 Some people find their way to
11 experience our city humping
12 backpacks, and we need to
13 accommodate them as well.

14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:
16 Member Phillips.

17 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

18 Thank you, Chairman Driscoll.

19 So in your testimony,
20 you mentioned that we had a site
21 for travel, which was the Greyhound
22 Station. However, what I want to
23 notice that it was only for
24 Greyhound, Peter Pan and whatever

1 people that Greyhound contracted.

2 It wasn't an intercity space.

3 The space that you're
4 looking to find, is that going
5 to -- because there was always the
6 Chinatown buses. They never worked
7 in Greyhound. They never were in
8 the Greyhound station I don't
9 believe -- well, some of them were,
10 but I don't think a lot of them
11 were.

12 Once you get this
13 intercity space for busing, is the
14 plan to have and regulate all buses
15 to go into this one space and they
16 can no longer be curbside?

17 MR. MONDLAK: Yeah. So
18 it's a very good point. The old
19 station, I think there was maybe
20 four major carriers working but not
21 all of them were using that site.
22 Chinatown used 11th Street and
23 still does other carriers.
24 Carriers used other places on the

1 sidewalk.

2 So the goal would be to
3 aggregate as many of the big
4 carriers as we can. But we also
5 need to be aware that there are
6 quite a few people bringing
7 passengers into Philly and picking
8 up passengers in Philly. So we
9 need to think about if a site we
10 identify maybe is a great site but
11 can't accommodate everybody, then
12 maybe there needs to be a couple
13 sites with some overflow.

14 So I don't know that I
15 can tell you that every single one
16 of them will be in our site, but I
17 think you sort of work towards that
18 goal and see how many you can get.
19 And then if there needs to be a
20 couple here and there, like right
21 now we have a couple that stop on
22 Schuylkill Avenue in West Philly,
23 it's not significant, but it adds
24 to the volume without necessarily

1 requiring us to build a facility
2 that's so big that it becomes just
3 a problem or it costs --

4 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

5 And even Megabus in University City
6 near 30th Street, they've never
7 used that site when it was there.

8 MR. MONDLAK: Correct.

9 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: So
10 I just think about what's the goal
11 here, right. Is the goal to bring
12 everyone into one space or is the
13 goal to just make sure that there's
14 great accommodations everywhere
15 regardless if it's curbside or if
16 it's the --

17 MR. MONDLAK: The honest
18 answer is the goal is to pull as
19 many as we can, but really it's to
20 do it right and do it in the least
21 disruptive way. And if that means
22 a couple of sites, that means a
23 couple of sites. And I don't think
24 we know the answer to that. But

1 it's definitely something we're
2 looking at.

3 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

4 Yeah. I mean, I just want to echo
5 the point that I think that there
6 should be some level of standards
7 that have to be held in order to
8 have your bus be a curbside space.
9 That point I do agree with.
10 Whether or not I just hope it
11 doesn't impact pedestrian space
12 when you do that.

13 Last question I have for
14 you, I know you're going to be
15 working with some consultants after
16 you just got this federal grant to
17 kind of do studies. I just want to
18 get a better sense of in that grant
19 application, did you describe a
20 timeline because I'm used to the
21 City of Philadelphia always looking
22 and investigating things, but I'm
23 not used to the city having a
24 strong timeline on when they should

1 have their findings completed, when
2 they should have execution, when
3 execution should begin? So how do
4 we go from brainstorming phase to
5 planning now to execution? Do you
6 have a timeline for that?

7 MR. MONDLAK: There is a
8 timeline for the TCDI grant, which
9 is the end of Fiscal '26 so about a
10 year from now, maybe a little more,
11 14 months or so.

12 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
13 And what do you foresee after you
14 did the study to figure out what
15 spaces or parcels are available for
16 an intercity bus terminal? What do
17 you perceive as the timeline after
18 that?

19 MR. MONDLAK: That will
20 depend on the site. Some sites
21 will likely require much more
22 investment in infrastructure and it
23 could be -- I mean, it's going to
24 be years. This is not a normal

1 development project that you can do
2 in two years so it's going to be
3 more than two years. But I think
4 it really depends on the
5 characteristics of the site to
6 determine exactly how many years
7 and how much, but I could only say
8 more than two.

9 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: So
10 you're saying Member Young who
11 called this hearing would be able
12 to get a report from you all by the
13 end of 2026 on those findings from
14 that --

15 MR. MONDLAK: Yeah. For
16 the long-term permanent solution,
17 yes.

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
19 All right. Seems like a long time
20 but all right. Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:
22 Chair recognizes Member Brooks.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS:
24 Thank you so much. So

1 Councilmember Jones kind of sparked
2 something in me, and I think about
3 the time as a mom coming from
4 wherever on the bus with my
5 children. And it's a stop in the
6 middle of the night. It's a rest
7 stop and everyone gets off the bus.

8 One place I remember,
9 Salisbury, Maryland. You go into a
10 gas station and use the bathroom.
11 I take all my little children at
12 the time, I had three then, load
13 back on a bus to get back on. I
14 remember one time the bus the
15 connecting bus wasn't there so we
16 had to take our things off and
17 stand on the side in this gas
18 station and wait for them to find
19 another bus to take us to the rest
20 of our route.

21 I can't imagine that
22 happening here in Philadelphia
23 under the underpass at Spring
24 Garden. So when I heard that the

1 station was closed, I had a lot of
2 phone calls in my office about this
3 as well and it's been a couple
4 years now.

5 And my question was
6 about timeline too because I'm
7 certain -- now I don't have those
8 same struggles, but I'm certain
9 there are other families that are
10 trying to get from place to place
11 that are experiencing this. And we
12 have this impression as the City of
13 Brotherly love and I can't imagine
14 another parent under the underpass
15 at Spring Garden with three kids in
16 the middle of the night waiting for
17 the next bus to connect.

18 I feel like as we think
19 through this it has to be some
20 immediate solutions. And I've seen
21 folks at 30th Street with kids,
22 which is scary, and what are we
23 doing? The timeline is important,
24 but is there any way for us to

1 expedite that because safety is of
2 importance?

3 And as we get ready --
4 2026 is one thing. I'm talking
5 about the reality of families that
6 are traveling from here to there
7 and what does safety look like in
8 Philadelphia. And currently, these
9 stops don't seem like a safe
10 solution for me. And actually, I
11 do have a daughter that's away in
12 college. She's at Norfolk State
13 and we opt to use Amtrak because I
14 can't be bothered with this bus
15 confusion. But I also realize I'm
16 at a point of privilege and I can
17 make a choice not to use the bus
18 and opt to take the train because
19 it's a little bit more expensive or
20 fly her back home if it's an
21 emergency.

22 So I would really like
23 to know what can we do to kind of
24 expedite this and all these things

1 being taken in consideration? I
2 heard some really good things about
3 the trailer options and all that.
4 But what about now? We've already
5 been in this influx for several
6 years now and I'm really concerned
7 about even before 2026, like people
8 are traveling today.

9 This story that I'm
10 telling is happening to somebody
11 today, not just in Philadelphia but
12 across the country, you know,
13 because transportation has failed
14 some people, and I've experienced
15 it myself and this was many years
16 ago.

17 So are we aware of any
18 other major cities that do not have
19 or have these type of terminals
20 that we could replicate and make
21 them much safer? I think some of
22 the locations we have are very
23 questionable, especially when I saw
24 people at 30th Street unloading the

1 bus. That was kind of right off
2 the -- that didn't seem safe.

3 And did we find any
4 equitable locations for these
5 terminals to be? I heard you say
6 there were six particular
7 terminals. And I was wondering
8 what the infrastructure looks like
9 besides the bathroom and shelter.
10 What would it be like if a parent
11 with two children, small children,
12 is it feasible for them to be there
13 with multiple folks that are
14 unloading the bus that could have,
15 what, 50, 60 people on it? And
16 that's one of my concerns. Because
17 to me it's a quality of life issue
18 and I would like for us to make
19 sure that we're thinking through
20 all of these little things.

21 I do appreciate
22 Councilmember Jones talking about
23 his situation, but I immediately
24 like I said was brought back to my

1 experiences of having to ride the
2 bus. And I hope that we're looking
3 through that lens of families that
4 this is their only option to go
5 travel and visit when we have other
6 options now. So I hope I was kind
7 of clear on the direction I was
8 going in with that.

9 MR. MONDLAK: I think
10 you were, Councilmember. I just
11 summarize that there are things we
12 want to do right now. And Nicola
13 mentioned a couple and she could
14 talk more to improve the situation
15 exactly where it is right now with
16 offstreet, waiting rooms. And
17 we're open to other suggestions
18 that can make it better. That
19 standard we want to continue at
20 whatever site we select for 2026
21 and the interim site. And then
22 long-term, as I said, is the one
23 that's going to take years. We'll
24 hopefully have plenty of time to do

1 it right and just get all the
2 amenities that we need and make
3 sure that everything is thought for
4 and accounted for.

5 So there isn't a wait
6 for 10 years to make it better.
7 The idea to make it better is do
8 now and again. Nicola mentioned
9 some of that. And if you'd like,
10 we can I think talk more about what
11 those are.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: I
13 did hear some of the suggestions,
14 but the timeline was of my concern.
15 I'm thinking about what about --
16 like, this is happening to someone
17 now. I'm saying I had the
18 experience. So what I'm hearing
19 happening here in Philadelphia is
20 much worse than I experienced while
21 I was in Salisbury, Maryland.

22 I can't think of other
23 rest stops that stops where the bus
24 did. And Philadelphia can't be

1 that experience for folks as we
2 talk about growing tourism and just
3 options for Philadelphia. It can't
4 be a point of horror for a family
5 traveling for whatever reason. And
6 I would love to kind of talk more
7 to that. And we don't have to do
8 it right now on the record, but I
9 just -- Councilmember Jones just
10 triggered some memories in my mind
11 and I was wondering what are the
12 solutions in the immediate for
13 people that are traveling.

14 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:
15 Member Squilla.

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
17 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18 And thank you for your
19 testimony. And I know we said it
20 was a surprise that they left. I
21 mean, I think there's been plans in
22 the city for over 10 years of a
23 permanent station and understanding
24 why that didn't happen. I think we

1 knew they were leaving once they
2 sold their property years ago. And
3 I think the goal was to have an
4 interim place.

5 And I know we rapidly
6 responded to Market Street
7 initially and had that there. It
8 didn't work out. Moved it to
9 Spring Garden and Delaware Avenue,
10 which is not a great location, and
11 have other ideas.

12 But I think part of the
13 issue and concern is the full blown
14 plan and the trust from the
15 community that are receiving these
16 locations. We had another possible
17 location in Old City that had some
18 other issues with the park
19 services.

20 But I think part of the
21 concern is people want to see a
22 long-term plan, an interim plan
23 because it's hard to trust anything
24 we do on an interim basis will not

1 be forever. And I get concerns
2 from my constituents as I received
3 with you all about the challenge in
4 that people do want and need a
5 place for transit to operate. We
6 all know the street is not the best
7 place for that, right.

8 We all know now that
9 this is an effort that is being
10 made by the city to find a
11 location, an interim location until
12 we have a grand location that we
13 can then have all these
14 transportation buses and other
15 providers go to. But if we are
16 looking at a wide range of interim
17 places, how do those people know
18 that that is not going to be once
19 it goes there ever moved because
20 nobody else would want a location
21 in their area? How do we convince
22 them, how do we show them, how do
23 we tell people that, yes, it's here
24 because right now it's on Spring

1 Garden Street and we have a lot of
2 challenges with that.

3 If it stays there for
4 another two years, an interim
5 space, are we talking an interim
6 space of 10 years and then a
7 permanent space? How do we explain
8 where it goes, where it is now,
9 where the proposal could go, how
10 long that is and then when a
11 permanent space would be available?

12 MR. MONDLAK: I think
13 you hit the nail on the head,
14 Councilman. I think that's what a
15 lot of people are thinking. And I
16 understand the trust issue because
17 I know that different things were
18 said at different times and they
19 didn't come to fruition. So I
20 totally understand that. And I'm
21 sure you're going to hear about a
22 lot of that today and it's not
23 wrong.

24 What I can say is that

1 we applied for the grant for a
2 reason. We knew that we needed to
3 do a thorough long-term strategy.
4 We have a consultant evaluating
5 sites right now because we know we
6 need to take it seriously and we
7 need to try to not make the same
8 missteps that we made leading up to
9 this. And all we can do is share
10 that as we develop it and reach
11 conclusions and finish our
12 analysis.

13 And will there be people
14 that don't trust us? Sure. And
15 we're going to have to earn that
16 trust back and it's going to take
17 time, but we don't have that
18 information to share today which
19 I'm sure is going to be a point of
20 frustration for lots of folks.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And
22 as you say that, obviously we know
23 there's going to be an interim
24 space, whether it's the current one

1 that's there, right, or another
2 one. Are we doing it parallel
3 with an interim space and a
4 permanent space that we're going to
5 do? Are they parallel tracks?

6 Is there something that
7 we could say that -- I don't know
8 what the study is going to show and
9 what areas are going to be there.
10 That's the question that I'm
11 getting. Nobody knows. It seems
12 like any time you say something's
13 temporary people believe that
14 temporary becomes permanent because
15 it's done, we don't have to bother
16 anybody else.

17 MR. MONDLAK: Yeah. So
18 it is concurrently, although
19 there's a much shorter time frame
20 for figuring out the interim site.
21 That's something that we should
22 have the information back this
23 summer, so we should be able to
24 talk about that in the fall because

1 we need to have that decision made
2 before 2026.

3 The long-term solution
4 we don't need to make this year.
5 And so, that will be on a longer
6 timeline, but they will be running
7 concurrent for now. Yeah.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All
9 right.

10 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:
11 Member Young.

12 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Just
13 one quick question. So why are we
14 prioritizing a municipally-owned or
15 public space versus going after or
16 looking at a private space that is
17 already available, already
18 outfitted for the things that we're
19 trying to accomplish here?

20 MR. MONDLAK: Well,
21 there can be challenges. So if
22 it's municipally-owned, you cut
23 through a lot of that negotiation
24 that you have to have. Sites that

1 are privately-owned could be
2 incredibly cost-prohibitive. There
3 was, as the Councilman alluded to,
4 a thought of moving to a site that
5 had jurisdiction by the Park
6 Service. And on its surface, it
7 seemed like, okay, it's a site that
8 was built for buses and why
9 shouldn't buses be there, but there
10 was huge community outrage over it
11 and there was also opposition from
12 the National Park Service.

13 So I think every site is
14 unique and the more likely we have
15 an ownership interest, that takes
16 one issue off the table. If you're
17 dealing with a property owner, a
18 lot of property owners they have
19 their ideas of what they want to
20 develop on the site and it's often
21 not a bus depot or a bus station so
22 they're not necessarily interested.
23 If they have other assets in the
24 area, they would definitely not be

1 interested. Often the cost can be
2 prohibitive. The timeline can be
3 long, so there are challenges.
4 It's not to say that we wouldn't
5 consider it. It just makes it
6 harder. But it's preferable just
7 for the sake of simplicity if it
8 were government-owned.

