

GOVERNMENT OF the DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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DEPARTMENT OF FOR-HIRE VEHICLES

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FOR-HIRE VEHICLE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

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THURSDAY,
JUNE 21, 2018

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The Advisory Council met in Suite
2032, 2235 Shannon Place, S.E., Washington, D.C.
at 10:00 a.m., LINWOOD JOLLY, Chairperson,
presiding.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

LINWOOD JOLLY, Chairperson

ERNEST CHRAPPAH, Director

JEFFREY SCHAEFFER

DOTTI LOVE WADE

DAWIT DAGNEW

STAFF PRESENT:

JUANITA MIXON, Secretary to the Council

P R O C E E D I N G S

(10:19 a.m.)

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Good morning. The time is 10:19. This is the For-Hire Vehicle Advisory Council meeting. We are at 2235 Shannon Place, Southeast, in hearing room 2032.

(I. Call to Order)

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: I would like to now call this meeting to order with a moment of silence for those who are not here anymore.

(II. Moment of Silence)

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Thank you.

(III. Preliminary Matters)

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Ms. Mixon, would you please take the roll?

MS. MIXON: Jason Arvanites?

(No response.)

MS. MIXON: Ernest Chrappah?

MR. CHRAPPAH: Present.

MS. MIXON: Dagneu, Dawit?

MR. DAGNEW: Present.

MS. MIXON: Elliott Ferguson?

1 (No response.)

2 MS. MIXON: Erik Moses?

3 (No response.)

4 MS. MIXON: Evian Patterson?

5 (No response.)

6 MS. MIXON: Jeffrey Schaeffer?

7 MR. SCHAEFFER: Present.

8 MS. MIXON: Anthony Thomas?

9 (No response.)

10 MS. MIXON: Dotti Wade?

11 (No response.)

12 MS. MIXON: Anthony Wash?

13 (No response.)

14 MS. MIXON: Linwood Jolly?

15 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Present. And, for

16 the record, Dotti Wade just walked in.

17 MS. MIXON: Okay. And I will go back

18 through the roll call.

19 Dotti Love Wade?

20 MS. WADE: Present.

21 MS. MIXON: So, Chair Jolly, we have

22 five present.

1 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Okay. Thank you.
2 Good morning. And I would like to
3 thank everybody for coming out today.

4 (IV. Action Items)

5 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Today's title --
6 well, today's agenda is "Streamlining and
7 Innovation for Title 31." This has been
8 something that has been discussed for at least
9 the three to four years that I have been involved
10 previously with the Taxicab Commission and now
11 with the Department of For-Hire Vehicles.

12 We do have some people coming to
13 testify, and they are not here. One is here, but
14 I think there may be one other coming. I wanted
15 to take advantage of the opportunity today since
16 we are small in numbers in terms of those
17 testifying to just get a snapshot of where we
18 have been and what we as advisors hope to
19 achieve. We had a great call yesterday, but we
20 also had the benefit of people that have been
21 involved with this issue much longer than myself.

22 So what I would like to do is just

1 start on my left. And I am going to ask Jeff
2 Schaeffer to kick this off because he has been
3 involved in this for a while. And, Jeff, you
4 know, just give us a couple -- well, give us an
5 overview of how you see opportunities for us to
6 really streamline Title 31 and how you see it
7 benefitting the industry.

8 And then I would like to ask my other
9 advisors to chime in. And then I would like to
10 finally close up with a wrap-up from Director
11 Chrappah, who always does a good job of bringing
12 this thing home.

13 So let's start with you.

14 MR. SCHAEFFER: Thank you very much.

15 I think that is a great opportunity to
16 revise Title 31. Taxis have been overregulated.
17 There is a lot of rules that are archaic and
18 really don't make any sense at this stage. You
19 know, we have had dynamic pricing to be a little
20 competitive, shared riding, but we need to do
21 more in Title 31. So I have asked the taxi
22 operators through DCTOA to come in and present.

1 Some of the things they discussed was maybe
2 having the age limitation 10 years, instead of 8;
3 possibly extending the face card for the drivers
4 to 3 years. They talked a lot about staying at
5 the 12 percent wheelchair accessibility. But
6 there has got to be more that we can do just to
7 decrease expenses and increase ridership and
8 attempt to make taxis relevant.

9 Anthony Dash should be here in a
10 minute. He will give a presentation at the end
11 for DCTOA.

12 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Ms. Wade, do you
13 want to slide down? You had some good comments
14 speaking on our call, too. I am just interested
15 in hearing your perspective on where you see this
16 going.

17 MS. WADE: Good morning, all. As I
18 looked at the -- well, at first, as I have been a
19 part of the Taxi Commission, who worked very
20 diligently to address the fines issues, the
21 technology issues, even as we did that, we knew
22 that it was piecemeal at the best to at least

1 address the immediate concerns. So the rewrite
2 of 31 would absolutely make all of the users, all
3 of the stakeholders, especially our drivers, make
4 operating their business so much easier and more
5 effective and more community-oriented. When I
6 come, I look from the perspective of the
7 community, not only the user but the impact that
8 the taxis and the other for-hire vehicles have on
9 our neighborhoods, on our commercial areas, on
10 traffic in general.

11 So as we look at these titles, the
12 revisions to these titles, we are going to be
13 looking at ways to help the community as well as
14 help the drivers. So we are looking in that
15 direction because voices are almost screaming at
16 us now about the proliferation of Ubers and
17 vehicles for hire, all of them, taxis included,
18 who idle in front of major hotels and shopping
19 districts outside of the taxi stands.

20 So we are looking at a number of
21 issues, but, most especially, we are looking to
22 help you, the drivers, have a better experience

1 across the board.

2 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Thank you.

3 And I will just share from my
4 perspective, I have spoken to a lot of taxi
5 drivers over the last few months about this. And
6 some, a majority of them, were independent
7 drivers. Some rented with some of the bigger
8 companies. I think, in general, all of them are
9 interested in, one, bringing the cost of business
10 down. And, Jeff, you mentioned that, but I think
11 there is also a balance with bringing the cost of
12 business down and some kind of innovation to
13 still make it worthwhile to drive a taxi.

14 I do notice that a lot of drivers that
15 I talk to are concerned about the aging of
16 vehicles, as you mentioned, Jeff, and they are
17 concerned about renewing face cards every two
18 years. But I think overall they are just
19 concerned about the owners' process on taxi
20 drivers to even -- even if we were to extend face
21 card renewal to three years, all of the other
22 steps they have to go through, they still have to

1 go to MPD and get a background check. You know,
2 there are a lot of different places that they
3 have to go to gather the information.

4 And, you know, part of looking at
5 innovation is, you know, how do we even
6 streamline some of those activities even more,
7 but there still is a balance there because the
8 Department of For-Hire Vehicles still needs that
9 information. And it is critical for a regulated
10 industry like taxis. But overall, I would say
11 that it just presents us a great opportunity to
12 revisit. I think the -- Title 31 is how many
13 hundred pages right now?

14 MS. WADE: Two. It was four.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: It was four. Down
16 to two? Boy, if we could get it down to, you
17 know -- somebody told me -- and I am not going to
18 name the company, but it is one of the other
19 companies. Theirs is like five pages.

20 Anyway, Advisor Dawit and then --

21 MR. DAGNEW: Good morning. This is a
22 very interesting issue. I mean, the last time

1 when this Title 31 was visited was when, in fact,
2 it was a commission, Taxicab Commission.

3 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Move your
4 microphone.

5 MR. DAGNEW: Oh, sorry. So since we
6 have been For-Hire, now it is a lot of outdated
7 rules in this 31. We want them all to remove.
8 For example, I was just mentioning the other day
9 for the chairman seat covers, cat seat covers.
10 That needs to be removed. We are not having that
11 for 1991 vehicles anymore.

12 So the other thing is residential
13 restrictions. Some people have to only live in
14 immediate metro area to drive in D.C. when, in
15 fact, Uber users can come from Delaware. In
16 fact, I have a gentleman here to testify for that
17 particular reason, been driving a taxi for 40
18 years. He lives outside of the metro area. And
19 he still cannot renew his face. And he has to
20 restrict it to live in metro area. So that gives
21 us one more thing to remove some restrictions or
22 outdated rules to be removed from the face

1 renewal things.

2 The other thing is, what are we
3 limiting regulations only for taxis, which is
4 only 6 percent in the industry? Why don't we
5 regulate everybody if we have to regulate? It is
6 a lot of regulations. This is a competition.
7 Only consider taxi a uniform division of for-hire
8 vehicle. So if we have to regulate, we have to
9 regulate everybody. And if there need to be
10 added regulations, they need to be added. If
11 there are some to be removed, we have to remove
12 them. Thank you.

13 MR. CHRAPPAH: Thank you, Advisor
14 Dawit.

15 When it comes to the subject of Title
16 31 rewrite, revision, or streamlining for
17 innovation, I feel quite strongly about that
18 subject. If you look at the last 10 years and
19 you focus on the last 3 years, in particular, it
20 is clear that the way people move around has
21 changed. We call it the evolution of the ride.
22 We have gone from just having a few thousand for-

1 hire vehicles to now more than 100,000 for-hire
2 vehicles, all the way up to 180,000 vehicles.
3 What the real number is, nobody really knows for
4 sure because of data-sharing issues. But what is
5 clear is that we have increased congestion on the
6 roads because there are a lot of cars on there.

7 What is also clear with the evolution
8 of the ride is that consumers have a lot more
9 options today, whether it is a cab, a limo, Uber,
10 Lyft, Via, a bike, dockless, or a scooter. There
11 are a lot more ways people can move around a
12 city. Yet, we have thousands of residents who
13 are not able to participate in the for-hire
14 ecosystem the way they would like to because of
15 transportation barriers. Some is directly
16 related to income. Some is directly related to a
17 disability. Some is directly related to not
18 having a smartphone or a credit card or a bank
19 account. And as a city that is booming, we have
20 to do something about it.

21 And within our purview is for-hire
22 vehicles. So it presents an opportunity for us

1 to leverage what we have to help solve challenges
2 that big cities face. And this is not an
3 exception.

4 What we have been successful in doing
5 is reducing the operating costs for drivers
6 through the digital platform, the DTS. We have
7 also been successful in creating pilot
8 transportation programs to make the journey more
9 accessible and affordable for people. Some of
10 these programs you know intimately well, whether
11 that is Transport DC for people with disabilities
12 or nonemergency medical transportation or rides
13 so veterans could get to employment or medical
14 centers or even neighborhood drive service,
15 medical transit programs for seniors and elderly.