9 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
10 you.

11 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:
12 Hearing no further questions, thank
13 you for your testimony.

14 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I
15 have one other question. So it's
16 not like it's out of the question.
17 You're saying it's easier if it was
18 publicly-owned, but we are still
19 going to look at --

20 MR. MONDLAK: It is not
21 a litmus test, that's correct.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
23 Okay.

24 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

1 Thank you for your testimony.

2 Ms. McDonald, please
3 call the next panel.

4 THE CLERK: Jody Holton,
5 Chris Valentin, Wendy Harvey Green.

6 (Witnesses approached
7 witness table.)

8 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:
9 Please state your name for the
10 record and proceed with your
11 testimony.

12 MR. VALENTIN:
13 Christopher Valentin. Good
14 afternoon, Transportation and
15 Public Utilities Committee Chair,
16 Driscoll, Vice-Chair Young,
17 Councilmembers Phillips, Jones,
18 Squilla and Brooks.

19 I'm Chris Valentin,
20 Assistant Chief Operating Officer
21 of Bus Operations at SEPTA. I'm
22 pleased to be joined by Jody
23 Holton, our Chief Planning and
24 Strategy Officer. Thank you for

1 the opportunity to testify on
2 behalf of SEPTA on this important
3 conversation regarding the location
4 of Philadelphia's intercity bus
5 terminal. We also want to thank
6 the Philadelphia Planning
7 Commission for including us as a
8 stakeholder in this process.

9 SEPTA fully supports
10 this effort to identify dedicated
11 intercity bus facility. Intercity
12 bus facility at the Greyhound
13 station was moved in July of 2023
14 from 10th and Filbert to the 600
15 block of Market Street. This
16 sudden transition severely
17 disrupted SEPTA operations, the
18 flow of traffic and the safety of
19 pedestrians.

20 The sudden shift also
21 rendered ineffective, especially
22 designated red-painted bus lanes
23 which were critical infrastructure
24 investment by the City and PennDOT,

1 the aim to improve transit
2 efficiency in a congested corridor.
3 Instead of facilitating traffic
4 flow, these lanes became long-term
5 parking zones for buses, private
6 vehicles, taxis and rideshare
7 services.

8 The resulting congestion
9 created unsafe conditions for SEPTA
10 operators and customers,
11 pedestrians, bicyclists and
12 intercity bus users. Specific
13 challenges for SEPTA included
14 transit stops that were obstructed
15 by idling intercity buses and cars,
16 crosswalks being blocked by
17 intercity buses encroaching on
18 intersections and intercity bus
19 workers loading luggage street side
20 on Market Street during rush hour.
21 These issues slowed SEPTA travel on
22 a major arterial route and
23 negatively impacted service
24 reliability and accessibility for

1 our customers.

2 SEPTA was forced to
3 discontinue the bus stop at 6th and
4 Market Street due to the mounting
5 safety concerns raised by our
6 employees. This closure eliminated
7 direct customer access to key
8 landmarks such as the Liberty Bell,
9 Independence Mall, National
10 Constitution Center along with
11 adjacent businesses. After months
12 of operational chaos, intercity bus
13 services were relocated to the 200
14 block of Spring Garden Street.

15 While the move
16 alleviated pressure on Market
17 Street, new challenges emerged.
18 The current location compromises
19 our Route 43 bus stop outside of
20 Spring Garden station on the El.
21 The current intercity bus zone also
22 occupies a staging zone SEPTA uses
23 for emergency shuttle buses during
24 El outages. This limits our

1 ability to respond swiftly to
2 service disruption on this vital
3 transit line.

4 Late next year the
5 shuttle staging area will become
6 even more necessary to the city's
7 transit network as I-95
8 reconstruction begins at Spring
9 Garden Station and shuttles will be
10 needed more frequently to handle
11 construction-related outages on the
12 El.

13 Intercity buses are an
14 important part of our region's
15 transportation network and SEPTA
16 fully supports the city's efforts
17 to identify an appropriate location
18 for a permanent terminal. We
19 understand that locating a new
20 terminal in a safe, accessible and
21 centrally located site that meets
22 the needs of our transportation
23 network users will be challenging.

24 SEPTA's offstreet bus

1 terminals, which are our loops and
2 transit centers, are at capacity,
3 and we face our own operational
4 challenges securing onstreet space
5 for layovers in the city's
6 congested street grid.

7 Additionally, ongoing
8 construction projects and frequent
9 scheduled and unscheduled
10 disruptions require SEPTA to
11 repeatedly relocate layover
12 locations on our busiest routes.
13 This instability renders an
14 onstreet intercity terminal
15 inadvisable. The ideal location
16 for the terminal should provide a
17 dedicated offstreet facility
18 equipped with areas for passengers,
19 drop-offs, pickups, waiting areas,
20 safe boarding and aligning for all
21 intercity coaches.

22 The location of the new
23 intercity bus terminal should also
24 facilitate convenient access to the

1 SEPTA system without disrupting
2 existing transit operations and our
3 hundreds of thousands of daily
4 riders. An accessible connection
5 to a nearby elevator equipped SEPTA
6 station would make the new
7 intercity bus terminal a true
8 gateway to the city and link
9 intercity bus travelers with
10 neighborhoods, attractions and
11 employment centers throughout our
12 region's robust transit network.

13 Growing up as a transit-
14 dependent Philadelphian, I deeply
15 value affordable regional mobility
16 options like intercity buses.
17 However, the integration into the
18 infrastructure must prioritize
19 safety, minimize congestion and
20 ensure reliability for all transit
21 users. A dedicated intercity bus
22 facility is urgently needed, one
23 that is strategically located to
24 balance operational efficiency,

1 pedestrian safety and connectivity
2 to regional attractions and transit
3 services. Thank you again for the
4 opportunity to testify and we look
5 forward to further collaboration
6 with the city and other
7 stakeholders on this important
8 matter. We're available for
9 questions.

10 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
11 you. I just have one question for
12 you. You talked about the
13 disruption in your operations
14 because of the idling vehicles,
15 rideshare cars, et cetera. Can you
16 just give us in your opinion what
17 type of infrastructure is necessary
18 to handle the pickup and drop-off
19 of the passengers given that you
20 operate a bus system? You have
21 plenty of terminals throughout the
22 city. What type of infrastructure
23 do you think the city should be
24 looking for when looking for a

1 long-term solution?

2 MR. VALENTIN: I think
3 from an operational perspective our
4 businesses are different, where we
5 have a frequency where people --
6 there's a cadence of people coming
7 in every 10 to 15 minutes, where
8 Councilmember Brooks had talked
9 about laying over places, having
10 long-term waiting areas. I think
11 that's very important, those types
12 of amenities, waiting rooms,
13 security, having places to stow
14 things.

15 I remember being a
16 customer at the Filbert Street
17 Station. They had lockers, things
18 that we generally wouldn't have.
19 So I think areas for them to queue
20 where our folks just kind of line
21 up real quickly, bunch up, get on
22 the bus. They have queuing areas
23 to offload luggage. I think those
24 are the type of amenities that

1 differ from our service to theirs,
2 and that's something they need to
3 consider in their infrastructure.

4 I don't know if, Jody,
5 if you have anything.

6 MS. HOLTON: Yeah. I
7 would say the same, that our
8 operations, our layover locations
9 are much quicker and need to have
10 that throughput, whereas they tend
11 to sit and they load luggage
12 potentially on both sides, and then
13 you have a lot of the Uber and the
14 Lyfts or friends and family picking
15 up, dropping off, so they
16 definitely need space for parking
17 or for having that moment to pick
18 up your friend's luggage as you
19 take them in a car somewhere else.

20 MR. VALENTIN: Right.
21 It's akin to the airport, the
22 departures and arrivals, how you
23 have that. We don't really have
24 that on our system much.

1 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: And
2 how important is access to SEPTA?
3 I know what your answer is probably
4 going to be. But how important is
5 access to SEPTA for those intercity
6 bus riders in order to access the
7 rest of our city?

8 MR. VALENTIN: I think
9 it's major. It's really what makes
10 us a connected city. You wouldn't
11 want to cut off any section of the
12 city. You want to make it equally
13 accessible to everyone. Again, I
14 rode to Bloomsburg University to
15 visit my sister. It's a five-hour
16 trip. I mean, I caught the 47 bus
17 to 8th and Market and walked over.
18 So I understand that a lot of folks
19 that depend on that Greyhound or
20 those intercity bus services depend
21 on us as well. So there has to be
22 a connectivity between those two to
23 have a functional network.

24 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank

1 you. You were just talking about
2 the bus. My freshman year in
3 college I went to Kutztown
4 University. I would catch the
5 Bieber bus. Unfortunately, they
6 went bankrupt by 2019, but that was
7 the only bus that got us back and
8 forth, students from Philadelphia,
9 to Kutztown University. And so,
10 without those types of facilities,
11 you know, it has a major disruption
12 on the education of the students of
13 Philadelphia residents to get to
14 some of those Commonwealth
15 university schools. We rely on
16 that. So just wanted to touch on
17 the importance of that.

18 And so, are there any
19 other questions of these witnesses
20 by members of the committee?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:

23 Seeing none, thank you so much for
24 your testimony here today.

1 MR. VALENTIN: Thank
2 you.

3 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:
4 Ms. McDonald, will you please call
5 the next panel to testify.

6 THE CLERK: Professor
7 Joseph Schwieterman, Micah Fiedler
8 and Benjamin She. Professor
9 Schwieterman and Micah Fiedler are
10 joining us virtually.

11 MR. SCHWIETERMAN: Yes.
12 This is Joe Schwieterman. Should I
13 begin?

14 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Yes.
15 Please state your name again and
16 begin your testimony.

17 MR. SCHWIETERMAN: Yes.
18 I am Joe Schwieterman. I am a
19 professor at DePaul University in
20 Chicago. I direct urban planning,
21 a thinktank at DePaul. I am also
22 the editor of a national
23 publication called Intercity Bus
24 E-news, which covers the industry

1 as well as having an annual report
2 on intercity bus. I've done
3 (inaudible) for about 20 years, so
4 I spent much of my time as a
5 researcher and policy looking at
6 intercity bus.

7 And I had a chance to
8 visit the Spring Garden location,
9 went through the old terminal many
10 times, so I'm quite familiar with
11 the setting. And for one, I want
12 to say I'm really impressed with
13 the conversation at this hearing
14 about the trade-offs and issues and
15 so forth. So it's gratifying to
16 see a city take it this seriously
17 because it is a major issue.

18 The main thing I want to
19 indicate, I'm going to be brief
20 here, is that the era of privately-
21 run terminals is rapidly ending.
22 And Philadelphia lost of course its
23 private terminal. Chicago is
24 grappling with a similar issue.

1 We're a couple years behind you in
2 terms of the crisis coming to our
3 city. And one by one, local
4 governments, county governments are
5 taking actions to solve this
6 problem.

7 And I just want to point
8 out that all up and down the
9 Northeast corridor, just briefly
10 give some examples: Boston at
11 South Station is kind of a state-
12 run bus terminal right at South
13 Station; New York, the Port
14 Authority is taking action for a
15 brand new Port Authority terminal;
16 in Baltimore, the municipal
17 government, city government worked
18 several years ago with Greyhound to
19 create a terminal south of
20 downtown; and Washington has the
21 Union Station entity providing a
22 quality bus terminal there.

23 So every city that's of
24 size has some governmental

1 leadership in this with a few
2 exceptions we mentioned. And I
3 think Philadelphia was unusual for
4 the private station lasting as long
5 as it did. Just want to give you a
6 couple other examples. Atlanta is
7 really a case example of what a
8 good new terminal can mean. And I
9 encourage the city to go down there
10 to see it.

11 It was built with city
12 support working with the state
13 government right next to the MARTA
14 transit system. And it's like a
15 little miniature airport, you might
16 say, with seats with power outlets
17 and LCD screens above and so forth.
18 Milwaukee -- so almost around the
19 country we're seeing leadership on
20 this issue, but it's sometimes
21 county governments, it's sometimes
22 transit authorities doing
23 leadership. It's sometimes port
24 authorities, but it really is an

1 issue of our time that private bus
2 companies just aren't willing to
3 budget for bus stations, which have
4 generated a lot of property tax
5 liability. So we're seeing not
6 only costs of running the stations,
7 but pretty serious property tax
8 bills over \$100,000 in some cases
9 that the industry just can no
10 longer support.

11 The acquisition of
12 Greyhound by Flix has sort of
13 accelerated this, but I commend
14 Philadelphia for just its
15 leadership to study the options and
16 find a solution. So thank you for
17 the chance to testify.

18 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
19 you, Professor.

20 Mr. Fiedler, please
21 state your name and begin with your
22 testimony.

23 MR. FIEDLER: Hi. Thank
24 you for having me. My name is

1 Micah Fiedler. First off, I would
2 like to say thank you for allowing
3 me to speak on this panel. I am a
4 transportation advocate and
5 currently a graduate student in
6 urban planning at Tufts University.

7 Last year I had the
8 privilege of working with activists
9 from all over Philadelphia in our
10 fight for better accommodations at
11 the existing bus pickup location
12 and for a plan to move forward with
13 a long-term solution to the bus
14 terminal issue. Now, I am
15 gratified to see that the City
16 Council is taking the first steps
17 on a long road towards providing
18 proper service for Philadelphia's
19 bus riders.

20 As you heard from
21 Professor Schwieterman before me,
22 the intercity bus industry has
23 continued to grow, even through the
24 bankruptcy of Megabus last year.

1 With rail service continuing on
2 reliability along the Northeast
3 corridor, more and more people are
4 likely to turn to intercity buses
5 to go between New York and D.C.
6 Yet Philadelphia, the central hub
7 of that corridor, is the only major
8 city to not service riders along
9 the line with a proper bus
10 terminal.

11 These facilities provide
12 critical protection from the
13 elements during extreme weather and
14 encourage intermodality between
15 companies and transit modes. A
16 centrally-located well-attended
17 building encourages safe use of the
18 network and can even provide
19 business development opportunities
20 for the surrounding plots.

21 1 million bus terminal
22 passengers will pass through
23 Philadelphia every year. They
24 should be greeted by more than a

1 curbside. Inspired by this clear
2 need and encouraged by the City
3 Council's initiative, I ran a basic
4 sustainability analysis on
5 potential locations for an
6 intercity bus terminal. That
7 poster you'll see to my right I
8 believe.

9 This analysis looked at
10 the vacant lots and parking lots
11 within the metro area, and greater
12 than based on factors ranging from
13 population density to land value
14 approximations to importantly
15 proximity to critical transit
16 infrastructure such as highways,
17 train stations and other bus
18 stations. For you today I would
19 like to submit this analysis along
20 with a list of the highest scoring
21 plots.