16 But we have to do more, and we have to
17 take direct aim at what one could argue ties our
18 hands behind our back. And that is the nature of
19 how Title 31 is written to conform with laws that
20 have been passed by City Council.

21 So as we look at streamlining Title
22 31, I think we should look at it in terms of a

1 blank slate. Our first step was to condense it
2 and make it transparent and available for the
3 public to comment on. While the public
4 formulates their ideas and proposals, we should
5 also be thinking about basically taking like a
6 sledgehammer to the whole infrastructure and
7 think about the future of the driver. The future
8 of the driver is a driver who is certified once
9 or licensed once by the department and they can
10 move between a cab, a private vehicle, a
11 limousine. It shouldn't matter. Consumers don't
12 care too much how many certifications a
13 particular driver has. They just want a safe and
14 affordable ride. So we should have that in the
15 back of our head.

16 We should also be thinking about the
17 company structure. As a for-hire vehicle
18 company, you should not be restricted to one
19 channel. If a company wants to get into the
20 private business, the public for-hire business,
21 the regulatory structure should accommodate and
22 encourage that so that we have meaningful

1 competition. And when it comes to the rider, we
2 should be thinking about consumer protection
3 first and make that paramount so that if I take a
4 ride in a private vehicle and I have a complaint,
5 I should be able to talk to somebody about it.
6 If I take a ride in a public for-hire vehicle, a
7 cab, or a limo and it is not resolved to my
8 satisfaction by the company, I should be able to
9 go above the company to the regulator to address
10 the concerns. That is the framework that I think
11 will put us in a position where our regulations
12 can adapt and bendable and responsive to market
13 conditions, rather than always playing catch-up.

14 And I am definitely excited to be
15 working with you all and the industry at large to
16 help move the city forth.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Okay. All right.
18 Thank you.

19 So, Ms. Mixon, we are now at the
20 public comment period. And you can call our
21 witnesses here to testify. I know we don't have
22 anybody signed in, but, you know, since we are

1 few in numbers, we can take a little time and
2 have a back-and-forth dialogue. So you can start
3 with the first person.

4 MS. MIXON: Okay, sir. I see your
5 hand raised. If you can approach the podium,
6 please? If you would write your name and sign
7 in? Then also, if you would say and spell your
8 name for the Court Reporter? And then you may
9 start.

10 (V. Public Comment Period)

11 MR. BARAH: Yes, ma'am. My name is
12 Zackarias Barah. I have been driving taxi almost
13 about 40 years, 37 years, since 1979. This is
14 the worst time that we have a taxicab as a
15 taxicab industry. And everybody is quitting
16 driving cab. So many people are quitting because
17 they cannot go forward. They cannot even afford
18 to pay their rent or anything. So we are in big
19 trouble.

20 The taxicab industry is falling apart.
21 We cannot just say it is doing good, it is doing
22 better. No. The taxicab industry is falling

1 apart. And soon I think we will see everybody
2 will be gone because there is nothing he can do.
3 We are not helping him. And I don't know what
4 the industry -- what the hack office is doing to
5 help us, but it is falling apart. Trust me. I
6 have been doing this for a long time. This is
7 threatening my life. I cannot make any more
8 living. That is why I came here today to testify
9 and if anybody can hear me.

10 So let's start with our income has
11 been reduced 75 percent of our income. Seventy-
12 five percent of our income is gone. We cannot
13 work. Lined up in the hotel, 75 percent of the
14 public would telephone. We are there lined up,
15 10, 5 cabs. They don't give a damn. So we are
16 in trouble.

17 And at the same time, the app is
18 there. It is there. You can see it, but it is
19 not working. Why? It could have helped us a lot
20 if the app was working. When we worked the
21 residential neighborhood, they could have called
22 us on an app, and we could have earned some

1 money. But the app doesn't function. You gave
2 them certain cab companies to do it, and they are
3 not doing it. So the hack office should have
4 taken that apart, taken that. And they have to
5 take that responsibility, I guess. Otherwise,
6 what do they use? I can see everything is there,
7 but it is not functioning. It could have helped
8 us a lot. So this is one, number two.

9 Number three, the \$200-\$250 tax
10 imposed on us, this is a lot of money because the
11 cab companies, the cab drivers, they are not
12 making any money. We have to pay \$250 tax. And
13 at the same time, we have to pay \$1 because we
14 live outside the city. I don't know whether this
15 as a law, it is lawful because if you live
16 outside in Virginia, you are working in D.C., so
17 you have to pay \$100? I don't know if it helps
18 anyone if we go to court.

19 So many people, they work for the
20 District of Columbia, they live outside the city.
21 But they don't get charged anything more than or
22 they have less opportunities in the city. But

1 because we live in Maryland and Virginia, we have
2 to pay \$100 more. And we cannot own any taxicab
3 because we live outside Maryland and Virginia.
4 But they also live in the city. They can own a
5 taxicab, another taxicab. Why is this lawful? I
6 don't think it is lawful.

7 So these are some of them. And
8 restricted about the residence, where you live,
9 the so-called metropolitan area, it was done in
10 the 1940s and 1930s. And they have never looked
11 at it. Nobody has looked at it. This is like
12 Prince George's or Montgomery County in this
13 neighborhood. If you don't live in that
14 neighborhood, you cannot drive taxi in D.C. Why
15 is this law there? You can live anywhere in DMV,
16 and you can drive here. Why is this law they
17 have never visited? So some of us, it is very
18 hard to live outside the metropolitan area. If
19 you live outside the metropolitan area, you
20 cannot drive here. And you make a living for
21 seven years in taxicab here, and there is no
22 other job you can do, especially at my age, once

1 you get to my age. Nobody will have me.

2 So this law should be -- I was
3 expecting you guys to bring the Title 31 here and
4 to give it to us so we could have that, some of
5 them, because we can hardly remember it, the
6 Title 31, because it is a lot of laws. So this
7 one has to be looked at, 1940s, 1930s law. I
8 think it is a fairly old law.

9 Loitering tickets. Loitering tickets.
10 We used to get 25, loitering. Now we could get
11 \$25. You get next 50. You get next 100. You
12 get next 200. Why is this law like that? It is
13 lawful to be doubled and tripled? And so
14 whenever somebody gave you loitering, you get
15 \$200. If you don't pay it in a few days, \$400.
16 This is a burden on the taxicab. Why do we do
17 this?

18 We had given the hack office 25 cents
19 every 3. And I think we had given a lot of money
20 to the hack office. And I don't think overall
21 given this much money to you, but we are giving
22 the hack office a lot of money, about 25 cents.

1 And because of that, I think I can see a lot of
2 hack officers hired every year.

3 At the same time, the hacker license
4 renewal used to be less money. It used to be \$50
5 or \$75. I don't remember. But now we have to
6 pay \$250 for this hack license, to renew it. Why
7 is it so much money and with a stamp for the --
8 just to put the stamp for the renewal of tag.
9 You charge us \$50. What for? Just to put the
10 stamp, we get a \$50 charge? Is this real? Why
11 is that imposed, \$50, just to put the stamp? I
12 mean, we didn't say a word because you told us to
13 give, to pay, and we pay for the stamp, just
14 that, \$50. For what?

15 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: So I have got
16 about six concerns. Do you have a few more
17 because then I want to get into some dialogue so
18 we could get some answers on a few of these
19 things?

20 MR. BARAH: I am almost finished. I
21 am almost finished.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Okay.

1 MR. BARAH: Almost finished. Almost
2 finished.

3 You raised a good question about the
4 year of the cars.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: The aging of the
6 vehicles.

7 MR. BARAH: Revisited. And I have a
8 MetroAccess. I think I talked to -- your name
9 again? Mr. --

10 PARTICIPANT: The director?

11 MR. BARAH: Yes. When he was here
12 before, when he was assisting, we talked to him
13 about MetroAccess. The handicapped vehicles in
14 D.C. that we have, the taxicab, we should have
15 some business from the MetroAccess. If we have
16 some portion of that, we could have made a lot of
17 money. And a lot of cab drivers would have
18 bought that handicapped vehicle. So he promised
19 us at that time he will talk to that and he might
20 do it, but it never happened.

21 So I thank you for listening to me.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Okay. So thank

1 you. So, look, I think at this point, I have got
2 about eight concerns that you voiced. A lot of
3 them have been dealt with before. But let me
4 have the director just respond to you because a
5 lot of what you have said, I know more than about
6 half of them, have been dealt with. So let me
7 let him give you a quick update on a lot of that.

8 MR. CHRAPPAH: Thank you, really, for
9 taking the time to share how you feel about the
10 industry. The sentiment you raised is not
11 foreign to us, and we have heard that from
12 different drivers at different points in time.
13 And we have addressed it. However, what keeps
14 coming up is, at least what I am seeing is, a
15 lack of information. And we will do everything
16 we can through public meetings of this nature to
17 point people in the right direction.

18 Let's start with the Title 31. Title
19 31 is available online. If you go to our
20 website, you click on "Drivers and Companies" or
21 there is a "Search" box. Just type "Title 31."
22 It will come up, and you will see all of the

1 content. The proposed regulation or the notice
2 of proposed regulation is also on our website for
3 printing. If that doesn't work, you could stop
4 by our Client Services Center, and they will do
5 their best to give you extracts of it or give you
6 the link directly so that you could print it on
7 your own.

8 You mentioned that the drivers give
9 the department 25 cents. No, they don't.
10 Passengers pay 25 cents per trip. In fact,
11 drivers get 25 cents added to the flag drop, and
12 it has been there since taxis went through the
13 modernization process, so drivers having
14 collected 25 cents extra into their pocket to
15 help them adapt to change. So that is something
16 that we want to be very factual about.

17 When it comes to the revenue
18 contribution, private sedans and black cars
19 contribute way more than taxis to the consumer
20 service fund. So, for example, in fiscal year
21 '17, private sedans contributed about \$4.53
22 million and taxis only \$3.1. That trend will

1 continue based on the volume of rise that we have
2 seen. So from a pure revenue-generation
3 standpoint, the private sedan businesses and
4 black cars or, as people call it, ride-sharing
5 companies, or TNCs, out-contribute taxis. And
6 that is indicative of the decline in the taxi
7 industry.

8 When it comes to MetroAccess business,
9 the opportunity is available for any driver who
10 will complete disability-sensitivity training and
11 how to assist passengers in a wheelchair. We
12 provide disability-sensitivity training at no
13 cost to any licensed driver. It is online. And,
14 in fact, it will be a required course for a
15 driver to renew their face ID.