22 You may notice from this
23 analysis that a vast majority of
24 the suitable locations are in

1 Center City. It makes sense.
2 Trust the location as it is the
3 location with the highest transit
4 connectivity in the region and it's
5 bound by two major interstates.

6 The Spring Garden
7 neighborhood shows up twice as does
8 Logan Square. 30th Street Station
9 has two top candidate plots on its
10 own. I ask that you see this
11 analysis as a guide for further
12 feasibility research. I concede
13 that the best terminal location may
14 not be on this list, but the
15 factors that play into this
16 analysis should point you in the
17 right direction towards Center
18 City. Thank you, and I'm available
19 for questions.

20 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
21 you so much, Mr. Fiedler.

22 Mr. She, please state
23 your name and begin with your
24 testimony.

1 MR. SHE: My name is
2 Benjamin She and I'm speaking on by
3 half of myself as a private citizen
4 and not for past and current
5 employers. From 2023 to November
6 2024, I was with the City's Office
7 of Transportation Infrastructure
8 Systems, OTIS, where I was tasked
9 on managing the transportation and
10 logistics planning for the city's
11 interstate bus terminal, both for
12 the temporary Spring Garden
13 terminal as well for numerous other
14 proposed sites. I worked hand in
15 hand with PPA, Streets and PCPC and
16 also helped facilitate
17 relationships with the interstate
18 bus operators as they navigate the
19 city's permitting and planning
20 process to relocate their bus stops
21 to Spring Garden.

22 I was on the streets
23 every day in the first week putting
24 up the signage, you know,

1 coordinating with ambassadors and
2 doing all that. Planning for and
3 establishing a new interstate bus
4 terminal is a daunting task that
5 few cities have the appetite for
6 but is simply a non-negotiable
7 feature of any major city, period.

8 Philadelphia is at the
9 midway point of the Northeast
10 corridor and also the nexus for
11 travel to the Midwest. In other
12 words, a bus terminal here has
13 built-in growth potential to be a
14 major hub for traffic and already
15 serves as one for many carriers.

16 Interstate bus has
17 reached numerous destinations in PA
18 where now rail or air services do
19 not go and it will not reach any
20 time soon. This includes major
21 cities like Allentown, Reading,
22 Scranton, State College, South
23 Jersey and Delaware. But unlike
24 Amtrak or airports, interstate

1 buses received zero subsidies from
2 the federal government to ensure
3 these critical destinations can
4 continue to be served.

5 The disruption of
6 service to Allentown when Beiber
7 Tourism went bankrupt in 2019, as
8 Councilmember Young mentioned, was
9 a major inconvenience of travelers.
10 The 2026 festivities alone would
11 indeed bring a lot more traffic,
12 but it also requires that
13 physically more space on Spring
14 Garden must be built or else
15 carriers will have no choice but to
16 park in any open curb they can find
17 furthering confusion of riders and
18 angry neighbors.

19 So you know, what would
20 it take to basically stand up a
21 terminal basically in less than a
22 year, right. When you think about
23 the features that it would take to
24 stand this up, you would need

1 around six to eight bus bays,
2 portable toilets, an enclosed
3 waiting area and ticket stall and
4 some security. But all this
5 together would not cost more than
6 maybe \$10 million in startup.

7 Indeed many bus
8 companies have experience with
9 starting up this interfacility
10 through portable ticket stands and
11 the like. But any possible plan no
12 matter how cheap requires a strong
13 oversight, coordination,
14 permitting, power and enforcement
15 of the state to ensure this will
16 happen. Without it, any carrier
17 could choose to opt out of the
18 location and go rogue by finding
19 another open curbside space to park
20 their buses. And this activity is
21 still happening occasionally right
22 now and I feel has gone unenforced
23 by PPA and PPD.

24 So my opinion on

1 basically the long-term location,
2 if we want to invest more money
3 past 2026 is the same was as it is
4 now. 30th Street Station is still
5 the best possible site to invest in
6 the future interstate bus terminal.
7 Colocation of interstate bus and
8 rail is Boston, D.C., LA,
9 Pittsburgh and countless other peer
10 cities. The built-in ridership
11 base of the college students in
12 university and long distance
13 computers is unbeatable.

14 In addition, this site
15 was already identified as the best
16 long-term facility in the 2016 30th
17 Street Station District Plan
18 co-written by the City, PennDOT,
19 Amtrak, Drexel and Brandywine
20 Realty Trust as the authoritative
21 master plan to guide the
22 development of the 30th Street
23 district.

24 However, there are also

1 major challenges to the site which
2 require more assistance in
3 political capital than we have seen
4 thus far. The exact site
5 identified in 2016 plan, which is a
6 parking deck next to the
7 (inaudible) center, would likely
8 require structural reinforcement to
9 host multiple buses according to
10 structural plans.

11 Most daunting is the
12 fact that there are zero land
13 parcel around 30th Street Station
14 owned by local public authorities.
15 Everything there is owned by
16 institutions like Brandywine,
17 Drexel and Amtrak. Talks to simply
18 reopen the curb space on JFK
19 Boulevard to interstate buses were
20 met with large resistance from
21 those institutions, even though the
22 Streets Department does hold the
23 statutory power to regulate
24 curbside space.

1 But none of these
2 obstacles are insurmountable.
3 Philadelphia is simply at the place
4 where peer cities like D.C. were a
5 decade ago. In my opinion,
6 Philadelphia has a prime
7 opportunity to plan for and finance
8 a permanent terminal on a
9 (inaudible) Center parking deck.
10 The City has many bargaining chips
11 available to get the institutions
12 back to the table. The most
13 powerful which is the keystone
14 opportunity zone designation that
15 was set over 20 years ago by the
16 City and state at 30th Street lots.
17 With the exposure
18 development in Schuylkill Yards, it
19 already benefits these same
20 stakeholders. KOZ has already done
21 its job at 30th Street, especially
22 with (inaudible) reduction in BRT
23 and wage tax. The future of KOZ
24 should be called into the question.

1 The next evolution for
2 the district should be improving
3 critical infrastructure like bus
4 terminals using tax increment
5 financing to get there. Having
6 this local base of funding allows
7 us to apply for federal grants from
8 the Department of Transportation
9 like the (inaudible) grant, with a
10 very strong application in order to
11 see this terminal become reality.
12 All this can be done a lot sooner
13 than one might think but requires a
14 strong and dedicated City Hall to
15 get there. Thank you.

16 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
17 you so much for your testimony.

18 I do have a question for
19 Professor Schwieterman, if you're
20 still on. Can you talk to us about
21 what other cities -- I mean, you
22 mentioned that other cities are
23 moving away from the private model
24 and beginning to own these assets.

1 Can you talk to us about how these
2 assets have become revenue
3 generating for the cities and how
4 the cities are able to keep the
5 operations of these facilities
6 going?

7 MR. SCHWIETERMAN: Yeah,
8 really good question. And the
9 typical way, kind of two models, in
10 some cases they find a private
11 operator to manage the terminal
12 with a lease and their concession
13 fees can come from food service and
14 other things. The usual method to
15 generate revenue is to charge
16 buses, either per bus departure
17 scaled by the size of the bus, you
18 know, so a 54-seat bus would be a
19 different fee than a smaller van.
20 Sometimes they're scaled to per
21 departure or per passenger. So it
22 would be kind of like an airport
23 arrangement where it's paid per
24 passenger.

1 There might be still
2 some subsidy involved for some
3 cities. That's being looked at in
4 Chicago, for example. If we had a
5 public terminal, it could pay for
6 itself. There is a lot of activity
7 in Philadelphia. The analysis I
8 did in January showed there's 56
9 daily buses from Philadelphia to
10 New York during the slow season.
11 So you can look at those kind of
12 fees. An example could be, you
13 know, \$40 per bus departure as a
14 fee and that can help generate some
15 pretty good revenue.

16 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
17 you. When you mentioned these
18 types of fees, how are they -- I
19 guess I'm trying to figure out we
20 have different municipal
21 authorities, like you said, port
22 authorities and things like that
23 that run some of the facilities.
24 In your opinion, is it better for

1 the municipality itself to run the
2 facility or is it to put that off
3 on a third party authority?

4 MR. SCHWIETERMAN: Well,
5 I do think bus stations need to be
6 seen as regional assets, and that's
7 the case we're trying to make here
8 in Chicago, that this is not just a
9 Chicago problem. The station
10 serves everybody. Of course, like
11 Philadelphia International Airport
12 I believe that's a city entity, but
13 it clearly has a regional role. So
14 I think it's reasonable to expect a
15 region to help pay for a bus
16 terminal, but the politics of that
17 can be difficult.

18 We do see Port Authority
19 of New York as a perfect
20 institution because they have a
21 long history of providing
22 transportation services for the
23 full region. But another case of
24 this, the city government taking

1 the lead, and I think they can
2 often move more quickly than when
3 you have sort of city suburban
4 collaborations.

5 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
6 you. One last question for you.
7 Have you seen any federal grant
8 dollars out there for this type of
9 infrastructure development for
10 municipalities or authorities?

11 MR. SCHWIETERMAN: Yeah,
12 we have. We've seen Washington
13 kind of wake up to this and see
14 that we have to sort of get over
15 this hang-up that we don't want to
16 subsidize a private business, which
17 was often sort of a fallback
18 position that people have. And I
19 think people now see that inter
20 city bus really is alone and having
21 to fight for itself for terminals,
22 so we have public involvement in
23 rail and in air, airports are
24 heavily get planning support from

1 cities. And so, I think those
2 barriers have fallen.

3 And there's been changes
4 to some of the federal funding
5 guidance to loosen up about that
6 and to push public transit
7 operators to be more accommodating
8 to intercity buses, you know,
9 public transit terminals too. So
10 the momentum is on the bus industry
11 side, but the clock is ticking in a
12 lot of cases.

13 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
14 you so much.

15 Are there any other
16 questions of these witnesses on
17 this panel?

18 Chair recognizes
19 Councilmember Phillips.

20 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: I
21 just want to briefly say that I'm
22 glad that Planning Development is
23 still here. Kathleen and John are
24 still here, hopefully here for rest

1 of the hearing because Micah has
2 presented 18 potential sites. I
3 think he needs to be on your
4 planning team. And not only that,
5 hopefully he can help you figure
6 out how to expedite this study. So
7 come to Philadelphia, Micah. We
8 need you. Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
10 you, Councilmember Phillips.

11 Are there any other
12 questions for members of this
13 panel?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:
16 Mr. She, I do have one question for
17 you. You mentioned 30th Street and
18 you heard the Professor's comment
19 about how there's a trend to move
20 more toward municipal or authority
21 ownership. But you talked about the
22 KOZ and those opportunities. Just
23 in your experience, can you just
24 tell us how can our city benefit by

1 having this intercity bus terminal
2 at 30th Street being managed or
3 owned by the land by a private
4 industry versus the City of
5 Philadelphia?

6 MR. SHE: Absolutely. I
7 think that it's a great location,
8 but I do recognize the challenge
9 that literally the City has no
10 stake in any parcels right now.
11 It's all Drexel, Brandywine,
12 Amtrak. And those relationships,
13 right, has always been on an
14 as-needed basis instead of sort of
15 being, you know, very proactive. I
16 would say that the 2016 33th Street
17 plan really already set the
18 groundwork to at least talk about a
19 bus station there. And as far as I
20 know, they're still publicly
21 committed to that.

22 And so, I think that a
23 great intermediary would be the
24 Parking Authority actually, you

1 know, as an authority that has
2 leverage to go after acquisition of
3 parcels for their interests and for
4 their purposes, right. They could
5 also do the same thing here and
6 apply sort of their policies and
7 their statutory power as an
8 intermediary. And then you could
9 do something like a ground lease,
10 right, with the City or any other
11 financing technique that really
12 could help sort of at least build
13 that sort of statutory fee on the
14 buses, right, but then also have
15 that financing power in place so
16 that we can all work hand in hand
17 with the existing institutions we
18 have and we don't have to reinvent
19 the wheel here. I think the
20 Parking Authority does show promise
21 in that model, I think.

22 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
23 you so much.

24 Are there any other

1 questions of these witnesses for
2 this panel?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:

5 Seeing none, I want to thank you
6 all for your testimony,
7 particularly those joining us
8 virtually. Thank you so much for
9 taking the interest in the City of
10 Philadelphia. I really appreciate
11 that.

12 MR. SCHWIETERMAN: Thank
13 you.

14 MR. FIEDLER: Thanks so
15 much.

16 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Will
17 the Clerk please call the next
18 witnesses on the next panel.

19 THE CLERK: Lew Myers.

20 (Witness approached
21 witness table.)

22 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Good
23 afternoon, Mr. Myers. Please state
24 your name for the record and begin

1 your testimony.

2 MR. MYERS: My name is
3 Lew Myers. I am Director of
4 Policy, Research and Impact for the
5 American Bus Association based out
6 of Washington, D.C. So thank you
7 to the Council for the time. Just
8 going to give a few remarks on
9 support for this intercity bus.

10 Intercity bus and
11 intermodal facilities are essential
12 hubs. These facilities serve as
13 critical transfer points, enabling
14 passengers to seamlessly connect
15 between transportation modes to
16 reach their final destinations.
17 They are vital to a well-
18 functioning and integrated regional
19 and national transportation
20 network.

21 Safe and closed
22 facilities enhance passenger
23 experience and accessibility. A
24 secure and closed terminal ensures

1 passenger safety, comfort and
2 convenience, especially during
3 transfers between carriers. These
4 facilities are significantly more
5 accommodating for passengers with
6 disabilities, mobility challenges
7 or those experiencing service
8 disruptions, insurance compliant,
9 ensuring compliance with ADA
10 standards and promoting equitable
11 access.

12 Intermodal facilities
13 drive economic development.
14 Facilities like Union Station in
15 Washington, D.C. highlight the
16 economic potential, generating over
17 \$35 million annually through
18 intercity bus, charter and tour bus
19 operations, parking and terminal
20 access fees. Similar investment in
21 Philadelphia can serve as an
22 economic engine, while enhancing
23 mobility.

24 Uncertainty and

1 relocation erode passenger
2 confidence. The frequent
3 relocation of intercity bus
4 operations in recent years has
5 undermined passenger trust,
6 complicated wayfinding and led to
7 service reductions. As a result,
8 some carriers have ceased servicing
9 Philadelphia, disrupting key
10 connections to cities like Atlantic
11 City, Washington, D.C., New York
12 and Pittsburgh. These changes have
13 disconnected intercity bus services
14 from broader transportation
15 systems, increasing travel costs
16 and reducing convenience for
17 passengers.

18 Charter bus parking is
19 critical for tourism and
20 operations. Since 2016,
21 Philadelphia's available motor
22 coach parking has declined, with
23 only one location currently serving
24 the downtown area. A new joint use

1 facility would address the
2 shortfall, supporting safe charter
3 operations and promoting tourism
4 and accommodating group travel and
5 tour buses.

6 Federal attention on
7 travel and tourism infrastructure:
8 The U.S. Department of
9 Transportation is actively updating
10 its national travel and tourism
11 infrastructure strategic plan.
12 Philadelphia's approach to
13 intermodal transportation and motor
14 coach access will serve as a case
15 study, either showcasing success or
16 highlighting gaps in implementation
17 and coordination.

18 Motor coaches serve
19 underserved communities. Intercity
20 buses and motor coach remain one of
21 the safest, most affordable
22 transportation options for
23 low-income and underserved
24 communities. They play a vital

1 role in ensuring equitable
2 transportation access across all
3 socioeconomic lines. Dual-use
4 facilities support sustainability
5 and small businesses.

6 A combined intermodal
7 and motor coach parking facility
8 would not only promote sustainable
9 transportation by encouraging mode
10 shifts from personal vehicles, but
11 will also support small, family-
12 owned transportation businesses
13 that form the backbone of intercity
14 and charter bus operations.

15 Lastly, I invite the
16 Council, the Mayor's office or
17 whomever would like to come down to
18 D.C. We could do a tour of Union
19 Station to give an example of what
20 an intercity intermodal facility
21 that is profitable looks like.
22 With that being said, I just want
23 to thank the Council again for
24 their time.

1 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
2 you so much for testifying today,
3 Mr. Myers. I appreciate you being
4 here and giving us your perspective
5 from the industry. One thing I
6 find I guess fascinating, your
7 testimony said Philadelphia, we're
8 either going to be a case study for
9 success or failure essentially.
10 And I hope that we are that case
11 study for success on how we can
12 move our city forward with this and
13 be an example for other cities for
14 newer 21st century intercity bus
15 terminals.

16 The Chair recognizes
17 Councilmember Phillips.

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: I
19 just want to quickly also note that
20 I'm really thankful that
21 Councilmember Young put this
22 together.

23 One of the things that
24 gets me with the City of

1 Philadelphia, particularly Planning
2 and Development, is that until
3 Councilmembers ask for hearings of
4 this nature about the future of our
5 city we don't hear from that
6 department. It's like we should
7 constantly get presentations about
8 what they're thinking, what they're
9 doing, but we don't. And it's
10 frustrating because we can't be a
11 21st century city if we're not
12 constantly thinking about planning
13 and we're not working together.

14 So it just kind of
15 undermines the fact that cities
16 like D.C. is generating \$35 million
17 annually through the intercity bus,
18 charter and tour bus operations. I
19 just want to get a better sense --
20 you said you invited us for a tour,
21 but I think they should go to the
22 tour first if they haven't already.
23 But I want to just from you how is
24 that possible? What are they doing

1 to get that \$35 million revenue in
2 particular, like detail-wise?

3 MR. MYERS: Just on a
4 low level, bus slips. Buses pay to
5 come in and out of Union Station.
6 And as the gentleman said, often
7 times they'll pay per passenger, if
8 not per bus. Then there's that
9 economic impact with restaurants,
10 shops. And so, whenever the
11 Council has time we are right down
12 the street and would love to host
13 the planning committee or whomever
14 to do a private tour and kind of
15 answer some of those questions as
16 you all look to build out your
17 infrastructure.

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
19 Yeah, absolutely. I was just
20 curious about it and if you can
21 share any details with us, that'd
22 be awesome. Thank you for coming
23 down to Philadelphia.

24 MR. MYERS: Thank you,

1 Councilman.

2 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
3 you. I do have one more question
4 for you. From the industry's
5 perspective, why traditionally has
6 the intercity bus travel with these
7 private companies, why haven't they
8 received the federal support that
9 some of the other transportation
10 modes have been receiving?

11 MR. MYERS: I might not
12 be qualified to answer that
13 directly, but I think that there
14 has to be a greater focus on motor
15 coach. I think when people think
16 major transportation they think air
17 travel, train and there's always
18 been a disproportionate funding
19 allocation to buses and motor
20 coach. And so, I think these type
21 of hearings only amplify and bring
22 to light the importance of having
23 motor coach.

24 If you think about it,

1 planes can't land everywhere.
2 Trains can't transport everywhere,
3 but buses do have a regional impact
4 nationwide. And so, I think these
5 are opportunities. And obviously,
6 coming from D.C. on Capitol Hill we
7 have the T&I Committee, which is
8 Transportation and Infrastructure.
9 And so, I think there might even be
10 an opportunity to kind of get in
11 front of that group to talk further
12 about the need for motor coach.

13 Just one last point. We
14 do a lot of analysis and studies.
15 And being over research, I'm privy
16 to a lot of data. We have a mega
17 decade coming up, which is going to
18 be the World Cup. And so, we need
19 to start putting the infrastructure
20 in place now to accommodate for
21 what FIFA is estimating 8 million
22 international travelers.

23 They're going to start
24 designating cities for which

1 particular soccer clubs are going
2 to be playing. And I imagine
3 Philadelphia would be one of those
4 major cities. And so, that's just
5 one example of the need to further
6 invest in this critical discussion.

7 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
8 you. I mean, that was kind of the
9 premise of why I wanted to do this
10 hearing because we are a site for
11 FIFA and we do know that our
12 location is critical to allow folks
13 to travel from Philadelphia to New
14 York to Boston to D.C., right, to
15 get to those matches, to follow
16 their teams. And so, having
17 intercity bus routes is critical
18 for those types of travelers. Just
19 for the easy convenience of it all,
20 because everyone can't afford
21 Amtrak, right, to hop on Amtrak.
22 But they could afford a \$30 ticket
23 to get to a match in Boston. So I
24 just want to thank you again for

1 being here and sharing your
2 testimony from the industry.

3 MR. MYERS: Thank you
4 everyone.

5 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
6 you so much.

7 Ms. McDonald, will you
8 please call the next panel to
9 testify.

10 THE CLERK: Peter
11 Picknelly, Noelia Calcano. And
12 available for questions is Matthew
13 Maglio and Francesca Friedman.

14 (Witnesses approached
15 witness table.)

16 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
17 you so much for being here today.
18 Please state your name for the
19 record and begin with your
20 testimony.

21 MS. WALDMANN: Yes.
22 Actually, it's Francesca Waldmann
23 and I will be the one providing
24 testimony.

1 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
2 you.

3 MS. WALDMANN: No
4 problem. So my name is Francesca
5 Waldmann. I am here on behalf of
6 FlixBus and Greyhound. Good
7 afternoon, I guess Chairman
8 Driscoll and Vice-Chairman Young
9 and members of the Committee.
10 FlixBus and Greyhound welcome the
11 City's focus on developing plans
12 for a permanent home for intercity
13 bus service in Philadelphia and the
14 infrastructure that the city and
15 its residents deserve.

16 We value our close
17 collaboration with the Office of
18 Transportation and Infrastructure
19 Systems, the Department of Planning
20 and Development, the City Planning
21 Commission, the Streets Department
22 and the City Council to support
23 current operations and provide
24 active input on future planning.

1 We are committed to working
2 together with all stakeholders to
3 deliver the best possible service
4 for the city of Philadelphia and
5 we'd be happy to answer any
6 questions that you may have. Thank
7 you.

8 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
9 you for your testimony.

10 Please proceed, sir.

11 MR. PICKNELLY: Hello.
12 Thank you very much. My name is
13 Peter Picknelly. I am CEO of Peter
14 Pan Bus Lines in Springfield,
15 Massachusetts. I appreciate the
16 opportunity here to talk about the
17 importance of the bus terminal here
18 in Philadelphia. And while I
19 really promise to be brief, I think
20 it's important that you understand
21 the scope of our business and our
22 industry to the city. I think
23 it'll give you a good perspective
24 and I'm prepared to do that.

1 First of all, Peter Pan,
2 we're a family-owned business. It
3 was started 92 years ago by my
4 grandfather. I'm third generation.
5 My son over there sitting, he's the
6 fourth generation. We've been
7 serving Philadelphia for 34 years.
8 We run service to 100 communities
9 in the Northeast. But none are
10 more important than Philadelphia to
11 us, very important.

12 Most of our passengers
13 go from here to New York City and
14 to Washington, D.C. We operate 25
15 daily trips midweek out of
16 Philadelphia. And also into
17 Philadelphia on weekends and
18 holidays, we run more than 50 trips
19 a day into and out of Philadelphia.

20 I'd like to give you --
21 we carry thousands of passengers
22 every day in the breakdown of our
23 passengers. So for you to
24 understand, 41% of our passengers

1 are students, 26% of our passengers
2 are seniors, 21% of our passengers
3 are commuters. The rest are daily
4 visitors. The most popular
5 destinations out of Philadelphia
6 are north to New York City and to
7 Washington, D.C.

8 Once passengers get to
9 either those two cities, they can
10 connect with 2800 cities throughout
11 the United States. Amtrak on the
12 other hand only services 500
13 cities. The average bus company
14 visitor when they come to
15 Philadelphia spend \$125 per day on
16 shopping, restaurants, et cetera.
17 That does not include overnight
18 stays in hotels.

19 People take buses
20 because there's a high frequency of
21 service in their very affordable
22 fares. I think you would be
23 surprised, Councilman, that
24 according to the American Bus

1 Association more people ride buses
2 in two weeks than take Amtrak in an
3 entire year. We are a vital part
4 of moving America and we're a vital
5 part of moving people in and out of
6 Philadelphia.

7 The average bus fare
8 from Philly to New York City is
9 \$18. Train fare -- and the bus
10 takes two hours. The train takes
11 two hours. It's exactly the same
12 time frame. An Amtrak fare to New
13 York City can be as high as 70
14 bucks and Acela fare to New York
15 City starts at \$80. It's a
16 significant difference cost for the
17 consumer to travel by train or by
18 bus.

19 When we moved out of the
20 Greyhound terminal, we saw an
21 immediate drop of 47% when we moved
22 from Filbert Street to Spring
23 Garden. There's no amenities
24 there. We even have porta-potties

1 that are about 100 yards away in a
2 back alley. We do salute the City
3 for working with us because we had
4 very little time to move. I think
5 we had a three-week notice to get
6 out of the Greyhound terminal and
7 we worked with the city to move to
8 Market Street and then that got too
9 congested, and they moved us to
10 Spring Garden.

11 The City was helpful to
12 us, but the locations we now have
13 are just not acceptable for our
14 customer. Most of our customers
15 take public transportation to the
16 bus terminal. That's how they get
17 there. There is 400% less
18 frequency of public transportation
19 to Spring Garden than there was to
20 the Greyhound bus terminal. That's
21 a huge problem for us.

22 When we make it
23 difficult for passengers to get to
24 the bus terminal, we're really

1 displacing passengers with
2 disabilities, seniors, students,
3 families with children. People
4 depend on our service for all sorts
5 of service. I mean, there are
6 people that would not be able to go
7 to college, wouldn't be able to go
8 to college right here if it wasn't
9 for the bus service we provide or
10 the seniors who need medical
11 service in Washington or New York,
12 they wouldn't be able to get it if
13 it wasn't for what we do. We
14 provide a very necessary service.

15 Philadelphia -- this is
16 a very interesting statistic that
17 I'd like you to really think about.
18 Out of the 100 cities we serve, and
19 we serve every major city in the
20 Northeast, Peter Pan sold more cash
21 fares in Philadelphia than any
22 other location, which tells me
23 those customers did not have credit
24 cards, which illustrates, I think,

1 it's logical to assume they're less
2 affluent. So the largest decline
3 in sales we saw when we moved from
4 Filbert Street from the Greyhound
5 terminal to Spring Garden were on
6 cash sales. So what we've really
7 done is we've taken advantage or
8 we've disadvantaged the most
9 vulnerable in our city and that's a
10 real concern to us.

11 When we also moved to
12 Schuylkill near 30th Street
13 Station, thankfully we were able to
14 rebuild some of the business we've
15 lost, but we're still at a
16 negative. We're still at, you
17 know, 10% to 15% less than we were
18 when we were at the Greyhound
19 terminal by servicing both
20 locations.

21 The new bus terminal in
22 Philadelphia has to be in Center
23 City. That's where our customers
24 want to take the bus. That's where

1 it's most accessible for customers
2 to take the bus. I heard Mr. She
3 say 30th Street Station. We think
4 that's an excellent option. We
5 really do. We're actually working
6 with the city of Providence right
7 now to build an intercity bus
8 terminal attached to the Amtrak
9 Station. It's a public-private
10 partnership. It's a great way you
11 can get something built cheaper,
12 faster. We have experience with
13 this and we'd love to work with the
14 City on it.

15 Philly is an amazing
16 city. It's one of the most amazing
17 cities on the planet. It needs a
18 better bus terminal. Our company's
19 committed to Philadelphia. We're
20 committed to providing first-class
21 transportation, but we need to do a
22 better job. People deserve a
23 better bus terminal than what we
24 have now and they need a new bus

1 terminal quickly. Thank you.

2 (Applause.)

3 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank

4 you so much for your testimony.

5 Just how important is it for your

6 business, can you re-emphasize for

7 us how important is it for your

8 business to be located in areas

9 where there are other modes of

10 transportation for your customers?

11 MR. PICKNELLY: It's

12 essential. That's where the

13 biggest decline was. You know, we

14 feed off each other. Our customer

15 takes public transportation to the

16 bus terminal. They just do.

17 There's some that we call kiss-and-

18 ride. They drive there. Well,

19 here's another interesting point.

20 If you take an Uber from City

21 Center to Spring Garden it's \$15.

22 That's almost the same amount of

23 money it would take to take the bus

24 to get to New York City. You're

1 doubling the cost for the customer
2 who can least afford it.

3 MS. WALDMANN: I'll
4 second that as well. One of the
5 most important things that we also
6 see is the same, mostly people
7 taking public transportation to
8 reach the bus. And ultimately that
9 connection is not just -- I mean,
10 the current customer, right, but
11 also thinking ahead. And again,
12 what this is about is planning for
13 the future as well. We're talking
14 about population of people where
15 the car ownership is on the
16 decline. More people are utilizing
17 public transportation. This is the
18 way of the future. And ultimately,
19 it will best serve not just our
20 business but the city to have the
21 connection between public transit
22 and really any long-distance
23 intercity transportation, including
24 the bus.

1 MR. PICKNELLY: One of
2 the reasons -- I wish the Professor
3 had mentioned it, but one of the
4 reasons that there are no
5 standalone bus terminals or are not
6 a ton left in the United States, we
7 operate some, but one of the
8 reasons there are a few is because
9 we feed off each other through
10 intermodals and there are federal
11 dollars out there that promote
12 intermodalism. So the most
13 successful terminals throughout the
14 country are those that have trains,
15 buses, transit buses, Ubers and
16 taxis all in one building. We feed
17 off one another and we all prosper.
18 And that's what the best model is.

19 And that's what I think
20 Philadelphia -- Philadelphia, this
21 is Philadelphia, right --

22 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: We're
23 the sixth largest city in the
24 country.