16 If you are interested in participating
17 in the para-transit business, we have providers
18 who are certified that will send dispatch or
19 trips to drivers. And if you need help in that,
20 you can contact our Client Services, and they
21 will put you in touch with any of the companies
22 so that you can get that volume of business. We

1 do roughly about \$4 million in business for that.
2 So for drivers who want to earn money, here is an
3 opportunity.

4 And that is not the only opportunity
5 that is available. There are opportunities for
6 drivers to take veterans to doctors'
7 appointments, employment locations for a fee that
8 is not -- sorry. When I say, "a fee," I mean for
9 a revenue opportunity, that is not something to
10 turn a blind eye on. It is quite significant.

11 You had also talked about tickets and
12 why do tickets double or something like that. We
13 adopted a warning-first enforcement policy for
14 issues that are not major. As a result of that
15 policy, the number of tickets that have been
16 issued has dramatically declined. And the
17 statistics are available on our website.

18 Loitering is a problem for the city in
19 general, not only for the environment because,
20 you know, you have like greenhouse gas emissions
21 but also the flow of traffic. So our position on
22 loitering is that we will give you a verbal

1 warning. We will give you a written warning. So
2 that is two strikes. The third time, then, we
3 will give you the ticket that is applicable. If
4 you violate it continuously, which would mean
5 like the fourth time, of course, the ticket has
6 to double because it means the message is not
7 getting there. So that is why you see cases
8 where the ticket for loitering doubles. It
9 doubles for people who have had multiple cracks
10 at the apple and they still don't change their
11 behavior.

12 MS. WADE: Excuse me. May I interrupt
13 on that one?

14 MR. CHRAPPAH: Yes, sure.

15 MS. WADE: Again, speaking on behalf
16 of our community -- I am going to hope I can
17 speak loud enough for you to hear.

18 I have been with the Metropolitan
19 Police Department as well as this vehicle for-
20 hire. The Metropolitan Police Department has a
21 zero tolerance for loitering. While this body
22 may give you a warning and a ticket, MPD will

1 give you a ticket. And a repeat will get you a
2 double citation. So I am just warning you that
3 this idling of vehicles is so severe that MPD is
4 looking to take severe action. And I would just
5 admonish all of the people who do -- I understand
6 the competitive nature of the for-hire vehicles
7 industry. I absolutely see it, know it
8 firsthand, but I am telling you the impact it is
9 having on businesses and communities and the
10 environment is significant. So if you complain
11 about a ticket doubling after a warning or two,
12 MPD will be watching, and they will absolutely
13 ticket you and run you away and look out for you
14 to return for a stricter enforcement.

15 I am just putting that you because,
16 having met with them, I know this is their zero-
17 tolerance policy. And it is my responsibility as
18 an advisor to this body to make this body aware
19 and to make the public aware and our stakeholders
20 aware that this is a major issue. And I am glad
21 you did bring that up because it gave me the
22 opportunity to address that very serious issue.

1 So this body uses deterrence, but the
2 city does not. Okay? Thank you.

3 MR. DAGNEW: Could I add a little bit
4 on this question? You can address it more. Any
5 idea or any plan to increase the taxi lines
6 across the city, now we have -- most of the time,
7 we have -- public buildings we don't have.
8 Hotels are the most we have. So is there any
9 plan for museums to add taxi lines around
10 museums, shops, and so on?

11 MR. CHRAPPAH: Yes. And I am going to
12 address Dawit's question. And I will continue
13 addressing the points you raised.

14 When it comes to taxi lines, we are
15 taking a holistic approach working with the
16 District Department of Transportation to steady
17 pickup and drop-off areas, trips that are done by
18 taxis, trips that are done by other for-hire
19 vehicles so that we can rationalize where the
20 stands will be.

21 So currently additional stands have
22 been deployed. They are working on a list of

1 about 155. And once it is completed, we are
2 going to post it on our website.

3 We are also engaging with private
4 sector partners, like Union Station, and private
5 property owners so that they can make reasonable
6 accommodations within their properties for for-
7 hire vehicles. We think that would not only
8 improve the flow of people from one point of the
9 city to another point of the city but would also
10 provide respite for drivers when they get tired.
11 So that is something that we are quite excited
12 about.

13 Coming back to some of the issues the
14 gentleman raised earlier. One particular point
15 which I would like to address as per the Title 31
16 rewrite is the domicile requirements. To give
17 you some background, it comes from the law. And
18 our regulations conform to it. There is
19 something called MSA, which means a multi-state
20 area: D.C., Maryland, Virginia. And the
21 boundaries of where drivers can live if they want
22 to work in the taxi industry has been defined in

1 that.

2 However, if we move to an environment
3 where a driver gets licensed to drive a private
4 car, a taxi, a limousine, that would raise an
5 opportunity for those who want to live a little
6 bit further out and still work in the city to be
7 able to do that. However, today there is a
8 solution in place. But I think people just
9 ignore it or, for some reason, they are just not
10 attracted to it. We have something called the
11 independent vehicle business registration or
12 license. That will basically allow you to own
13 your own vehicle.

14 There are a few drivers who have gone
15 through that process. They work with our Client
16 Services Center. The manager, Kim Davis, is
17 sitting right there. She can tell you all about
18 it.

19 So if you live somewhere and you are
20 a cab driver and you want to own your own
21 business, there is absolutely no reason why you
22 shouldn't go through the process. Again, lack of

1 information, lack of interest, or a combination
2 of the two.

3 Paying \$100 for out-of-state, sure.
4 I mean, governments have a cost of serving the
5 public. And they can charge reasonable fees for
6 that. So while I am sympathetic to the decline
7 in the taxi industry, I also see the need for
8 government to recoup its costs for doing
9 business. And that is reflected in a policy of
10 charging \$50 for client service representatives
11 to review documents that some people submit
12 fraudulently, to review applications, to coach
13 drivers, and to spend time with them in going
14 through the application process, and for us to
15 maintain computer systems. That puts all of that
16 together.

17 So it is not \$50 to get a stamp. If
18 it is \$50 to get a stamp, we wouldn't even ask
19 you to come here in the first place. So we have
20 to sort of like, you know, call a spade a spade
21 in that vein.

22 However, we have also rolled out

1 online applications to reduce our cost of doing
2 business, make it easier for drivers and
3 companies to transact with us. So I would
4 encourage you to take a look at the online portal
5 so that you don't even have to show up here. I
6 think there is an opportunity cost for you to
7 come here. That is basically a fare that you
8 have probably missed on. As much as we love the
9 driver community, we would rather they go online
10 to transact with us and come here for complex
11 transactions. So when it comes to vehicle
12 renewals, I see no reason why people would not go
13 online.

14 And, finally, the idea of the
15 department taking over the app, we have been down
16 that road. And we have been very clear from a
17 policy standpoint that we will not compete with
18 people we regulate. However, we will provide
19 software to make it easier for drivers to get
20 dispatch or trips as long as the payment goes
21 through somebody else, instead of us. So if you
22 still feel strongly about the department taking

1 over the app, I think we can spend some time
2 outside of this forum to discuss actions that
3 would help achieve the same objective without the
4 department formally managing a dispatch app
5 because there are so many of them out there.
6 There is Uber Taxi. There is Genesis Impact.
7 There is Yellow App. There are so many of them
8 out there. There are so many apps. So the
9 department managing an app is not a winning
10 strategy. However, the department is very
11 interested in ensuring that drivers who are out
12 there on digital meters will have an opportunity
13 to receive dispatch requests and hails on their
14 meters.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Mr. Zackarias,
16 thank you for coming. And we appreciate you
17 being part of today's testimony.

18 Ms. Mixon, you can call the next
19 person to testify.

20 MS. MIXON: Okay. Do we have another
21 person who would like to testify? Please raise
22 your hand. All right, sir. And, again, if you

1 could put your name down and sign? Then right
2 before you speak, say your name and spell it for
3 the Court Reporter?

4 MR. DASH: Good morning, everyone. My
5 name is Anthony Dash. It is A-n-t-h-o-n-y D-a-s-
6 h.

7 I currently have the pleasure of
8 chairing the DCTOA. We represent a large
9 majority of taxicab companies. This level of
10 participation is unique. And we are passionate
11 about the issues which affect drivers; companies;
12 the public; and, of course, government.

13 I was happy to have the chance to
14 speak to you today about five key issues. They
15 are WAV compliance; 10 years for taxicabs; 3
16 years for face IDs, instead of two; 4, to develop
17 a meaningful and robust working group to create a
18 master plan, if you will; and, lastly, what can
19 we do for you.

20 So on WAV compliance going to 20
21 percent, as you all know, D.C. has a mandate to
22 go from 12 percent WAV compliance to 20 by year's

1 end. Now, speaking with many stakeholders and
2 decision-makers, I understand the Council, DFHV,
3 City Council all support keeping WAV compliance
4 to 12 percent, which means amending legislation.
5 We have spoken directly with City Council. We
6 have petitioned and wrote countless letters.
7 Sadly, we have no results as of today. We humbly
8 ask you, the Advisory Council, to assist our
9 group with achieving a stay at 12 percent.

10 Second is 10 years for taxicabs.

11 Again, as everyone probably knows by now, DFHV
12 has set a limit at of 10 years for private for-
13 hire vehicles and 7 for taxis. Based on previous
14 stats, taxi represents about 5 percent of the
15 total for-hire industry here in the District.
16 That means there is one standard for 95 percent
17 of the for-hire industry, and for the other 5
18 percent of the industry, there is a different
19 standard. I ask for your support to advocate
20 meaningfully to revise Title 31 such that all
21 for-hire vehicles have a 10-year age limit. We
22 believe the support is there. However, we need

1 your advocacy to make it happen.

2 Thirdly, we ask three years for face
3 ID renewals. Currently, there are many fees
4 associated with just being a taxi driver. There
5 are also a lot of newer fees which drivers have
6 had to endure, not DFHV-related. Overall, due to
7 the cost and loss of income, it is becoming
8 harder for drivers to continue driving a taxi.
9 We would like to help encourage the drivers to
10 stay in the taxi and provide world-class service.
11 We need our experienced drivers to keep driving,
12 not to give up due to costs of renewing your
13 credentials. We ask that you support our
14 endeavor and that we change face IDs from being
15 valid for 2 years and make them 3 years. A
16 simple change such as this one would greatly help
17 our drivers by bringing down costs and making it
18 easier to stay a taxi driver.

19 Fourthly, we ask that we establish a
20 working group to create a master plan. I propose
21 that we better organize ourselves by coming
22 together and plan the future of taxi. Just as

1 cities have master plans for different segments
2 of the city, I believe that we could accomplish
3 more and achieve better outcomes of taxi by
4 establishing a working group amongst ourselves
5 and creating a master plan we all advocate for.
6 The results would be a better working
7 relationship with government and industry
8 stakeholders. With better planning, we as an
9 industry can prepare and better adapt to future
10 changes. Ultimately, coordination will result in
11 better service being rendered to the public.