1 MR. PICKNELLY: I know,
2 right. And for Peter Pan, it's the
3 third largest bus route we have and
4 we serve 100 cities. We love
5 Philadelphia and we're staying
6 here. People deserve better.

7 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: I
8 agree. I agree.

9 Any questions for
10 members of this panel?

11 Chair recognizes
12 Councilmember Phillips.

13 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
14 I'll be quick so we can keep it
15 going with the other panelists.
16 But just wonderful to finally meet
17 the Peter and the Pan.

18 MR. PICKNELLY: Well,
19 I'm the third generation. My son's
20 the fourth.

21 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
22 Yeah, the third generation and the
23 son's over there, right. My gosh,
24 what a family lineage.

1 MR. PICKNELLY: He wants
2 me gone so fast. He wants to put
3 me out to pasture.

4 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: I
5 know. Got to keep the family
6 business going. But I just want to
7 just commend you for the work that
8 you're doing. I just want to ask
9 you just really quickly if we did
10 move to the 30th Street Station,
11 but just trying to think about what
12 can we do now, right?

13 That's a future thing
14 according to Planning. What can we
15 do now to make this easier for
16 residents? Because it's starting
17 to click to me why it would be so
18 much harder for folks to get down
19 to -- I actually just drove by
20 there the other day. I was like,
21 oh, wait, I'm about to do a hearing
22 on this and it was shocking.

23 MR. PICKNELLY: We
24 really wanted a temporary location

1 underneath the underpass on 9th and
2 Filbert. We thought it was ideal,
3 could hold about six or seven buses
4 underneath. It was close to the
5 mall, in facilities, there was
6 great space there but we were told
7 we couldn't use it because the
8 Parking Authority was moving their
9 offices there.

10 In my view, you could
11 easily fit that out within two
12 months and you could move the bus
13 terminal there. It's back in
14 Center City. That's what I think
15 you could do as a very quick
16 temporary move.

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
19 9th and Filbert?

20 MR. PICKNELLY: And it
21 would have waiting rooms. Long-
22 term I think 30th Street Station,
23 connecting it is a great option.
24 It's what makes intermodal

1 successful in other areas. I also
2 like the old police station. I
3 think that that's a nice location
4 as well. And I'll develop it for
5 you. I'll buy it, I'll pay for it
6 and lease it back to the city.

7 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

8 You hear that --

9 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: You
10 hear that, City?

11 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

12 Peter is ready to go.

13 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:

14 Peter's ready.

15 MR. PICKNELLY: I'm
16 telling you and we'll do it. We've
17 done it elsewhere. We're working
18 in Providence to do it now.

19 MS. WALDMANN: I'll
20 emphasize some things that folks
21 mentioned before that are really I
22 think key for what's missing right
23 now on Spring Garden, which again
24 Philly is a city that's in an area

1 that gets what I call real weather.
2 So having taken the bus actually
3 down here from New York today, so
4 yay, on our actual service that we
5 provide and being out there in the
6 rain, we really, really, really
7 want to make sure that a city like
8 Philadelphia has something that is
9 not just under an overpass but
10 really has acclimatized waiting
11 area.

12 Y'all get snow. We get
13 snow everywhere really in the
14 Northeast. So, snow, cold, but on
15 the other side too, it gets hot.
16 We want to make sure folks are
17 comfortable waiting when they're
18 with their luggage, maybe with
19 their kids also. And it's a hot
20 day in the middle of summer --

21 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
22 And that's the part that we're
23 missing. See, there's some point
24 of privilege, I haven't taken the

1 bus in a long time. But folks --

2 MR. PICKNELLY: You
3 don't know what you're missing,
4 Councilman.

5 MS. WALDMANN: Well,
6 we'll put you on a bus.

7 MR. PICKNELLY: I'll get
8 you a ticket.

9 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
10 But I was going to say you're
11 right, why would I want to stand
12 outside while it's hot, while it's
13 chilly, cold. Yeah, I might need
14 to get to New York, but the
15 Greyhound what it did afford is
16 that you could sit in
17 air-conditioning in the heat, you
18 know, and it was cold. So, yeah,
19 we got to think of something.

20 MR. PICKNELLY: If you
21 don't mind, in my temporary
22 solution of 9th and Filbert there's
23 plenty of room. We would build out
24 for indoor waiting area. It would

1 be sheltered from -- the buses
2 would be sheltered. It would be
3 ideal for a temporary location
4 short-term until we build something
5 somewhere else.

6 In my view that could be
7 rebuilt. You could have a waiting
8 room for 100 people at least, maybe
9 more and there's amenities and
10 there's shelter for the buses. It
11 would be a good temporary solution
12 in the core.

13 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
14 you so much. I mean, that's one
15 reason why I wanted to emphasize if
16 we were still looking at privately-
17 owned land, you know, because I
18 think a public-private partnership
19 in this could expedite this because
20 we have no timeline essentially or
21 we don't know. But if we can look
22 to the private market, the private
23 sector, to help us expedite this, I
24 think that could be very useful.

1 I know Mr. She talked
2 about all the incentives that are
3 there that are possibly available.
4 So I would love to speed this up
5 because time is of the essence when
6 it comes to making sure that we
7 continue to roll out the red carpet
8 for our intercity bus travelers.

9 Are there any other
10 questions of these panelists?

11 MR. PICKNELLY: Can I
12 make one last statement?

13 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Yes,
14 sir.

15 MR. PICKNELLY: Because
16 I listened to pull so many others,
17 we pay a significant amount of
18 money in terminals like Boston. We
19 pay a per gate fee. We pay over
20 \$200,000 a year to use the Boston
21 bus terminal. We use seven gates
22 there. We pay a departure fee and
23 we pay per gate and then we also
24 pay for any ticket counter space we

1 have.

2 Washington D.C. is
3 unusual. We actually pay per
4 passenger. But in most cities you
5 pay gate fee. You pay to use and
6 own and operate from a gate and you
7 pay departure fees. We would give
8 you all that information. And we
9 also took a bus tour from
10 Philadelphia, I don't know, last
11 year. I participated on it. And
12 there were a bunch of people from
13 City Hall and we took them on a
14 tour. We went to Baltimore. We
15 went to Washington, D.C. and showed
16 them some other bus terminals.
17 We'll be glad to do it again for
18 the Council.

19 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
20 you so much. I'll be more than
21 willing to take you up on that
22 offer so we'll be reaching out. So
23 thank you so much for your
24 testimony.

1 MS. WALDMANN: Thank

2 you.

3 MR. PICKNELLY: Thank

4 you.

5 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:

6 Ms. McDonald, will you please call

7 the next panel.

8 THE CLERK: Matt Ruben,

9 Sydney Rexroad and Hercules

10 Griegos.

11 (Witnesses approached

12 witness table.)

13 MS. REXROAD: It looks

14 like we have a few additions here.

15 We also have Natalie McNeil who is

16 a business owner on Front Street.

17 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank

18 you so much. Just state your name

19 for the record and begin with your

20 testimony.

21 MS. REXROAD: Sure.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. MCNEIL: Hi. My

24 name is Natalie McNeil and I'm the

1 owner of Ends Hair Design and Day
2 Spa. I have been in business for
3 38 years here in the city of
4 Philadelphia. I have been located
5 on the 600 block of Front Street
6 for the last 15 years. And good
7 afternoon and thank you for
8 allowing me to speak.

9 I chose the neighborhood
10 because I was -- it was peaceful
11 and diverse and easy for our
12 clients to access, especially with
13 free parking. We watched the area
14 grow over the years and we've
15 welcomed the growth. But about a
16 year ago things changed
17 dramatically when an intercity bus
18 stop was placed on our corner
19 without any notice or
20 communication. What followed has
21 been disruptive and honestly
22 distressing. Strangers, some would
23 stay for long periods of time, wash
24 up in our bathrooms. They would

1 pretend like they were getting
2 their hair done, but really they
3 were waiting for the buses. And
4 so, they would come in and sit and
5 go ask to use our bathroom and
6 sometimes get washed up in there.

7 We have also had -- they
8 were using our salon as a private
9 bathroom. Some would stay for long
10 periods of time. We started
11 finding the paraphernalia and trash
12 outside of our salon. One morning
13 I arrived to find mattresses, food
14 clothing spread across the front of
15 our businesses. It was
16 overwhelming.

17 For the first time in 15
18 years we had to start locking our
19 door. We've been there for 15
20 years. We've never had to lock our
21 doors during the daytime while
22 we're working. You know, you get
23 fresh air, clients like looking
24 out. But once this bus came, then

1 we had to lock the doors. And so,
2 we have now been having to keep our
3 doors locked. So every client that
4 comes in we had to put a bell
5 outside. So now we have to ring
6 people in, lock the door as soon as
7 they come in and then do our
8 clients and then relock the doors.

9 We have learned again
10 that without proper notice that
11 parking spots were going to be
12 taken up on our block, six parking
13 spots where they were going to put
14 porta-potties. And once we found
15 out about that, we notified
16 different -- our Councilperson and
17 our State Representatives. And
18 fortunately, we were able to stop
19 that so they did not put the
20 toilets there on our block.

21 I'm here today to say
22 small businesses like mine deserve
23 a voice. We are the fabric of this
24 community. We want to grow with

1 Northern Liberties, not to be
2 pushed out of it. And please don't
3 make decisions that put our safety
4 in our livelihoods at risk. Thank
5 you.

6 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
7 you so much for your testimony.

8 MS. REXROAD: Hi. I'm
9 Sydney Rexroad. I'm a Northern
10 Liberties resident, the former
11 Executive Director of the Northern
12 Liberties Neighbors Association and
13 I'm currently the Executive
14 Director of the Northern Liberties
15 BID.

16 I've been working on
17 this issue since January of 2024
18 about a month after the city
19 dropped bus operations on our
20 sidewalks without any advanced
21 notice. In that time I've worked
22 with some really great folks from
23 OTIS and the Planning and
24 Development Department that I know

1 they're just doing their best in
2 the bad situation that we've all
3 found ourselves in.

4 Northern Liberties has
5 shown our openness to working with
6 the City from the beginning. The
7 NLNA immediately began documenting
8 and reporting issues to the city
9 and fielding complaints and
10 questions from our community.
11 We've even advised the City on some
12 safety and operational strategies.

13 It was a lot for a
14 neighborhood organization with a
15 paid staff of one, but we wanted to
16 help. Unlike other neighborhoods
17 that have been considered as
18 potential hosts for bus operations,
19 we said, yes, we will work with you
20 and we've done so ever since.

21 The addition of bus
22 operations to an area without the
23 needed infrastructure has caused a
24 lot of strain. Despite bi-weekly

1 meetings between City and
2 neighborhood representatives, many
3 of the issues present from the
4 beginning, like trash, pedestrian
5 and bike safety, bad behavior from
6 bus carriers, a lack of basic
7 amenities for bus passengers are
8 ongoing.

9 We continued working
10 with the City even as it became
11 clear that the resources needed to
12 make this success were not coming.
13 And as the timeline for moving the
14 buses out of the neighborhood
15 shifted from three months to nine
16 to a year to the limbo that we're
17 in now.

18 Late last year we were
19 told that the City had made a plan
20 to move bus operations; first to a
21 medium-term interim site, then a
22 long-term interim site where they
23 would remain until a permanent bus
24 depot can be built within the next

1 decade or so.

2 We have repeatedly asked
3 questions about the selection
4 process and timeline for these
5 sites. The City has shared almost
6 no information with us, while the
7 talk of the medium-term site and
8 moving from Northern Liberties both
9 have stalled.

10 I'm really proud of my
11 community for the good faith effort
12 that we put into making this work,
13 but we have not been treated in
14 kind. The City's most recent plan
15 is to drop a few trailers into a
16 parking lot shared with PennDOT's
17 I-95 construction equipment and
18 call it Philadelphia's intercity
19 bus station for the next 10 years.

20 The NLNA and NLBID both
21 formally oppose this plan along
22 with other community organizations
23 as it blatantly ignores the needs
24 of both bus passengers and the

1 needs of our community.

2 I'd like to thank
3 Councilmember Young for introducing
4 this resolution, for inviting me to
5 testify. I believe that City
6 Council is essential for ensuring
7 that we find a real solution that
8 shows respect for bus passengers,
9 Northern Liberties and for
10 Philadelphia.

11 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
12 you so much for your testimony.

13 Mr. Ruben.

14 MR. RUBEN: Chair Young
15 and the rest of the members of the
16 Committee, thank you for this
17 opportunity. My name is Matt
18 Ruben. I'm a 33-year Philly
19 resident and a longtime board
20 member of the Northern Liberties
21 Neighbors Association. I'll be
22 brief and would welcome follow-up
23 questions.

24 As Sydney has noted,

1 we've worked in good faith with
2 OTIS and the Department of Planning
3 and Development. We are not
4 NIMBYs. In fact, three of the five
5 potential alternative sites I
6 mentioned in my written testimony
7 are in or on the border of our
8 neighborhood. It's drawn to
9 consider only Northern Liberties,
10 but we're willing to listen to a
11 sensible proposal if the City ever
12 makes one.

13 The officials we've
14 dealt with are well-intentioned,
15 but in our experience the City's
16 site vetting and decision-making
17 process is opaque, dysfunctional,
18 and irrational. A block from
19 Spring Garden, a block on
20 Callowhill is the Delaware River
21 Waterfront Corporation's existing
22 permanent bus facility, climate-
23 controlled bathrooms with indoor
24 plumbing, large waiting area,

1 lighting, security, bus slips, easy
2 highway access. They have
3 repeatedly offered this to the city
4 and they have been repeatedly told
5 no, thanks. All the site needs is
6 an ADA ramp up the driveway from
7 the sidewalk. For less than the
8 City has already spent trying and
9 failing to manage the situation on
10 Spring Garden, we all could have
11 been spared the misery, disruption,
12 and confusion of the past 18 months
13 and still the City says no to this
14 as an interim solution.

15 Same with other possible
16 sites. In my experience, they rule
17 them out based on bogus or fixable
18 issues while letting everyone
19 suffer from worse, unsolvable
20 problems on Spring Garden. And
21 now, as Sydney noted, appear to be
22 considering a truly awful plan for
23 the next 10 years still on Spring
24 Garden.

1 In my view, Council must
2 force the City to open up the
3 process and listen to reason. Next
4 summer as you know bus volume will
5 increase by an order of magnitude.
6 Philly will be in the international
7 spotlight. And in my view, the
8 city is unprepared. A disaster is
9 looming and I urge Council to act
10 immediately for the good of bus
11 riders, my community and our city.
12 Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
15 you so much.

16 Mr. Griegos.

17 MR. GRIEGOS: Good
18 afternoon, Councilman Young,
19 Councilman Phillips. Hercules
20 Griegos here today on behalf of
21 Northern Liberty's Phase 1 Owner,
22 LLC and Northern Liberties Phase 2
23 Owner, LLC, owners of the property
24 and approved development at 700

1 North Delaware Ave.

2 The proposed development
3 spans two full city blocks of the
4 700 blocks of North Delaware to the
5 east, North Front Street to the
6 west and the blocks of Brown Street
7 to the North and Fairmount Avenue
8 to the south for the better part of
9 this decade.

10 We have worked
11 tirelessly with various city
12 agencies, numerous community
13 organizations, countless near
14 neighbors and many other third-
15 party professionals to obtain
16 approval to begin construction of
17 this large-scale transformative
18 residential development project
19 consisting of two seven-story
20 buildings with 466 units,
21 landscaping right-of-way
22 improvements, along with a
23 pedestrian-focused retail promenade
24 at (inaudible) Street, including

1 16,000 square feet of commercial
2 retail with entrances facing 79
3 through 99 Spring Garden Street.

4 Here today to express
5 our opposition to the city's
6 consideration of an interim or
7 permanent intercity bus terminal at
8 that location, quite literally
9 across the street from our
10 development. My clients have
11 invested \$222 million and continue
12 to dedicate considerable resources,
13 investment Capital in that area.

14 More importantly, I
15 think placing an intercity transit
16 facility with high volume of large
17 bus traffic making use of
18 surrounding roads and major
19 corridors directly adjacent to the
20 newly-created pedestrian-focused
21 retail corridor poses significant
22 safety threat on visitors,
23 residents and customers.

24 I'm going to try to

1 summarize the rest because I know
2 we're a low on time, but I just
3 want to add that we spent
4 considerable time and I know
5 there's been considerable work with
6 Mr Rubin, the Bid DRWC and others
7 to make sure that Delaware Ave
8 becomes pedestrian-friendly and
9 developable and we're starting to
10 see that planning come to life
11 today.

12 And there's lots of
13 opposition to auto-oriented uses.
14 The Planning Commission opposed at
15 least two auto-oriented users,
16 maybe more along Delaware Avenue.
17 My clients have joined in to work
18 to create pedestrian-friendly
19 retail access. And now,
20 introducing this large auto-
21 oriented use I think is contrary to
22 that planning and all that work
23 we've done.

24 So my letter has been

1 sent into the record, but I'll just
2 close to say that we think the City
3 should reconsider any proposal for
4 79-99 Spring Garden Street. Thank
5 you.

6 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
7 you so much for your testimony. I
8 just want to note that as the City
9 continues to plan for the future I
10 would hope that there is a deeper
11 involvement of the community of the
12 RCOs and the planning process
13 because to spring something like
14 this on the community without
15 notice, I mean you guys have
16 expressed a lot of frustration with
17 that. So I do hope that we as a
18 city can do better in talking to
19 the community about some of these
20 future development plans.

21 The Chair recognizes
22 Councilmember Phillips.

23 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: I
24 also want to see if we can get on

1 record a response to your question
2 from the city about why we did not
3 use -- I forget the location.

4 MR. RUBEN: The DRWC
5 intercity bus facility on
6 Callowhill Street.

7 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
8 There you go. Why was that not
9 explored just out of curiosity, so
10 at some point we'd like to get that
11 from the city. Thank you.

12 MR. RUBEN: Thank you so
13 much, Councilmember. If I could
14 just say one thing in response to
15 your comment. The exchange that
16 the two of you just recently had
17 with the gentleman from Peter Pan
18 with his thoughts about possible
19 sites is far more transparent,
20 opaque and direct than any
21 interaction we've had with the City
22 discussing potential sites in our
23 neighborhood let alone other
24 potential sites in the city. And

1 that's part of what our frustration
2 is. Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
4 you so much for coming down here
5 giving us your testimony on that.
6 We really appreciate that as we
7 move forward.

8 Ms. McDonald, can you
9 please call the next panel.

10 THE CLERK: John Chen,
11 Deborah McCarty and Blake Carroll.

12 (Witnesses approached
13 witness table.)

14 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
15 you. And as you're coming up to
16 present your testimony, we do have
17 some written testimony that is
18 submitted for the record. If you
19 could summarize your testimony, we
20 really appreciate that. Thank you.

21 State your name again
22 and begin with your testimony.

23 MS. McCARTY: Good
24 afternoon, Vice-Chairman Young

1 and -- well, nobody else is here.
2 My name is Deborah McCarty and I
3 serve as Co-chair of the Powelton
4 Village Civic Association Zoning
5 Committee and I'm here on behalf of
6 the Civic Association.

7 We believe that a
8 permanent location for an intercity
9 bus terminal, which all buses
10 utilize, not having them
11 everywhere, is very much needed.
12 Not that long ago Bolt and
13 Megabuses utilized the 3000 block
14 of JFK Boulevard as their
15 "terminal." This use was a
16 constant source of aggravation for
17 many of us.

18 These sources of
19 aggravation and annoyances varied.
20 Among other things, they included
21 that awaiting passengers invariably
22 blocked the footway, making it
23 difficult for pedestrians to make
24 their way through the maze.

1 Vehicles blocked traffic lanes
2 while dropping off, waiting to pick
3 up and then picking up bus
4 passengers. The fumes from idling
5 buses made it miserable for any of
6 us walking through or riding our
7 bikes past that area and the area
8 was constantly trashed with
9 remnants of what appeared to be,
10 and more likely, bus passengers'
11 snack packagings.

12 These experiences and
13 what has been observed at other
14 locations inform our testimony
15 today. While we take no position
16 on a specific location in the city
17 where terminals should be located,
18 we strongly believe that wherever
19 it is situated certain factors
20 should be adhered to and taken into
21 consideration.

22 These include: error
23 management laws and regulations
24 should be aggressively enforced for

1 all idling buses. Unfortunately,
2 our observations is that
3 enforcement is lacking in this
4 regard. This is not only a waste
5 of fuel. The fumes are noxious and
6 unnecessarily pollute our
7 environment. No idling should be
8 tolerated.

9 An area for cars to pick
10 up and drop off passengers should
11 be provided since the car and bike
12 travel lanes are not blocked.
13 Enforcement for blocking these
14 lanes has been irregular at best.
15 All violators should be promptly
16 ticketed.

17 Something I haven't
18 heard today is a secure bike
19 storage area should be provided for
20 bus ticketholders that ride their
21 bike to and from the terminal.
22 Also, a bike share station should
23 be situated nearby. Folks use
24 public transportation but they also

1 ride bikes.

2 The terminals should be
3 cited near public transportation.

4 We think the Market Frankford El or
5 the Broad Street Line are ideal.

6 There should be bathroom facilities
7 for bus ticketholders, maybe a
8 barcode on the ticket that allows
9 access just for those ticketholders
10 so you don't have other folks using
11 the facilities if that's an issue.

12 It should not be cited
13 where residents will be disturbed
14 by noise. The station ground
15 should be kept clean and trash-free
16 at all times. And while it
17 probably goes without saying to
18 avoid traffic jams, there should be
19 adequate turning radius or radii
20 for buses entering and exiting the
21 station. Lastly, this all assumes
22 there will be a sheltered area for
23 passengers to wait for their bus.

24 In summary, we contend

1 that our great city does deserve a
2 first class intercity bus terminal.
3 If the issues I've stated are taken
4 into consideration when locating
5 and operating said terminal, we
6 believe it will be an asset for
7 Philadelphia. Thank you for the
8 opportunity to share what we
9 believe should be taken into
10 consideration when locating an
11 intercity bus terminal and I'm
12 happy to answer any questions you
13 may have.

14 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:

15 Thanks so much.

16 Mr. Chin.

17 MR. CHIN: Good

18 afternoon, Vice-Chair Young. Thank
19 you for having me here today.
20 Thanks for the opportunity to
21 provide testimony on Bill No.
22 250109, which calls for hearings
23 into potential locations for new
24 intercity bus terminal in the city

1 of Philadelphia.

2 For years our community
3 has endured the negative impacts of
4 the Greyhound terminal's location
5 at 10th and Filbert Streets. While
6 we support the importance of
7 intercity transit and connecting
8 people across the region, the
9 placement of the terminal adjacent
10 to our neighborhood, particularly
11 Chinatown, had come at a
12 significant cost to our community's
13 health, safety and quality of life.

14 The buses cut through
15 Chinatown, bringing increased
16 traffic congestion, air pollution
17 and serious pedestrian safety
18 concerns when the Greyhound bus
19 terminal operated at 10th and
20 Filbert Streets. These are just
21 not inconveniences, but they were
22 persistent disruptions that eroded
23 the well-being and vitality of our
24 neighborhood.

1 The situation became so
2 problematic that New Jersey
3 Transit, one of the region's major
4 transit providers, was forced to
5 reroute five of their bus lines
6 away from the Greyhound bus
7 terminal due to what it described
8 as unsafe conditions in 2022.

9 According to New Jersey
10 Transit Senior Vice-president of
11 Bus Operations that redesigned
12 traffic pattern at the terminal
13 forced buses to ride the curb on
14 the sidewalk to complete turns and
15 endangered drivers, employees and
16 passengers. He also noted the lack
17 of a proper boarding area, which
18 could force passengers to stand in
19 active bus lanes. These are just
20 not operational challenges. They
21 are public safety hazards.

22 So we believe a logical
23 and equitable solution is to
24 relocate the intercity bus terminal

1 to 30th Street Station as a major
2 regional hub. It is already
3 equipped to handle large volumes of
4 travelers and offers necessary
5 infrastructure, multimodal
6 connections in space for safe,
7 organized bus operations.

8 The move would improve
9 access for all Philadelphians and
10 visitors while relieving
11 disproportionate burden currently
12 placed on communities like ours.
13 We urge City Council to prioritize
14 safety, equity and smart urban
15 planning in its decision-making
16 process. Thank you.

17 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
18 you so much.

19 Mr. Carroll.

20 MR. CARROLL: Good
21 afternoon, Councilmember Young. My
22 name is Blake Carroll, Chair of the
23 Transportation Committee
24 representing Logan Square

1 Neighborhood Association or LSNA.
2 LSNA is committed to actively
3 engaging with the City of
4 Philadelphia, including this
5 Council, the Mayor's office to
6 advocate for and contribute to the
7 improvement of transportation
8 options for all Philadelphians.

9 We believe that a robust
10 and well-planned transportation
11 network is essential for the
12 economic vitality and quality of
13 life in our city. We also
14 recognize the importance of
15 Philadelphia as a welcoming setting
16 and one that provides easy
17 connectivity to neighboring cities
18 and regions.

19 For many visitors, the
20 intercity bus terminal serves as
21 their first point of contact with
22 Philadelphia. As such, its
23 location, design and functionality
24 play a crucial role in shaping

1 their initial impression of our
2 city.

3 A well-designed terminal
4 can contribute significantly to a
5 positive and welcoming experience.
6 LSNA acknowledges that the 30th
7 Street Station is already a
8 significant hub for intercity
9 travel, accommodating Amtrak, SEPTA
10 Regional Rail and many other
11 transit modes. Given this existing
12 infrastructure and its central
13 relocation, we believe that it is a
14 logical location to explore as a
15 potential site for a more permanent
16 intercity bus terminal.

17 We understand the
18 complexities involved, but the
19 potential benefits of colocation
20 are substantial. While 30th Street
21 lies outside our formal registered
22 community organization's
23 boundaries, the development of a
24 more permanent intercity bus

1 terminal in that area will
2 undoubtedly have implications for
3 the Logan Square Neighborhood and
4 its residents. Therefore, we
5 sincerely look forward to
6 collaborating with the City to gain
7 an understanding of how such a
8 facility might be developed.

9 Specifically, we are
10 interested in working with the City
11 to understand several key aspects,
12 how a new terminal would integrate
13 with existing transportation
14 networks within the Logan Square
15 area, including bus routes, bike
16 lanes and pedestrian walkways, how
17 the design of the terminal can
18 effectively mitigate any
19 potentially negative impacts on
20 traffic flow and pedestrian safety.

21 We must ensure that
22 increased bus traffic does not lead
23 to increased congestion or
24 compromise the safety of our

1 streets. Lastly, we would like to
2 understand how the terminal can be
3 designed to provide essential basic
4 amenities for travelers. The
5 current situation with passengers
6 often left waiting outside without
7 adequate shelter, restrooms or
8 seating is simply unacceptable. A
9 permanent terminal must address
10 these deficiencies.

11 In summary and
12 conclusion, LSNA supports the
13 exploration of a permanent
14 intercity bus terminal solution,
15 particularly at a location like
16 30th Street Station that offers
17 existing intermodal connections.
18 We are committed to working
19 constructively with the City to
20 ensure that any development in this
21 area enhances the overall
22 transportation network, minimizes
23 negative impacts and provides a
24 welcoming and efficient experience

1 for all travelers and look forward
2 to participating in this process.

3 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
4 you so much. I have a question for
5 Mr. Chin. You talked about I guess
6 Chinatown's maybe resistance to a
7 bus terminal there. Can you talk
8 about has there been while the
9 terminal was operated at 10th and
10 Filbert any economic impact that it
11 had on your neighborhood?

12 MR. CHIN: The economic
13 impact that it may have had was
14 minimal. Mostly the passengers
15 would arrive shortly before the
16 buses would depart and arriving
17 buses, the passengers would depart
18 fairly quickly after they entered
19 the station so it's pretty minimal.
20 And I guess you're asking because
21 Chinatown is a commercial district,
22 so we have not seen the impact that
23 we think that volume of buses that
24 comes in the area should have, no.

1 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
2 you. Thank you all so much for
3 your testimony. I appreciate you
4 all taking the time out coming down
5 here today.

6 MS. McCARTY: Thanks for
7 the opportunity.

8 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Of
9 course.

10 Ms. McDonald, will you
11 please call the next panel.

12 THE CLERK: Stephen
13 Bronskill, Jackson Betz, Alex
14 Malone and David Brownlee.

15 (Witnesses approached
16 witness table.)

17 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
18 you all for being here today. If
19 we have received your written
20 testimony, again I'm just going to
21 ask you to summarize if you can.
22 Whoever, please start. State your
23 name and proceed with your
24 testimony.

1 MR. BRONSKILL: Thank
2 you so much, Vice-Chair Young. My
3 name is Stephen Bronskill. I'm the
4 Coalition Manager for Transit For
5 Philadelphia. I really appreciate
6 the opportunity to speak with you
7 today. To be concise here, I
8 represent a coalition of almost 40
9 organizations focused on
10 sustainable, reliable and
11 affordable public transportation.

12 I just want to join all
13 the folks here in calling for
14 urgency in relocating the intercity
15 bus terminal to an offstreet
16 location that is accessible,
17 respectful and provides dignity and
18 support and amenities for our
19 riders.

20 I really appreciate you
21 and fellow Councilmembers sharing
22 your personal stories of riding the
23 bus. There have been over 1
24 million bus riders impacted since

1 Greyhound closed its Center City
2 terminal who have been dumped onto
3 Market Street and now Spring Garden
4 Street with very minimal shelter or
5 resources.