12 Lastly, what can we do for you?

13 Overall, we would like to work with you as a
14 department at a higher level. I didn't only come
15 here today to ask but also to give. What are
16 some of the suggestions we can do to help with
17 the issues that you see today?

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Thank you, Mr.
20 Dash. And thank you for coming today. I have a
21 few comments on what you said.

22 I think the consensus here is that

1 everybody is generally interested in looking at
2 10 years for vehicles and 3 years for face ID. I
3 think your idea about a working group is good.
4 And you asked what you could do for us. I think
5 at some point, when we do plan a working group
6 like that, I think we have to come up with a
7 singular message for Department of For-Hire
8 Vehicles and we have to advocate that message.

9 There is still a lot of
10 misunderstanding in the executive and in the
11 Council building. And it is easier not to have
12 the hard discussions and just say, you know,
13 "Everybody is fine," you know, "I don't see
14 anybody on television yelling and screaming about
15 taxis and Uber and Lyft," but, you know, we do
16 have to get to a point where we are advocating
17 for these things. And I think that this Advisory
18 Council can develop more of a role in that
19 because we have a little more latitude to say
20 things that are a little more uncomfortable to
21 the executive and to the Council with regards to
22 legislation that I know personally is just

1 sitting there. And it is legislation that could
2 enable a lot more innovation here to do a lot of
3 things you want to do.

4 So I will personally follow up with
5 you on that, and I have had some conversations
6 with the director about all of these things you
7 shared with us today.

8 So I will start on my left with
9 Advisor Wade, if you have some comments, and then
10 right on down.

11 MS. WADE: Okay. Yes. So I also
12 understand the desire to reduce your costs of
13 doing business within the District. And I
14 understand your concerns about the fees, but it
15 is also important that you understand how your
16 money is being spent that you do use in fees.
17 All of the technology updates that this body
18 provides cost to do. And, even if the District
19 funds us to do that, where do those funds come
20 from? It comes from taxes. So those people who
21 live outside of the District, earn income within
22 the District do not pay taxes to the District.

1 But you use the streets. You use all of the
2 facilities. The lights have to be maintained,
3 all of the public services. Streets have to be
4 cleaned. Roads have to be kept. Taxi stands
5 have to be determined. All of this costs money.
6 And if we don't get the money from you, who come
7 in and use it, through our fees and other local
8 taxes, then how do we help pay for the services
9 that you get? So that is one of the reasons for
10 the fees. It is not just because we want to put
11 a stamp on a piece of paper.

12 When I was in private industry years
13 ago, I had the responsibility of getting visas
14 for international workers. The District charged
15 50 cents to put a seal on a document. I then had
16 to take it to the State Department. And to put a
17 seal on that same document, they charged \$15. To
18 take it to that embassy, they charged \$45, same
19 seal, same purpose. But they had to pay for
20 their expenses. So the purpose of the fees is
21 not punishment, and they are not ill-thought-out.

22 We tried to do as best we could to

1 reduce unnecessary fees and unnecessary fines.
2 And we are going to do that continuously, even
3 through the revisions of Title 31.

4 So I thought it would be important for
5 that point to be made that we don't just assess
6 fees, but there is a purpose for those fees. And
7 I think that was the main thing that I wanted to
8 talk about. Some of the other issues I would
9 like to discuss with my fellow Council members
10 before I bring it to the public. Thank you.

11 MR. SCHAEFFER: Thank you very much.
12 I think everything has been covered. Anthony, we
13 had talked before. Thank you for the
14 presentation and bringing everything in.

15 The only thing that wasn't touched was
16 about the app, everyone asking for the app. I
17 just want to make -- the app was out there for a
18 long time, and very few people used the app. So
19 I guess, Anthony, on your question that you ended
20 up with, what can you do, I guess as company
21 owners, we need to reach out to our drivers and
22 let them know the opportunities that are there.

1 The other gentleman was talking about
2 -- he called it MetroAccess. He was referring to
3 Transport DC, I believe. And there is an
4 opportunity for him to work Transport DC. You
5 know, there are plenty of trips available for
6 someone willing to do it, especially with a
7 wheelchair-accessible vehicle. So we just have
8 to as fleet owners get the opportunities and the
9 word out to the drivers in a better forum and get
10 some of the information they are getting that is
11 not accurate and clarified at the same time.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Advisor Dawit, why
14 don't you go? And then we will have the director
15 do the final wrap-up on this.

16 MR. DAGNEW: I also want to thank Mr.
17 Dash for bringing these issues before us, and I
18 am so thankful again to bringing these particular
19 three years for ID renewal. That prompted my
20 answer -- my answer to some questions was
21 drivers, the \$250 that they are paying for
22 renewal. If that \$250 covered for 3 years, that

1 would be a good idea. And that could be a little
2 reduction for the cost of doing business. That
3 is one thing.

4 The second thing, I would second Jeff
5 with the app. If this app would have been
6 working properly, I think that would be a good
7 addition for business for drivers. Yes, the
8 department is not going to do anything about this
9 app because it regulates. Everybody doesn't want
10 to get into the business of doing business with
11 the people that it regulates. True. But can we
12 as a regulator help some technological companies
13 who can come and consolidate?

14 I mean, these four or five companies
15 who are working with this app, I think there is
16 some misconception in there. I think we need
17 somebody who could take over the entire app
18 business and consolidate and directly deal with
19 the drivers.

20 Yellow Cab has it on. Capital Cab has
21 it on. All of those five companies have their
22 own apps, as opposed to having one. This is only

1 aid to 5,000 cabs on the street. Can we
2 consolidate all in one app? Is there any way the
3 department can help do that? That would be a
4 great deal, Director. Can we say something about
5 that?

6 MR. CHRAPPAH: Yes. When it comes to
7 the consolidation, what the department can do is
8 provide a piece of technology called application
9 program interface, APIs. That would help some
10 app connect to all of the for-hire vehicles. And
11 that is a proposal that will be consistent with
12 our mission in that we are not going to advocate
13 for one for-hire vehicle over another. We would
14 like to see consumer choice.

15 The body we have here as an Advisory
16 Council has different representatives to bring
17 different perspectives. So that is great. From
18 a department standpoint, though, we would like to
19 see all taxis on one platform, all private
20 vehicles on the same platform, all limos on the
21 same platform, so that we can get closer to this
22 idea of transportation as a service or mobility

1 as a service where you see everything at one
2 place and you, the consumer, decides. So
3 philosophically I want to just make sure for the
4 record folks know where at least the department
5 is coming from.

6 To get there, there are steps we can
7 take. One step would be making sure that at
8 least all taxis can be accessible from a single
9 platform. That would be some measure of
10 progress. And we will look into ways to make
11 that happen, particularly since the department
12 has provided a digital meter pretty much for free
13 to the industry. So we will see what options are
14 available and how we can leverage data
15 integration, have APIs to support any company
16 that wants to send dispatch requests to all
17 drivers. In doing so, we will also pay attention
18 to DTS providers. Since they collect the
19 surcharge, we want to make sure that they have a
20 role to play in the payment and the collection of
21 passenger surcharge to the city as well.

22 And, Mr. Dash, thanks for the

1 presentation. I was a bit taken aback because
2 typically we don't hear from people in terms of,
3 you know, what can they do. It is almost always
4 the takers, not givers. So I had to make sure
5 what I heard was actually what was said.

6 So there are a few areas off the top
7 that I think could be helpful. And one is
8 consumer education. We would like companies and
9 fleet owners to take greater ownership about
10 educating consumers about what their options are;
11 secondly, greater ownership in managing drivers
12 in their particular fleet. That oversight should
13 not be left only to the department. We have a
14 very decentralized approach to regulations. So
15 we have regulations for companies, regulations
16 for drivers. We like companies and fleet owners
17 to pay attention to the requirements that are on
18 drivers and requirements that are on companies so
19 that they can manage that relationship. That is
20 something that we have seen on the platform
21 economy, the economy side, the ride-sharing side,
22 where they take an active interest in managing

1 the driver relationship, but, as you know, I
2 leave that to the government. That will make the
3 government too big. And that is not going to be
4 effective.

5 So if, for example, a driver
6 consistently receives complaints from passengers,
7 obviously there are repercussions from a
8 regulatory standpoint. At some point, a company
9 has got to say, "No. Driver, you are harming my
10 reputation. You are harming public interest.
11 And I don't want you to be affiliated with my
12 company anymore." So companies should adopt
13 policies that are consistent with the regulation
14 and allows them to manage the relationship with
15 drivers. So that is an area I would like to see
16 some improvement on.

17 And when it comes to the 10-year age
18 limit for cars, I am not opposed to that at all.
19 I think there is an opportunity to implement it
20 the right way so that we don't end up with the
21 hoopties and the junk cars that tarnished the
22 reputation of our D.C. taxis that the agency and

1 the public and the advisory body have worked so
2 hard to redeem. The average car you see on the
3 road now is so fresh and so clean. With this
4 summer heat, when you get into a car that is
5 fully air conditioned, credit card works, digital
6 payment works, and with a group of friends, you
7 choose to share a ride, it is much more fun. So
8 we definitely don't want to leave any window of
9 opportunity for the industry to head down South.
10 So figuring out exactly how to implement the 10
11 years is something that we can work together with
12 the public to achieve.

13 And for the 3-year face ID, I would
14 even go as far as saying give people 10-year face
15 ID. Give them a lifetime of a face ID. However,
16 there have to be checkpoints, and there has to be
17 a framework where companies are also monitoring
18 the vehicle drivers so that somebody who has a
19 perpetual license to drive, if they don't behave
20 appropriately, well, you yank their privilege.
21 That way the markets self-correct. So three
22 years, yes. I don't have any problem with that.

1 I would rather see perpetual driving privileges
2 with companies playing an active role in
3 suspending drivers. And then the regulator can
4 focus on due process to ensure that companies
5 don't take advantage of drivers and drivers don't
6 also take advantage of a very decentralized
7 system.

8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Ms. Mixon, you can
10 find out if there are any more. I don't think we
11 have any more at this point.

12 MS. MIXON: Anyone else like to
13 testify today? Please raise your hand.

14 (No response.)

15 MS. MIXON: Chair Jolly, no one else.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: So let me just
17 wrap up and say that --

18 MR. DAGNEW: Chairman Jolly?

19 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Sure. Go ahead.