6 To give you a scale of
7 that problem, this has been
8 unimaginably hard, particularly for
9 Philadelphians who have
10 disabilities. The current Spring
11 Garden site features a single
12 wheelchair pickup location and the
13 nearby El station lacks an
14 elevator. And so, Philadelphians
15 with disabilities, nearly a quarter
16 million of them should be
17 prioritized in this work in
18 accessibility in a future terminal.

19 This is something that
20 we are also committed to, shelter,
21 bathrooms, access to food and
22 water, air-conditioning and heat,
23 to not block bus and bike lanes.
24 The Spring Garden corridor is one

1 of the critical part of the city's
2 bike network and we need to make
3 sure that we have accessibility
4 measures in place. A PA system and
5 support staff for communication,
6 especially with riders with
7 disabilities and adequate support
8 staff to assist passengers and a
9 smooth travel experience.

10 Operational funding,
11 this is necessary to maintain the
12 terminal's operations and services.
13 Sustainable funding sources
14 identified by the Mayor's office
15 and Streets Department to ensure
16 the terminal's long-term viability
17 and a timeline for construction. A
18 clear timeline to be established by
19 transparency and accessibility to
20 the community.

21 I appreciate the
22 Committee's attention to this
23 today. Just to summarize,
24 Philadelphia requires a bus

1 terminal that supports people and
2 we look forward to working with the
3 Council and the Parker
4 Administration to advocate for a
5 permanent intercity bus station
6 that all Philadelphians can be
7 proud of. Thanks for the
8 opportunity to be here today.

9 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
10 you, Mr. Bronskill.

11 MR. BROWNLEE: My name
12 is David Brownlee. You already
13 have the testimony from the Design
14 Advocacy Group. I'm one of the
15 Vice-chairs. DAG is a large
16 community of architects, city
17 planners, landscape architects and
18 others interested in promoting
19 excellence and equity in the build
20 environment.

21 And it is simply the
22 case that our disastrously
23 unsuccessful intercity bus terminal
24 has been in our minds for a long

1 time and we welcome the attention
2 of this committee and your
3 attention, Councilman Young, to
4 this problem. We've also welcomed
5 the attention of City Council to
6 city planning issues more
7 generally. There's a lot to be
8 done in that area.

9 We think that the
10 Director of City Planning of
11 Planning and Development Jesse
12 Lawrence got it just about right
13 when in a recent DAG meeting he
14 said that a visitor's arrival at an
15 urban transit hub like a bus
16 station really is a handshake with
17 a new city. And it has to be said
18 that when those use our bus
19 station, and that includes
20 Philadelphians, don't get a
21 handshake, they get a sucker punch.
22 It's a dreadful facility.

23 It's an enormously
24 urgent problem that we have to face

1 before next spring, and I think we
2 are all somewhat discomforted by
3 the pace that's been laid out by
4 our Planning officials. We need to
5 move extraordinarily rapidly and we
6 need to identify a site both for an
7 interim and for a long-term
8 solution. It would be nice if they
9 could be the same place in terms of
10 infrastructure, but we need to be
11 able to put both of those ideas out
12 there to get reaction very quickly.

13 Very simply, the
14 curbside sidewalk Spring Garden
15 Street setup can't be fixed we
16 think even in the short run. That
17 would be like putting lipstick on
18 the face of a pig. We believe that
19 we can do better and that a number
20 of other very potentially useful
21 sites, including 30th Street,
22 including the city-owned land
23 around the Roundhouse, can be
24 identified and moved on

1 expeditiously.

2 So I've painted three
3 alternative, if you will, metaphors
4 for the future: A sucker punch, a
5 painted pig and a handshake. And
6 DAG thinks we all deserve to be
7 greeted with a handshake and a
8 smile. Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
10 you so much.

11 MR. MALONE: My name's
12 Alex Malone. I'm the
13 Transportation Committee Co-chair
14 of 5th Square advocacy. Some of
15 these points have already been made
16 so I'm going to summarize my
17 testimony for the sake of time.

18 We have been involved in
19 this since 2023 when the Greyhound
20 intercity bus terminal abruptly
21 closed. That closure left
22 thousands of travelers without
23 access to basic necessities. They
24 lack proper shelter. They have no

1 restrooms. They lack food options.
2 They have no seating and they have
3 no clear travel information.

4 These individuals are
5 not simply transitory visitors to
6 be ignored, their residents, their
7 students, their seniors, their
8 low-income workers and families.
9 They are people who rely on the
10 intercity bus travel as their most
11 affordable and often only viable
12 transportation option. The
13 conditions they have, have been
14 unacceptable and that's why we've
15 taken action.

16 5th Square launched a
17 citywide petition urging city
18 government and the intercity bus
19 operators to establish a proper
20 terminal, one that includes
21 essential amenities like shelter,
22 seating, signage, ADA-compliant
23 facilities, public restrooms and
24 seamless connections to SEPTA and

1 other transportation modes.

2 The public response to
3 that petition was swift and
4 powerful. We got close to 700
5 Philadelphians who signed on with
6 us and demanded that it be made
7 clear that we must do better for
8 our intercity bus riders.

9 We also partnered with
10 organizations such as Transit
11 Forward Philadelphia, Liberty
12 Resources and Disabled in Action to
13 conduct an on-site assessment of
14 the current Spring Garden Street
15 location currently beneath I-95.

16 What we found was deeply
17 troubling. There's no basic
18 infrastructure, no protections from
19 the elements, a lack of ADA
20 requirements and, most
21 disturbingly, no access to clean
22 drinking water. On an extremely
23 hot day our volunteers handed out
24 water to waiting passengers, an act

1 of basic human decency that should
2 never be necessary in a city of our
3 stature.

4 The situation will only
5 be made worse in the coming years
6 as PennDOT still plans to go ahead
7 with their ill-advised expansion
8 and widening of I-95 through Center
9 City in South Philadelphia, which
10 will cause incalculable harm to the
11 city and its residents. In
12 addition, we collaborated with the
13 Bicycle Coalition of Greater
14 Philadelphia, the Delaware Valley
15 Association of Regional Rail
16 Passengers and the Sunrise Movement
17 to advocate for both short- and
18 long-term solutions.

19 We strongly supported
20 the interim use of the Auto Park
21 Garage in Old City as a safer, more
22 appropriate location, while a
23 permanent solution preferably at
24 30th Street was developed turning

1 the area around 30th Street into a
2 true multimodal transportation hub,
3 linking Philadelphia with the rest
4 of the country.

5 Let us be clear in this
6 moment. A great city ensures that
7 everyone regardless of how they
8 travel is treated with dignity and
9 respect. Intercity bus riders
10 deserve nothing less than the
11 standards we expect for subway,
12 regional rail or airline
13 passengers. 5th Square is being
14 steadfast in this fight for the
15 dignity of intercity bus passengers
16 and we thank you for your continued
17 leadership and commitment to
18 resolving this crisis with the
19 urgency it deserves and the
20 compassion that it morally
21 requires.

22 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
23 you so much.

24 MR. BETZ: Good

1 afternoon, Co-Chair Young and
2 members of City Council. My name
3 is Jackson Betz. I'm a member of
4 the 5th Square Transit Committee, a
5 Fishtown resident and a frequent
6 intercity bus rider, having used
7 services like Greyhound and Peter
8 Pan to travel the country.

9 Just in the past year I
10 visited Hartford, Connecticut,
11 Dayton, Ohio and Fall River,
12 Massachusetts, among other places
13 by intercity bus. Each of these
14 three cities has a population less
15 than a tenth of Philadelphia's, but
16 as a bus passenger I was treated
17 far better in each of these places.
18 Each of these cities has a real
19 waiting room with heated
20 facilities, air-conditioning,
21 bathrooms and concession stands.
22 Easy connections to other local
23 transit modes and signage and staff
24 to guide me on my journey. But in

1 Philadelphia, I waited beneath the
2 dank, noisy highway overpass.

3 Philadelphia is a city
4 with an extraordinary quality of
5 life and every day I'm glad to live
6 here. But based on my conditions
7 of our intercity bus terminal at
8 Front and Spring Garden, I wouldn't
9 blame prospective workers, diners,
10 nightlife enjoyers, residents and
11 others from arriving in our city by
12 bus, taking one look and turning
13 around and leaving. We need to put
14 our best foot forward and there's
15 no better place to start than our
16 intercity bus terminal. Thank you
17 for introducing this measure.

18 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
19 you. I just have one question for
20 you, Mr. Betz. So when you go to
21 these other cities and see smaller
22 cities, just tell us how you are
23 greeted by -- what's your first
24 impression when you're going to

1 these other cities versus when you
2 come back home to Philadelphia?

3 MR. BETZ: Absolutely.

4 All of these cities often offered
5 transit facilities for their local
6 transit agencies that were
7 coordinated with the intercity bus
8 terminal. So Greyhound and Peter
9 Pan would be coordinated with
10 Amtrak, local agencies, et cetera.
11 So it was very easy to hop off the
12 Greyhound bus or the Amtrak train
13 or whatever method I was using and
14 get on another bus to take me to
15 the City Center or whatever
16 friend's house I was visiting,
17 et cetera. They were very clean
18 extraordinary facilities. And
19 Philadelphia has plenty of
20 potential for facilities like that,
21 some of which already exist today.
22 And I hope these could be developed
23 for intercity bus passengers.
24 Thank you.

1 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
2 you so much for that. And thank
3 you all for your testimony. I
4 appreciate that.

5 Ms. McDonald, can you
6 please call the next panel to
7 testify.

8 THE CLERK: Helena
9 Gallant, Nico Meyering, Anthony
10 Lanzilotti.

11 (Witnesses approached
12 witness table.)

13 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
14 you. Please state your name for
15 the record and begin with your
16 testimony.

17 MR. MEYERING: Hi,
18 Councilmember. My name is Nico
19 Meyering and I'm ready to give my
20 testimony. Thank you for having
21 me. I am currently the Chairman
22 for the Mayor's Commission on
23 People with Disabilities. And like
24 many other disabled Philadelphians,

1 I rely on bus transportation very
2 frequently.

3 Like others, I go up to
4 New York for me to see my parents
5 and then I go down to D.C. to see
6 my sister. I'm here to urge all
7 stakeholders in this room and in
8 this city to open and maintain an
9 accessible and safe intercity bus
10 terminal.

11 For ages, our city's
12 approached to intercity bus riders,
13 especially disabled riders like me
14 and maybe some of you here today,
15 has been a mess. We cannot safely
16 stick to our curb in Chinatown nor
17 can we accept a site at Spring
18 Garden with no indoor shelter, no
19 safe landing zone and no elevator
20 at the nearest subway stop.

21 If you weren't freezing,
22 you were getting soaked. If you
23 weren't getting soaked, you were
24 overheating or dodging traffic in

1 your wheelchair. This is
2 embarrassing for Philadelphia,
3 which is the greatest city in the
4 world. This is a civic issue and a
5 moral issue, my friends. Disabled
6 riders like me and my friends
7 deserve better.

8 For over a year we've
9 discussed potential sites for this
10 terminal. These ideas come,
11 germinate and go. In order to take
12 a real step forward on this issue,
13 any permanent site must be
14 accessible. Let's talk about what
15 that means. I invite you all to
16 close your eyes and imagine -- no,
17 dream with me. The ideal terminal
18 is near multiple bus routes and a
19 subway station with an elevator. It
20 has indoor bathrooms, heat and AC.

21 Passengers and
22 ticketholders can sit in a proper
23 waiting room. What separates -- my
24 friends, what separates a bus

1 terminal from a bus stop? Well, a
2 terminal is safe, sheltered and
3 surrounded by restaurants and
4 stores, basic things that every
5 traveler should have access to, not
6 just the travelers who drive.

7 Disabled people like me
8 really enjoy spending money and we
9 want to spend it here in
10 Philadelphia after all. Speaking
11 of driving and parking, if you ever
12 tried to drive or park in the city,
13 you know, one, that it's a
14 nightmare and, two, that by the
15 time you find a spot, your meter's
16 already expired. Thus transit
17 access is not some outrageous
18 luxury. It is an ethical necessity
19 for us all.

20 Like all of you, my
21 heart breaks each time I read about
22 a traffic death or a pedestrian
23 death. These tragedies are soul-
24 shattering and preventable. Every

1 time we design transit around
2 curbside chaos instead of
3 thoughtful infrastructure and
4 universal design, we put lives at
5 risk, especially disabled lives
6 like mine, especially cyclists,
7 especially pedestrians like me.

8 A new terminal then
9 removes that chaos. No more riders
10 waiting in the street. No more
11 buses clogging the bike lane.
12 Instead we get offstreet loading, a
13 safe waiting space and real dignity
14 baked into universal design.
15 Dignity and access not just for the
16 17 percent of the city, 245,000
17 Philadelphians who are disabled,
18 but also older residents, new
19 families perhaps with babies and
20 strollers and more. Access means
21 we all win.

22 I know we all want the
23 same thing, a Philadelphia where
24 getting around is safe, reliable

1 and welcoming for everybody. A
2 safe, accessible, permanent
3 intercity bus terminal brings us
4 closer to that vision. We want to
5 be a city that takes equity
6 seriously so we have to show it
7 then in the way we treat transit
8 users, especially those of us with
9 disabilities.

10 I urge you now to make
11 sure a permanent terminal is fully
12 accessible. We can give
13 Philadelphians a bus terminal that
14 we all deserve without sending them
15 on a scavenger hunt for an
16 elevator. Thanks everybody. I
17 look forward to working with all of
18 you to make the city safer, more
19 accessible and more connected.
20 Just speak into my good ear.
21 Thanks.

22 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
23 you so much for your testimony.

24 Ms. Gallant.

1 MS. GALLANT: Good
2 afternoon. My name is Helena
3 Gallant and I serve as
4 Transportation Advocate at CARIE,
5 the Center for Advocacy for the
6 Rights and Interests of Elders.
7 Thank you, Councilmember Young, for
8 holding today's hearing and for the
9 opportunity to present testimony on
10 Resolution No. 250109 regarding
11 potential locations of a new
12 intercity bus terminal in the city
13 of Philadelphia.

14 CARIE is a nonprofit
15 advocacy organization that has been
16 empowering older adults, ensuring
17 rights, fighting for dignity,
18 improving quality of life and
19 combating ageism since 1977. CARIE
20 provides advocacy, information,
21 options counseling to about 2000
22 people a year, helping ensure
23 access to benefits, services and
24 supports. And we have had the

1 privilege of working with many of
2 your offices.

3 CARIE supports a
4 permanent intercity bus terminal to
5 be constructed in a convenient
6 location that meets the following
7 criteria: meets ADA accessibility
8 standards, provides adequate
9 shelter, has sufficient numbers of
10 public restrooms, including
11 ADA-compliant bathrooms, provides a
12 waiting area with seating, is close
13 to SEPTA and other transit
14 connections, has ample lighting and
15 is accessible and safe for all
16 riders, especially those that use
17 wheelchairs, walkers, canes and
18 other mobility devices or riders
19 who are blind or have other sensory
20 impairments.

21 There have been
22 proposals made for a location near
23 the 30th Street Station
24 transportation hub, which would be

1 a promising location to replace a
2 now closed Greyhound Bus Terminal
3 at 13th and Filbert, as it is
4 already a well-utilized location by
5 other transit riders with close
6 proximity to SEPTA Regional Rail,
7 Amtrak trains and NJ Transit.

8 Thank you again for the
9 opportunity to testify today.

10 Preventing cuts to SEPTA is a top
11 priority not only to ensure that
12 there are transportation options
13 once a passenger arrives at a
14 Philadelphia intercity bus
15 terminal, but also for older
16 Philadelphians who rely upon SEPTA
17 to survive and thrive and for their
18 caregivers to have SEPTA service to
19 travel to their homes. We look
20 forward to supporting your efforts
21 to ensure SEPTA's funding needs are
22 met and to construct an intercity
23 bus terminal in Philadelphia that
24 is safe, accessible and dignified

1 for older adults. Thank you again.

2 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: I

3 just want to thank you both for

4 your advocacy for some of our most

5 underprivileged populations here in

6 the city of Philadelphia. Your

7 advocacy, your voice, was

8 definitely needed as we continue

9 this conversation. Because again,

10 we are the passengers of this

11 particular service and we want to

12 make sure that it fits what the

13 consumer needs, right, and we want

14 to make sure all consumers have the

15 ability to enjoy the benefits of

16 living in this first-class city

17 that we have in Philadelphia. So

18 thank you so much for coming down

19 to testify.

20 MS. GALLANT: Thank you.

21 MR. BETZ: Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: We

24 will now transition to our public

1 comment on Resolution 250109. As
2 we're limited on time, we're going
3 to ask anyone -- we're going to ask
4 anyone who's providing public
5 testimony to limit your repetitious
6 comments. We have a lot of
7 testimony today that we heard. And
8 so, if you could come up for public
9 comment and just present to us your
10 sentiments on this particular
11 issue.

12 THE CLERK: Alan Fisher,
13 Judith Sachs, Jared Johnson and Ted
14 Zellers.

15 (Witnesses approached
16 witness table.)

17 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:
18 Please state your name and begin
19 with your comment.

20 MR. FISHER: Yeah. My
21 name is Alan Fisher. Good to talk
22 to you, Councilman Young. I'm not
23 going to go through the speech
24 because I know we're short on time.

1 But I think one thing that really
2 summarizes basically most of what I
3 wrote is a news reporter's quote
4 about Penn Station's destruction in
5 1963. And Mr. Vinson says, "One
6 used to enter the city like a God
7 and now one scuttles in like a
8 rat." And I think that really
9 describes the discrepancy between
10 people that enter at 30th Street
11 Station and people that show up on
12 the bus, which I've done both.

13 And I think like most
14 people have already mentioned most
15 of the things that I've said on
16 here, but the thing that I would
17 say is that we're in a new era of I
18 guess people talking about
19 construction and infrastructure and
20 everything like that. And it
21 really I think bothered a bunch of
22 people here earlier in the back
23 when one of the transportation
24 people in the beginning of the

1 meeting was like, oh, it's going to
2 take two years to study this.

3 That's kind of not how
4 things should work. It shouldn't
5 take two years to study the damn
6 thing and then actually maybe you
7 get more processes and meetings
8 after that and it takes five, six
9 years to get to a point where you
10 agree on a point and then you build
11 the thing and then it takes a
12 decade or something like that.

13 I think the thing that
14 Philadelphia has over a lot of
15 cities at the moment is that unlike
16 some of the California cities,
17 which are kind of made fun of for
18 this which is that they might take
19 two years to permit a house to
20 rebuild from being damaged by fire,
21 or like in San Francisco, they took
22 like five, six years to approve a
23 toilet or something like that, I
24 think it's really critical for

1 Philly to show that we aren't like
2 that and that we can choose
3 immediately a location near 30th
4 Street because I think we all agree
5 that's where it probably should go,
6 and then move on from there and
7 assign contracts, assign the things
8 that we need to do and get the
9 thing built.

10 Because I think in the
11 midterm, it's like you need to
12 serve the customers like the guy
13 from Peter Pan said earlier better
14 in their current location or
15 different location, but we should
16 just move on to the long-term thing
17 as fast as we can.

18 And like I was looking
19 at the property map around 30th
20 Street, there's 3051 JFK Boulevard
21 that is owned by SEPTA so that
22 would be an appropriate location in
23 my opinion. And 3101 Market
24 Street, which is owned by PennDOT,

1 both are parking lots and both are
2 near 30th Street Station.
3 Otherwise the parking lot next to
4 the Cira building or whatever might
5 work. But that's pretty much all I
6 have to say, so thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
8 you.

9 MR. ZELLERS: Hi. My
10 name is Ted Zellers. I live in
11 Kensington. Thank you so much for
12 having us. I'll try to be brief as
13 well. I moved here in large part
14 because of the public transit
15 options. I sold my car after
16 moving here, which was really
17 exciting for me. I'd say about
18 half my friends are in the same
19 boat, like we're nondrivers by
20 choice. It's what Philly has
21 that's like such a cool thing about
22 it that we really love about living
23 here.

24 I've also spent about 15

1 years crisscrossing Pennsylvania on
2 Greyhound, FlixBus, Peter Pan.
3 Like you name it, I've seen the
4 good, the bad, the ugly. I've
5 stuck with intercity bus the whole
6 time. But recently it's just the
7 rain, the snow, the hot sun, the
8 exhaust, the 18 wheelers, all this
9 stuff with curbside service has
10 just been too much. And I've
11 started skipping trips to see my
12 parents in D.C. I've started
13 skipping trips to see my friends in
14 Pittsburgh because it's just been
15 so onerous and unpleasant.

16 And my wife recently
17 asked me like, does she think our
18 kids and their friends are still
19 going to be driving around in
20 gas-powered cars. And I said, I
21 don't know. And when I go to D.C.
22 and New York and our peer cities
23 like that with these great
24 intercity bus stations, I think,

1 no, we're going to get there, this
2 is great, I feel seen, I feel like
3 my choices matter. But in Philly,
4 I feel like I have to shout to be
5 heard, even though I'm part of the
6 one-third of Philly households that
7 don't have access to a car. And
8 so, thank you. Thank you so much
9 for listening.

10 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
11 you so much.

12 MR. JOHNSON: Good
13 afternoon. My name is Jared
14 Johnson. I'm transit organizer for
15 5th Square advocacy. I'm here
16 today to talk about Bill 250109.
17 As you may have heard when
18 Greyhound left its longtime bus
19 terminal in 2023 at Filbert Street,
20 it left a loop. It left a hole in
21 the community.

22 And as you realize,
23 Spring Garden is not an adequate
24 place for drop-off passengers. And

1 this is not acceptable and it is
2 embarrassing in a major city such
3 as Philadelphia. This puts bike
4 riders in danger and it's costing
5 residents and businesses dearly.

6 As a Philadelphia native
7 myself, the City of Philadelphia
8 can be better than this. That's
9 why I'm asking the Council to find
10 a permanent location for an
11 intercity bus terminal with
12 adequate conditions. There are a
13 few examples that may come to mind
14 and that people might think about.

15 So the first you already
16 heard is 30th Street Station, which
17 is the best option. But I have
18 another option, which is 7th and
19 Race Street where the old Police
20 Rotunda was. I walk around
21 Philadelphia sometimes like once a
22 week and I walk through that area,
23 and it has a great place to park
24 busses. It has wide open spaces.

1 So I was thinking that that would
2 be a good idea. It's also a good
3 connection for the Metro B Line and
4 the newly PATCO Franklin Station
5 that commuters can take to New
6 Jersey and back.

7 Of course, there's
8 always the Filbert Street Station,
9 now that the Sixers arena has been
10 canceled and scrapped. But once
11 again, I think the 30th Street
12 Station will be the best idea. It
13 has good connections to the El and
14 the trolley lines and New Jersey
15 Transit lines as well as Amtrak, so
16 it's all rolled up into one.

17 So in conclusion,
18 whatever decision that is made with
19 adequate amenities of Greyhound,
20 this will help commuters and will
21 help people with disabilities
22 greatly. And one more thing, I
23 know that there's some of us from
24 5th Square and transit for

1 Philadelphia, probably some of them
2 have left, but for those who
3 decided to stay this long and want
4 all this done, can I get a ride on.
5 Not right on, but r-i-d-e on.

6 (Ride on.)

7 MR. JOHNSON: All right.
8 Thank you for your time.

9 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
10 you so much for your testimony.

11 Ms. McDonald, could you
12 please call the next names for
13 public comment.

14 THE CLERK: Darlene
15 Mencina, Gloria Lamorgia, Francesco
16 Waldmann and Will Tung.

17 (Witnesses approached
18 witness table.)

19 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
20 you all. Please state your name
21 for the record and begin with your
22 testimony.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:
24 Okay. I'll start. And thank you,

1 Councilman Young. I'm so
2 appreciative of this and hearing
3 everybody's testimony and I will be
4 brief. I'm a resident of
5 Philadelphia long-time, advocate of
6 public transportation long-time,
7 gave up my car a long time ago. I
8 used the Greyhound terminal for a
9 long time and then it moved to
10 Market Street. And I was like, oh,
11 my God, I can't believe we're doing
12 this, Philadelphia has moved all
13 these buses here.

14 And then when it moved
15 to Spring Garden and 2nd Street, it
16 was shocking to me I have to say.
17 It was so disturbing. I felt it
18 was a real equity issue. I thought
19 to myself how the X did the city of
20 Philadelphia do this.

21 It was enlightening for
22 me because I started feeling like a
23 second-class citizen. We were
24 dumped on the side of a highway.

1 That's the way it felt. And I
2 just, you know, to me the call for
3 doing something quickly, the
4 dignity of everyone. People use
5 buses sometimes because it's
6 affordable, sometimes it is the
7 only way to get to Point A and
8 Point B. Sometimes it's very
9 intentional. And buses are an
10 equalizer. We need to do better.
11 And it has to be connected. Again,
12 connectivity is so important. It
13 has to be central to other modes of
14 public transportation.
15 Accessibility for all.

16 Anyway that's all I have
17 to say because my experience was
18 devastating. Last weekend I took
19 my niece who had some mobility
20 issues and my sister there, and I
21 felt shameful about the city of
22 Philadelphia. I was completely
23 embarrassed. It's like shocking to
24 me that this has been going on for

1 so long. We definitely have to do
2 better. Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
4 you for your testimony and for your
5 sign as well.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:
7 Thank you for having this meeting.
8 I really appreciate it. As a bus
9 person, I never drove. I don't
10 have a car. I always took SEPTA.
11 I always took Greyhound. I
12 remember when the Greyhound
13 terminal was at 17th and JFK before
14 it was at 10th and Filbert. That's
15 how long I've been taking
16 Greyhound.

17 Like she was saying,
18 when you go to 2nd and Spring
19 Garden it's so sad. It's so
20 debilitating for a big city, sixth
21 largest city in America and we are
22 like dumped under an underpass. It
23 stinks like urine. It's horrible
24 at 2nd and Spring Garden. 10th and

1 Filbert wasn't all that great, but
2 it was a heck of a lot better.

3 But I just wish it
4 wouldn't take two years for a
5 permanent station. I think the
6 city should really think long and
7 hard about this because there are a
8 lot of people that take the bus
9 that go to Wilmington, that go
10 to -- I used to go to Scranton four
11 times a year to see my daughter and
12 grandchildren.

13 When you get off at
14 Scranton, it's gorgeous. It's a
15 bus station. It's a real bus
16 station. Even Mt. Poconos,
17 Stroudsburg have a bus station. It
18 was like coming back here, it's
19 like a third world country. It's
20 just unbelievable. Europe probably
21 has better buses now that the
22 German company owns Greyhound.

23 But as a senior, I'm 77
24 years old. I cannot stand out in

1 the heat. I can't stand out in the
2 cold. So I wish you would -- I
3 wish Council and the Mayor and the
4 Planning Commission, whoever, gets
5 this started. It should have been
6 started when Greyhound closed two
7 years ago. But I want to see a new
8 stadium before I go out of this
9 world. Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
11 you so much.

12 MR. TUNG: Thank you.
13 My name is Will Tung. I'm a
14 volunteer at 5th Square Advocacy.
15 I'm so glad that Council is holding
16 this hearing, is bringing light to
17 this issue. This is something
18 that's kind of been overlooked
19 since 10th and Filbert closed.

20 A wise man once said,
21 don't tell me what your priorities
22 are, show me where you spend your
23 money and I'll show you what your
24 priorities are, right. And it's

1 budget season. I would love for
2 Council to join us in advocating
3 for a better solution for our
4 intercity bus riders and for
5 Council to come back that up with
6 some funding for the Administration
7 so they can seek a better solution.

8 And I'm glad that
9 Council's here, Council's holding
10 this hearing. I want this to be
11 the last hearing on this and I want
12 us to find a solution. The clock
13 is ticking. 2026 is going to come
14 before we know it and we want to
15 invite the world and we want to
16 show them a good Philadelphia, the
17 Philadelphia we know that we want
18 to put on a good face for the
19 world. So thank you very much.

20 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
21 you all for your comment. And just
22 for the record, I want to note that
23 the sign says, Everyone deserves
24 toilets, shelter, access, equity.

1 So thank you so much for coming out
2 here to testify.

3 Ms. McDonald, please
4 call any other names for public
5 comment.

6 THE CLERK: There are no
7 more names for public comment.

8 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
9 you so much. I would like to thank
10 you all for coming down here today
11 and joining us for this very
12 important hearing. We learned a
13 lot today. I learned a lot today.
14 And hopefully, we can work with our
15 city to develop what we need to
16 become, you know, to continue to be
17 that world-class city that we are
18 as we look towards 2026 and beyond.

19 And with that, this
20 concludes the business before the
21 Committee on Transportation and
22 Public Utilities. Thank you all
23 very much for your attendance.

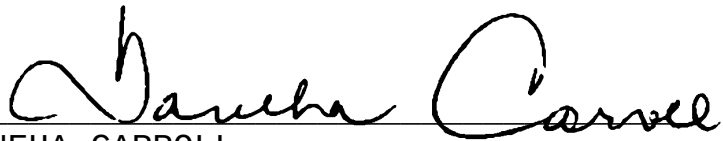
24 (Committee on

1 Transportation and Public Utilities
2 concluded at 5:12 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the proceedings
and evidence noted are contained fully and
accurately in the stenographic notes taken by
me in the foregoing matter, and that this is a
correct transcript of the same.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Taneha Carroll". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Taneha" and the last name "Carroll" clearly distinguishable.

TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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