20 MR. DAGNEW: I wish I can raise this
21 question once for the director or even Mr. Dash.
22 One thing we haven't paid attention is the cruise

1 light compliance.

2 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: The what?

3 MR. DAGNEW: This cruise light has --

4 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Oh, cruise light.

5 MR. DAGNEW: Yes. Cruise light has
6 been a problem between drivers and passengers.
7 There are some companies who use -- this cruise
8 light automatically shuts off when the meter goes
9 on. For the most part, most drivers, including,
10 I think, Bay Cab, have to use manual. I think we
11 are in a technological age now I don't think we
12 need the manual thing with the digital we should
13 be using.

14 What are the requirements for these
15 five companies before getting a D.C. license?
16 Aren't they suppose to have a regulation or at
17 least a minimum standard to do this? I think I
18 want to ask Mr. Dash. What happened to Bay Cab
19 is what happened for most cab companies. The
20 cruise light does not go off when the meter goes
21 on. What is their plan? I think manually
22 working is not an appropriate way to work. They

1 have to have a standard that needs to be held
2 responsible to do that cruise light that goes
3 automatic. Drivers are not supposed to be the
4 ones who are supposed to be bearing this
5 responsibilities. They are paying these
6 companies to do the right business, and they are
7 not doing.

8 MR. CHRAPPAH: Let me take that one.
9 Essentially, Bay Cab will have to speak for
10 itself, but, at least from where we sit from the
11 department's standpoint, our requirement is that
12 there has to be a mechanism for controlling the
13 dome light. It is consistent with our public
14 policy approach of giving choice and not being
15 overly prescriptive in an environment where is
16 innovation. So today there are Bluetooth
17 adapters that can automatically control the
18 legacy dome light and the new cruising light.
19 There is a switch also and -- what is the name?
20 -- seat sensors that also control the dome light.
21 So that is an indication of the range of options
22 that is out there.

1 Enforcement staff have been vigilant
2 in terms of driver education as well. And as the
3 DTS renewal is coming up, we would not entertain
4 any renewals that don't bring a better approach
5 to the dome light issue. That alone wouldn't be
6 the basis for the agency's decision, but in
7 totality, we would be looking for improvement in
8 the way people behave and an improvement in the
9 way technology is deployed because the technology
10 is out there. There are so many options out
11 there.

12 We expect any DTS who files for
13 renewal to show a concrete plan on how to work
14 with drivers to achieve 100 percent compliance.
15 But the part that I don't get and I wouldn't try
16 to solve is that no level of automation is going
17 to take care of the walls problems. So today if
18 I need to turn left, I turn on my traffic
19 indicator signal so that I turn left. The car
20 doesn't turn left automatically, and the light
21 doesn't come on. It is very similar to the
22 cruising light, dome light, and the meter.

1 When a fare gets into the vehicle, a
2 passenger gets into the vehicle, you know you
3 have got to press "Hired" for the meter. So why
4 can't you just turn off the dome light? So no
5 excuse can be given to the idea that "I forgot."
6 Well, you didn't forget to collect the fare. You
7 didn't forget to press meter "Hired." So that is
8 a rally of what we are living with. However,
9 given our experience with that, we have raised
10 the standards.

11 MR. DAGNEW: Right. That is what I am
12 asking.

13 MR. CHRAPPAH: And we are saying,
14 "Okay. Now a machine is going to do it for you,
15 and you will pay a price for it." And the market
16 will determine what is a reasonable fee.

17 MR. DAGNEW: Gentleman, again, I am
18 here with the -- my company auditor is here. I
19 just want to praise him. Jeff is here. His
20 company is doing exactly what it is asked to do.
21 Why not as it is going to do it, I mean, there is
22 one standard. Meter on, cruise light should go

1 off. There should not be more than one
2 particular driver has to touch before he has
3 taken his fare.

4 MR. CHRAPPAH: Absolutely.

5 MR. DAGNEW: That is all I am asking.

6 MR. CHRAPPAH: Yes, yes. The standard
7 is there. It is engraved in ink in regulation.
8 And when compliance officers see drivers that are
9 out of compliance, they get an NOI. Some of them
10 received NOIs because videos were taken of them
11 not being in compliance. Some have been
12 counseled. And that effort will continue because
13 we are dealing with humans here.

14 At some point, somebody will tell you,
15 "Well, I don't have enough juice on my tablet.
16 That is why it is not going to that dome light"
17 or "I forgot." Oh. "The switch is not working,"
18 so many excuses. We are at a point where we will
19 have zero tolerance, not only on the drivers'
20 side but on DTS providers' when it comes time for
21 renewal, which I believe is around the corner.
22 It should be in about 9 or 10 days from now.

1 July 1st is the deadline. So for DTS who may be
2 watching online or who pay attention to these
3 transcripts, we are waiting for renewal
4 applications and just be --

5 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Thank you.

6 Did you have anything to add to that?

7 MR. SCHAEFFER: No. No.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: So, look, I want
9 to thank everybody for coming today. I want to
10 end on a good note. So during the week -- and
11 Advisor Dawit probably knows this best because he
12 sees me a lot during the week. I probably come
13 into contact with anywhere from 20 to 30 taxi
14 drivers during a week. And this is consistent
15 because I drink at a 7-11, where everybody hangs
16 out. You know this. I would say that when I
17 first joined the Taxicab Commission, one of the
18 big complaints was the experience here in the
19 building at the Department of For-Hire Vehicles.
20 And all the taxi drivers say, "Man, every time I
21 go down there, you know, there are just tons of
22 complaints."

1 Half of them are weeded out because
2 people just, as you said, were misinformed. But
3 over the past few months, I must say, it is
4 pleasing to get a lot of positive comments about
5 what goes on here. So I thought we would end
6 today on a good note by thanking the professional
7 staff of the Department of For-Hire Vehicles that
8 is always here to support us. And you guys are
9 here to support us today because we only had two
10 witnesses, and we took our advisor capacities and
11 turned ourselves into public witnesses so we
12 could read all of this testimony into the record.

13 But, Director Chrappah, your staff is
14 doing a wonderful job. And it is known out in
15 the streets. And I have noticed a change in the
16 last three and a half, almost four years, Advisor
17 Wade, since we showed up.

18 MS. WADE: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Yes. I have
20 noticed a change, and there is a lot of positive
21 feedback. So I wanted to thank you today and end
22 by giving you a round of applause. And we can

1 read that into the record.

2 (Applause.)

3 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: And, finally, if
4 there are no further comments, we are adjourned.
5 And it is 11:27. Thank you.

6 (Whereupon, at 11:27 A.m., the meeting
7 was adjourned.)

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A

A-n-t-h-o-n-y 35:5
a.m 1:10 2:2 58:6
aback 47:1
able 12:13 15:5,8 31:7
absolutely 7:2 28:7,12
 31:21 55:4
accessibility 6:5
accessible 13:9 46:8
accommodate 14:21
accommodations 30:6
accomplish 38:2
account 12:19
accurate 43:11
achieve 4:19 34:3 38:3
 49:12 53:14
achieving 36:9
action 4:4 28:4
actions 34:2
active 47:22 50:2
activities 9:6
adapt 15:12 24:15 38:9
adapters 52:17
add 29:3,9 56:6
added 11:10,10 24:11
addition 44:7
additional 29:21
address 6:20 7:1 15:9
 28:22 29:4,12 30:15
addressed 23:13
addressing 29:13
adjoined 58:4,7
admonish 28:5
adopt 48:12
adopted 26:13
advantage 4:15 50:5,6
advisor 9:20 11:13
 28:18 40:9 43:13
 56:11 57:10,16
advisors 4:18 5:9
advisory 1:5,9 2:5 36:8
 39:17 45:15 49:1
advocacy 37:1
advocate 36:19 38:5
 39:8 45:12
advocating 39:16
affect 35:11
affiliated 48:11
afford 16:17
affordable 13:9 14:14
age 6:2 19:22 20:1
 36:21 48:17 51:11
agency 48:22
agency's 53:6
agenda 4:6
aging 8:15 22:5
ago 41:13
ahead 50:19

aid 45:1
aim 13:17
air 49:5
allow 31:12
allows 48:14
amending 36:4
answer 43:20,20
answers 21:18
Anthony 3:8,12 6:9
 35:5 42:12,19
anybody 15:22 17:9
 39:14
anymore 2:10 10:11
 48:12
Anyway 9:20
apart 16:20 17:1,5 18:4
APIs 45:9 46:15
app 17:17,20,22 18:1
 33:15 34:1,4,7,9
 42:16,16,17,18 44:5,5
 44:9,15,17 45:2,10
applause 57:22 58:2
apple 27:10
applicable 27:3
application 32:14 45:8
applications 32:12 33:1
 56:4
appointments 26:7
appreciate 34:16
approach 16:5 29:15
 47:14 52:14 53:4
appropriate 51:22
appropriately 49:20
apps 34:8 44:22
archaic 5:17
area 10:14,18,20 19:9
 19:18,19 30:20 48:15
areas 7:9 29:17 47:6
argue 13:17
Arvanites 2:16
asked 5:21 39:4 54:20
asking 42:16 54:12
 55:5
assess 42:5
assist 25:11 36:8
assisting 22:12
associated 37:4
attempt 6:8
attention 46:17 47:17
 50:22 56:2
attracted 31:10
auditor 54:18
automatic 52:3
automatically 51:8
 52:17 53:20
automation 53:16
available 14:2 23:19
 25:9 26:5,17 43:5

46:14
average 49:2
aware 28:18,19,20

B

back 3:17 13:18 14:15
 30:13
back-and-forth 16:2
background 9:1 30:17
balance 8:11 9:7
bank 12:18
Barah 16:11,12 21:20
 22:1,7,11
barriers 12:15
based 25:1 36:13
basically 14:5 31:12
 33:7
basis 53:6
Bay 51:10,18 52:9
bearing 52:4
becoming 37:7
behalf 27:15
behave 49:19 53:8
behavior 27:11
believe 36:22 38:2 43:3
 55:21
bendable 15:12
benefit 4:20
benefitting 5:7
best 6:22 24:5 41:22
 56:11
better 7:22 16:22 37:21
 38:3,6,8,9,11 43:9
 53:4
big 13:2 16:18 48:3
 56:18
bigger 8:7
bike 12:10
bit 29:3 31:6 47:1
black 24:18 25:4
blank 14:1
blind 26:10
Bluetooth 52:16
board 8:1
body 27:21 28:18,18
 29:1 40:17 45:15 49:1
booming 12:19
bought 22:18
boundaries 30:21
box 23:21
Boy 9:16
bring 20:3 28:21 42:10
 45:16 53:4
bringing 5:11 8:9,11
 37:17 42:14 43:17,18
building 39:11 56:19
buildings 29:7
burden 20:16

business 7:4 8:9,12
 14:20,20 22:15 25:8
 25:17,22 26:1 31:11
 31:21 32:9 33:2 40:13
 44:2,7,10,10,18 52:6
businesses 25:3 28:9

C

C 2:1
cab 12:9 14:10 15:7
 16:16 18:2,11,11
 22:17 31:20 44:20,20
 51:10,18,19 52:9
cabs 17:15 45:1
call 2:7,9 3:18 4:19 6:14
 11:21 15:20 25:4
 32:20 34:18
called 17:21 30:19
 31:10 43:2 45:8
capacities 57:10
Capital 44:20
car 31:4 49:2,4 53:19
card 6:3 8:21 12:18
 49:5
cards 8:17
care 14:12 53:17
cars 12:6 22:4 24:18
 25:4 48:18,21
cases 27:7
cat 10:9
catch-up 15:13
Center 24:4 31:16
centers 13:14
cents 20:18,22 24:9,10
 24:11,14 41:15
certain 18:2
certifications 14:12
certified 14:8 25:18
Chair 3:21 50:15
chairing 35:8
chairman 10:9 50:18
Chairperson 1:10,13
 2:3,8,12,14 3:15 4:1,5
 6:12 8:2 9:15 10:3
 15:17 21:15,22 22:5
 22:22 34:15 38:19
 43:13 50:9,16,19 51:2
 51:4 56:5,8 57:19
 58:3
challenges 13:1
chance 35:13
change 24:15 27:10
 37:14,16 57:15,20
changed 11:21
changes 38:10
channel 14:19
charge 21:9,10 32:5
charged 18:21 41:14,17

41:18
charging 32:10
check 9:1
checkpoints 49:16
chime 5:9
choice 45:14 52:14
choose 49:7
Chrappah 1:14 2:18,19
 5:11 11:13 23:8 27:14
 29:11 45:6 52:8 54:13
 55:4,6 57:13
citation 28:2
cities 13:2 38:1
city 12:12,19 13:20
 15:16 18:14,20,22
 19:4 26:18 29:2,6
 30:9,9 31:6 36:3,5
 38:2 46:21
clarified 43:11
clean 49:3
cleaned 41:4
clear 11:20 12:5,7
 33:16
click 23:20
client 24:4 25:20 31:15
 32:10
close 5:10
closer 45:21
coach 32:12
collect 46:18 54:6
collected 24:14
collection 46:20
Columbia 1:1 18:20
combination 32:1
come 5:22 7:6 10:15
 23:22 32:19 33:7,10
 38:14 39:6 40:19 41:6
 44:13 53:21 56:12
comes 11:15 15:1
 24:17 25:8 29:14
 30:17 33:11 40:20
 45:6 48:17 55:20
coming 4:3,12,14 23:14
 30:13 34:16 37:21
 38:20 46:5 53:3 56:9
comment 14:3 15:20
 16:10
comments 6:13 38:21
 40:9 57:4 58:4
commercial 7:9
commission 4:10 6:19
 10:2,2 56:17
communities 28:9
community 7:7,13
 27:16 33:9
community-oriented
 7:5
companies 8:8 9:19

18:2,11 23:20 25:5,21
 33:3 35:9,11 44:12,14
 44:21 47:8,15,16,18
 48:12 49:17 50:2,4
 51:7,15,19 52:6
company 9:18 14:17,18
 14:19 15:8,9 42:20
 46:15 48:8,12 54:18
 54:20
compete 33:17
competition 11:6 15:1
competitive 5:20 28:6
complain 28:10
complaint 15:4
complaints 48:6 56:18
 56:22
complete 25:10
completed 30:1
complex 33:10
compliance 35:15,20
 35:22 36:3 51:1 53:14
 55:8,9,11
computer 32:15
concerned 8:15,17,19
concerns 7:1 15:10
 21:16 23:2 40:14
concrete 53:13
condense 14:1
conditioned 49:5
conditions 15:13
conform 13:19 30:18
congestion 12:5
connect 45:10
consensus 38:22
consider 11:7
consistent 45:11 48:13
 52:13 56:14
consistently 48:6
consolidate 44:13,18
 45:2
consolidation 45:7
consumer 15:2 24:19
 45:14 46:2 47:8
consumers 12:8 14:11
 47:10
contact 25:20 56:13
content 24:1
continue 25:1 29:12
 37:8 55:12
continuously 27:4 42:2
contribute 24:19
contributed 24:21
contribution 24:18
control 52:17,20
controlling 52:12
conversations 40:5
coordination 38:10
corner 55:21

cost 8:9,11 25:13 32:4
 33:1,6 37:7 40:18
 44:2
costs 13:5 32:8 37:12
 37:17 40:12 41:5
Council 1:5,9,21 2:5
 13:20 36:2,3,5,8
 39:11,18,21 42:9
 45:16
counseled 55:12
countless 36:6
County 19:12
couple 5:4
course 25:14 27:5
 35:12
court 16:8 18:18 35:3
covered 42:12 43:22
covers 10:9,9
cracks 27:9
create 35:17 37:20
creating 13:7 38:5
credentials 37:13
credit 12:18 49:5
critical 9:9
cruise 50:22 51:3,4,5,7
 51:20 52:2 54:22
cruising 52:18 53:22
currently 29:21 35:7
 37:3

D

D 2:1
D-a-s- 35:5
D.C 1:10 10:14 18:16
 19:14 22:14 30:20
 35:21 48:22 51:15
Dagnew 1:17 2:20,21
 9:21 10:5 29:3 43:16
 50:18,20 51:3,5 54:11
 54:17 55:5
damn 17:15
Dash 6:9 35:4,5 38:20
 43:17 46:22 50:21
 51:18
data 46:14
data-sharing 12:4
Davis 31:16
Dawit 1:17 2:20 9:20
 11:14 43:13 56:11
Dawit's 29:12
day 10:8
days 20:15 55:22
DC 13:11 43:3,4
DCTOA 5:22 6:11 35:8
deadline 56:1
deal 44:18 45:4
dealing 55:13
dealt 23:3,6
decentralized 47:14
 50:6
decides 46:2
decision 53:6
decision-makers 36:2
decline 25:6 32:6
declined 26:16
decrease 6:7
defined 30:22
definitely 15:14 49:8
Delaware 10:15
department 1:3 4:11
 9:8 14:9 24:9 27:19
 27:20 29:16 33:15,22
 34:4,9,10 38:14 39:7
 41:16 44:8 45:3,7,18
 46:4,11 47:13 56:19
 57:7
department's 52:11
deployed 29:22 53:9
desire 40:12
determine 54:16
determined 41:5
deterrence 29:1
develop 35:16 39:18
DFHV 36:2,11
DFHV-related 37:6
dialogue 16:2 21:17
different 9:2 23:12,12
 36:18 38:1 45:16,17
digital 13:6 34:12 46:12
 49:5 51:12
diligently 6:20
direct 13:17
direction 7:15 23:17
directly 12:15,16,17
 24:6 36:5 44:18
director 1:14 5:10
 22:10 23:4 40:6 43:14
 45:4 50:21 57:13
disabilities 13:11
disability 12:17
disability-sensitivity
 25:10,12
discuss 34:2 42:9
discussed 4:8 6:1
discussions 39:12
dispatch 25:18 33:20
 34:4,13 46:16
District 1:1 18:20 29:16
 36:15 40:13,18,21,22
 40:22 41:14
districts 7:19
division 11:7
DMV 19:15
dockless 12:10
doctors' 26:6
document 41:15,17

documents 32:11
doing 13:4 16:21,21
 17:4,6 18:3 32:8 33:1
 40:13 44:2,10 46:17
 52:7 54:20 57:14
dome 52:13,18,20 53:5
 53:22 54:4 55:16
domicile 30:16
Dotti 1:16 3:10,16,19
double 26:12 27:6 28:2
doubled 20:13
doubles 27:8,9
doubling 28:11
dramatically 26:16
drink 56:15
drive 8:13 10:14 13:14
 19:14,16,20 31:3
 49:19
driver 14:7,8,8,13 25:9
 25:13,15 31:3,20 33:9
 37:4,18 48:1,5,9 53:2
 55:2
drivers 6:3 7:3,14,22
 8:5,7,14,20 13:5
 18:11 22:17 23:12,20
 24:8,11,13 25:19 26:2
 26:6 30:10,21 31:14
 32:13 33:2,19 34:11
 35:11 37:5,8,9,11,17
 42:21 43:9,21 44:7,19
 46:17 47:11,16,18
 48:15 49:18 50:3,5,5
 51:6,9 52:3 53:14
 55:8 56:14,20
drivers' 55:19
driving 10:17 16:12,16
 37:8,11 50:1
drop 24:11
drop-off 29:17
DTS 13:6 46:18 53:3,12
 55:20 56:1
due 37:6,12 50:4
dynamic 5:19

E

E 2:1,1
earlier 30:14
earn 26:2 40:21
earned 17:22
easier 7:4 33:2,19
 37:18 39:11
economy 47:21,21
ecosystem 12:14
educating 47:10
education 47:8 53:2
effective 7:5 48:4
effort 55:12
eight 23:2

elderly 13:15
Elliott 2:22
embassy 41:18
emissions 26:20
employment 13:13 26:7
enable 40:2
encourage 14:22 33:4
 37:9
endeavor 37:14
ended 42:19
endure 37:6
enforcement 26:13
 28:14 53:1
engaging 30:3
engraved 55:7
ensure 50:4
ensuring 34:11
entertain 53:3
entire 44:17
environment 26:19
 28:10 31:2 52:15
Erik 3:2
Ernest 1:14 2:18
especially 7:3,21 19:22
 43:6
Essentially 52:9
establish 37:19
establishing 38:4
everybody 4:3 11:5,9
 16:15 17:1 39:1,13
 44:9 56:9,15
Evian 3:4
evolution 11:21 12:7
exactly 49:10 54:20
example 10:8 24:20
 48:5
exception 13:3
excited 15:14 30:11
excuse 27:12 54:5
excuses 55:18
executive 39:10,21
expect 53:12
expecting 20:3
expenses 6:7 41:20
experience 7:22 54:9
 56:18
experienced 37:11
extend 8:20
extending 6:3
extra 24:14
extracts 24:5
eye 26:10

F

face 6:3 8:17,20 10:19
 10:22 13:2 25:15
 35:16 37:2,14 39:2
 49:13,14,15

facilities 41:2
fact 10:1,15,16 24:10
 25:14
factual 24:16
fairly 20:8
falling 16:20,22 17:5
far 49:14
fare 33:7 54:1,6 55:3
fee 26:7,8 54:16
feedback 57:21
feel 11:17 23:9 33:22
fees 32:5 37:3,5 40:14
 40:16 41:7,10,20 42:1
 42:6,6
follow 42:9
Ferguson 2:22
figuring 49:10
files 53:12
final 43:15
finally 5:10 33:14 58:3
find 50:10
fine 39:13
finer 6:20 42:1
finished 21:20,21 22:1
 22:2
first 6:18 14:1 15:3 16:3
 32:19 56:17
firsthand 28:8
fiscal 24:20
five 3:22 9:19 17:12
 35:14 44:14,21 51:15
flag 24:11
fleet 43:8 47:9,12,16
flow 26:21 30:8
focus 11:19 50:4
folks 46:4
follow 40:4
for- 11:22 27:19 30:6
 36:12
for-hire 1:3,5 2:4 4:11
 7:8 9:8 10:6 11:7 12:1
 12:13,21 14:17,20
 15:6 28:6 29:18 36:15
 36:17,21 39:7 45:10
 45:13 56:19 57:7
foreign 23:11
forget 54:6,7
forgot 54:5 55:17
formally 34:4
formulates 14:4
forth 15:16
forum 34:2 43:9
forward 16:17
four 4:9 9:14,15 44:14
 57:16
fourth 27:5
Fourthly 37:19
framework 15:10 49:17

fraudulently 32:12
free 46:12
fresh 49:3
friends 49:6
front 7:18
fully 49:5
fun 49:7
function 18:1
functioning 18:7
fund 24:20
funds 40:19,19
further 31:6 58:4
future 14:7,7 37:22 38:9

G

G 2:1
gas 26:20
gather 9:3
general 7:10 8:8 26:19
generally 39:1
Genesis 34:6
gentleman 10:16 30:14
 43:1 54:17
George's 19:12
getting 27:7 41:13
 43:10 51:15
give 5:4,4 6:10 17:15
 20:4 21:13 23:7 24:5
 24:5,8 26:22 27:1,3
 27:22 28:1 30:16
 37:12 38:15 49:14,15
given 20:18,19,21 54:5
 54:9
givers 47:4
gives 10:20
giving 20:21 52:14
 57:22
glad 28:20
government 1:1 32:8
 35:12 38:7 48:2,3
governments 32:4
greater 47:9,11
greatly 37:16
greenhouse 26:20
group 35:17 36:9 37:20
 38:4 39:3,5 49:6
guess 18:5 42:19,20

H

h 35:6
hack 17:4 18:3 20:18,20
 20:22 21:2,6
hacker 21:3
hails 34:13
half 23:6 57:1,16
hand 16:5 34:22 50:13
handicapped 22:13,18
hands 13:18

hangs 56:15
 happen 37:1 46:11
 happened 22:20 51:18
 51:19
 happy 35:13
 hard 19:18 39:12 49:2
 harder 37:8
 harming 48:9,10
 head 14:15 49:9
 hear 17:9 27:17 47:2
 heard 23:11 47:5
 hearing 2:6 6:15
 heat 49:4
 held 52:1
 help 7:13,14,22 13:1
 15:16 17:5 24:15
 25:19 34:3 37:9,16
 38:16 41:8 44:12 45:3
 45:9
 helped 17:19 18:7
 helpful 47:7
 helping 17:3
 helps 18:17
 higher 38:14
 hire 7:17 12:1 27:20
 30:7 36:13
 hired 21:2 54:3,7
 holistic 29:15
 home 5:12
 hoopties 48:21
 hope 4:18 27:16
 hotel 17:13
 hotels 7:18 29:8
 humans 55:13
 humbly 36:7
 hundred 9:13

I

ID 25:15 37:3 39:2
 43:19 49:13,15,15
 idea 29:5 33:14 39:3
 44:1 45:22 54:5
 ideas 14:4
 idle 7:18
 idling 28:3
 IDs 35:16 37:14
 ignore 31:9
 II 2:11
 III 2:13
 ill-thought-out 41:21
 immediate 7:1 10:14
 impact 7:7 28:8 34:6
 implement 48:19 49:10
 important 40:15 42:4
 imposed 18:10 21:11
 improve 30:8
 improvement 48:16
 53:7,8

included 7:17
 including 51:9
 income 12:16 17:10,11
 17:12 37:7 40:21
 increase 6:7 29:5
 increased 12:5
 independent 8:6 31:11
 indication 52:21
 indicative 25:6
 indicator 53:19
 industry 5:7 9:10 11:4
 15:15 16:15,20,22
 17:4 23:10 25:7 28:7
 30:22 32:7 36:15,17
 36:18 38:7,9 41:12
 46:13 49:9
 information 9:3,9 23:15
 32:1 43:10

infrastructure 14:6
 ink 55:7
 innovation 4:7 8:12 9:5
 11:17 40:2 52:16
 integration 46:15
 interest 32:1 47:22
 48:10
 interested 6:14 8:9
 25:16 34:11 39:1
 interesting 9:22
 interface 45:9
 international 41:14
 interrupt 27:12
 intimately 13:10
 involved 4:9,21 5:3
 issue 4:21 9:22 28:20
 28:22 53:5
 issued 26:16
 issues 6:20,21 7:21
 12:4 26:14 30:13
 35:11,14 38:17 42:8
 43:17
 Items 4:4
 IV 4:4

J

Jason 2:16
 Jeff 5:1,3 8:10,16 44:4
 54:19
 Jeffrey 1:15 3:6
 job 5:11 19:22 57:14
 joined 56:17
 Jolly 1:10,13 2:3,8,12
 2:14 3:14,15,21 4:1,5
 6:12 8:2 9:15 10:3
 15:17 21:15,22 22:5
 22:22 34:15 38:19
 43:13 50:9,15,16,18
 50:19 51:2,4 56:5,8
 57:19 58:3

journey 13:8
 JUANDA 1:21
 juice 55:15
 July 56:1
 JUNE 1:7
 junk 48:21

K

keep 37:11
 keeping 36:3
 keeps 23:13
 kept 41:4
 key 35:14
 kick 5:2
 Kim 31:16
 knew 6:21
 known 57:14
 knows 12:3 36:11 56:11

L

lack 23:15 31:22 32:1
 large 15:15 35:8
 lastly 35:18 38:12
 latitude 39:19
 law 18:15 19:15,16 20:2
 20:7,8,12 30:17
 lawful 18:15 19:5,6
 20:13
 laws 13:19 20:6
 leave 48:2 49:8
 left 5:1 40:8 47:13
 53:18,19,20
 legacy 52:18
 legislation 36:4 39:22
 40:1
 let's 5:13 17:10 23:18
 letters 36:6
 level 35:9 38:14 53:16
 leverage 13:1 46:14
 license 21:3,6 31:12
 49:19 51:15
 licensed 14:9 25:13
 31:3
 life 17:7
 lifetime 49:15
 light 51:1,3,4,5,8,20
 52:2,13,18,18,20 53:5
 53:20,22,22 54:4,22
 55:16
 lights 41:2
 limit 36:12,21 48:18
 limitation 6:2
 limiting 11:3
 limo 12:9 15:7
 limos 45:20
 limousine 14:11 31:4
 lined 17:13,14
 lines 29:5,9,14

link 24:6
 Linwood 1:10,13 3:14
 list 29:22
 listening 22:21
 little 5:19 16:1 29:3
 31:5 39:19,20 44:1
 live 10:13,20 18:14,15
 18:20 19:1,3,4,8,13
 19:15,18,19 30:21
 31:5,19 40:21
 lives 10:18
 living 17:8 19:20 54:8
 local 41:7
 locations 26:7
 loitering 20:9,9,10,14
 26:18,22 27:8,21
 long 17:6 33:20 42:18
 longer 4:21
 look 7:6,11 11:18 13:21
 13:22 23:1 28:13 33:4
 46:10 56:8
 looked 6:18 19:10,11
 20:7
 looking 7:13,14,20,21
 9:4 28:4 39:1 53:7
 loss 37:7
 lot 5:17 6:4 8:4,14 9:2
 10:6 11:6 12:6,8,11
 17:19 18:8,10 20:6,19
 20:22 21:1 22:16,17
 23:2,5,7 37:5 39:9
 40:2,2 56:12 57:4,20
 loud 27:17
 love 1:16 3:19 33:8
 Lyft 12:10 39:15

M

ma'am 16:11
 machine 54:14
 main 42:7
 maintain 32:15
 maintained 41:2
 major 7:18 26:14 28:20
 majority 8:6 35:9
 making 18:12 37:17
 46:7
 Man 56:20
 manage 47:19 48:14
 manager 31:16
 managing 34:4,9 47:11
 47:22
 mandate 35:21
 manual 51:10,12
 manually 51:21
 market 15:12 54:15
 markets 49:21
 Maryland 19:1,3 30:20
 master 35:18 37:20

38:1,5
matter 14:11
Matters 2:13
mean 9:22 21:12 26:8
 27:4 32:4 44:14 54:21
meaningful 14:22 35:17
meaningfully 36:20
means 27:6 30:19 36:4
 36:16
measure 46:9
mechanism 52:12
medical 13:12,13,15
meeting 1:5 2:5,9 58:6
meetings 23:16
members 1:12 42:9
mentioned 8:10,16 24:8
mentioning 10:8
message 27:6 39:7,8
met 1:9 28:16
meter 46:12 51:8,20
 53:22 54:3,7,22
meters 34:12,14
metro 10:14,18,20
MetroAccess 22:8,13
 22:15 25:8 43:2
metropolitan 19:9,18
 19:19 27:18,20
microphone 10:4
million 24:22 26:1
minimum 51:17
minute 6:10
misconception 44:16
misinformed 57:2
missed 33:8
mission 45:12
misunderstanding
 39:10
Mixon 1:21 2:14,16,18
 2:20,22 3:2,4,6,8,10
 3:12,14,17,21 15:19
 16:4 34:18,20 50:9,12
 50:15
mobility 45:22
modernization 24:13
moment 2:9,11
money 18:1,10,12
 20:19,21,22 21:4,7
 22:17 26:2 40:16 41:5
 41:6
monitoring 49:17
Montgomery 19:12
months 8:5 57:3
morning 2:3 4:2 6:17
 9:21 35:4
Moses 3:2
move 10:3 11:20 12:11
 14:10 15:16 31:2
MPD 9:1 27:22 28:3,12

MSA 30:19
multi-state 30:19
multiple 27:9
museums 29:9,10

N

N 2:1
name 9:18 16:6,8,11
 22:8 35:1,2,5 52:19
nature 13:18 23:16 28:6
need 5:20 11:9,10
 25:19 32:7 36:22
 37:11 42:21 44:16
 51:12 53:18
needs 9:8 10:10 52:1
neighborhood 13:14
 17:21 19:13,14
neighborhoods 7:9
never 19:10,17 22:20
new 52:18
newer 37:5
NOI 55:9
NOIs 55:10
nonemergency 13:12
note 56:10 57:6
notice 8:14 24:1
noticed 57:15,20
number 7:20 12:3 18:8
 18:9 26:15
numbers 4:16 16:1

O

O 2:1
objective 34:3
obviously 48:7
office 17:4 18:3 20:18
 20:20,22
officers 21:2 55:8
old 20:8
once 14:8,9 19:22 30:1
 50:21
ones 52:4
online 23:19 25:13 33:1
 33:4,9,13 56:2
operating 7:4 13:5
operators 5:22
opportunities 5:5 18:22
 26:5 42:22 43:8
opportunity 4:15 5:15
 9:11 12:22 25:9 26:3
 26:4,9 28:22 31:5
 33:6 34:12 43:4 48:19
 49:9
opposed 44:22 48:18
options 12:9 46:13
 47:10 52:21 53:10
order 2:7,9
organize 37:21

out-contribute 25:5
out-of-state 32:3
outcomes 38:3
outdated 10:6,22
outside 7:19 10:18
 18:14,16,20 19:3,18
 19:19 34:2 40:21
overall 8:18 9:10 20:20
 37:6 38:13
overly 52:15
overregulated 5:16
oversight 47:12
overview 5:5
owners 30:5 42:21 43:8
 47:9,16
owners' 8:19
ownership 47:9,11

P

P 2:1
pages 9:13,19
paid 50:22
paper 41:11
para-transit 25:17
paramount 15:3
part 6:19 9:4 34:17 51:9
 53:15
PARTICIPANT 22:10
participate 12:13
participating 25:16
participation 35:10
particular 10:17 11:19
 14:13 30:14 43:18
 47:12 55:2
particularly 46:11
partners 30:4
passed 13:20
passenger 46:21 54:2
passengers 24:10
 25:11 48:6 51:6
passionate 35:10
Patterson 3:4
pay 16:18 18:12,13,17
 19:2 20:15 21:6,13,13
 24:10 40:22 41:8,19
 46:17 47:17 54:15
 56:2
paying 32:3 43:21 52:5
payment 33:20 46:20
 49:6
people 4:12,20 10:13
 11:20 12:11 13:9,11
 16:16 18:19 23:17
 25:4 27:9 28:5 30:8
 31:8 32:11 33:12,18
 40:20 42:18 44:11
 47:2 49:14 53:8 57:2
percent 6:5 11:4 17:11

17:12,13 35:21,22
 36:4,9,14,16,18 53:14
period 15:20 16:10
perpetual 49:19 50:1
person 16:3 34:19,21
personally 39:22 40:4
perspective 6:15 7:6
 8:4
perspectives 45:17
petitioned 36:6
philosophically 46:3
pickup 29:17
piece 41:11 45:8
piecemeal 6:22
pilot 13:7
place 1:10 2:6 31:8
 32:19 46:2
places 9:2
plan 29:5,9 35:18 37:20
 37:22 38:5 39:5 51:21
 53:13
planning 38:8
plans 38:1
platform 13:6 45:19,20
 45:21 46:9 47:20
play 46:20
playing 15:13 50:2
please 2:15 16:6 34:21
 50:13
pleasing 57:4
pleasure 35:7
plenty 43:5
pocket 24:14
podium 16:5
point 23:1,17 30:8,9,14
 39:5,16 42:5 48:8
 50:11 55:14,18
points 23:12 29:13
Police 27:19,20
policies 48:13
policy 26:13,15 28:17
 32:9 33:17 52:14
portal 33:4
portion 22:16
position 15:11 26:21
positive 57:4,20
possibly 6:3
post 30:2
praise 54:19
Preliminary 2:13
prepare 38:9
prescriptive 52:15
present 1:12,19 2:19,21
 3:7,15,20,22 5:22
presentation 6:10
 42:14 47:1
presents 9:11 12:22
presiding 1:11

press 54:3,7
pretty 46:12
previous 36:13
previously 4:10
price 54:15
pricing 5:19
Prince 19:12
print 24:6
printing 24:3
private 14:10,20 15:4
 24:18,21 25:3 30:3,4
 31:3 36:12 41:12
 45:19
privilege 49:20
privileges 50:1
probably 33:8 36:11
 56:11,12
problem 26:18 49:22
 51:6
problems 53:17
process 8:19 24:13
 31:15,22 32:14 50:4
professional 57:6
program 45:9
programs 13:8,10,15
progress 46:10
proliferation 7:16
promised 22:18
prompted 43:19
properly 44:6
properties 30:6
property 30:5
proposal 45:11
proposals 14:4
propose 37:20
proposed 24:1,2
protection 15:2
provide 25:12 30:10
 33:18 37:10 45:8
provided 46:12
providers 25:17 46:18
providers' 55:20
provides 40:18
public 14:3,3,20 15:6
 15:20 16:10 17:14
 23:16 28:19 29:7 32:5
 35:12 38:11 41:3
 42:10 48:10 49:1,12
 52:13 57:11
punishment 41:21
pure 25:2
purpose 41:19,20 42:6
purview 12:21
put 15:11 21:8,9,11
 25:21 35:1 41:10,15
 41:16
puts 32:15
putting 28:15

Q

question 22:3 29:4,12
 42:19 50:21
questions 43:20
quick 23:7
quite 11:17 26:10 30:11
quitting 16:15,16

R

R 2:1
raise 31:4 34:21 50:13
 50:20
raised 16:5 22:3 23:10
 29:13 30:14 54:9
rally 54:8
range 52:21
rationalize 29:19
reach 42:21
read 57:12 58:1
real 12:3 21:10
reason 10:17 31:9,21
 33:12
reasonable 30:5 32:5
 54:16
reasons 41:9
receive 34:13
received 55:10
receives 48:6
record 3:16 46:4 57:12
 58:1
recoup 32:8
redeem 49:2
reduce 33:1 40:12 42:1
reduced 17:11
reducing 13:5
reduction 44:2
referring 43:2
reflected 32:9
regards 39:21
registration 31:11
regulate 11:5,5,8,9
 33:18
regulated 9:9
regulates 44:9,11
regulation 24:1,2 48:13
 51:16 55:7
regulations 11:3,6,10
 15:11 30:18 47:14,15
 47:15
regulator 15:9 44:12
 50:3
regulatory 14:21 48:8
related 12:16,16,17
relationship 38:7 47:19
 48:1,14
relevant 6:8
remember 20:5 21:5
remove 10:7,21 11:11

removed 10:10,22
 11:11
rendered 38:11
renew 10:19 21:6 25:15
renewal 8:21 11:1 21:4
 21:8 43:19,22 53:3,13
 55:21 56:3
renewals 33:12 37:3
 53:4
renewing 8:17 37:12
rent 16:18
rented 8:7
repeat 28:1
repercussions 48:7
Reporter 16:8 35:3
represent 35:8
representatives 32:10
 45:16
represents 36:14
reputation 48:10,22
requests 34:13 46:16
required 25:14
requirement 52:11
requirements 30:16
 47:17,18 51:14
residence 19:8
residential 10:12 17:21
residents 12:12
resolved 15:7
respite 30:10
respond 23:4
response 2:17 3:1,3,5,9
 3:11,13 50:14
responsibilities 52:5
responsibility 18:5
 28:17 41:13
responsible 52:2
responsive 15:12
restrict 10:20
restricted 14:18 19:8
restrictions 10:13,21
result 26:14 38:10
results 36:7 38:6
return 28:14
revenue 24:17 26:9
revenue-generation
 25:2
review 32:11,12
revise 5:16 36:20
revision 11:16
revisions 7:12 42:3
revisit 9:12
Revisited 22:7
rewrite 7:1 11:16 30:16
ride 11:21 12:8 14:14
 15:4,6 49:7
ride-sharing 25:4 47:21
rider 15:1

ridership 6:7
rides 13:12
riding 5:20
rise 25:1
road 33:16 49:3
roads 12:6 41:4
robust 35:17
role 39:18 46:20 50:2
roll 2:15 3:18
rolled 32:22
room 2:6
roughly 26:1
round 57:22
rules 5:17 10:7,22
run 28:13

S

S 2:1
S.E 1:10
Sadly 36:7
safe 14:13
satisfaction 15:8
saying 49:14 54:13
Schaeffer 1:15 3:6,7
 5:2,14 42:11 56:7
scooter 12:10
screaming 7:15 39:14
seal 41:15,17,19
Search 23:21
seat 10:9,9 52:20
second 36:10 44:4,4
secondly 47:11
Secretary 1:21
sector 30:4
sedan 25:3
sedans 24:18,21
seeing 23:14
seen 25:2 47:20
sees 56:12
segments 38:1
self-correct 49:21
send 25:18 46:16
seniors 13:15
sense 5:18
sensors 52:20
sentiment 23:10
serious 28:22
service 13:14 24:20
 32:10 37:10 38:11
 45:22 46:1
services 24:4 25:20
 31:16 41:3,8
serving 32:4
set 36:12
seven 19:21
Seventy- 17:11
severe 28:3,4
Shannon 1:10 2:5

share 8:3 23:9 49:7
shared 5:20 40:7
shopping 7:18
shops 29:10
show 33:5 53:13
showed 57:17
shuts 51:8
side 47:21,21 55:20
sign 16:6 35:1
signal 53:19
signed 15:22
significant 26:10 28:10
silence 2:10,11
similar 53:21
simple 37:16
single 46:8
singular 39:7
sir 16:4 34:22
sit 52:10
sitting 31:17 40:1
six 21:16
slate 14:1
sledgehammer 14:6
slide 6:13
small 4:16
smartphone 12:18
snapshot 4:17
so-called 19:9
software 33:19
solution 31:8
solve 13:1 53:16
somebody 9:17 15:5
 20:14 33:21 44:17
 49:18 55:14
soon 17:1
sorry 10:5 26:8
sort 32:20
South 49:9
Southeast 2:6
spade 32:20,20
speak 27:17 35:2,14
 52:9
speaking 6:14 27:15
 36:1
spell 16:7 35:2
spend 32:13 34:1
spent 40:16
spoken 8:4 36:5
staff 1:19 53:1 57:7,13
stage 5:18
stakeholders 7:3 28:19
 36:1 38:8
stamp 21:7,8,10,11,13
 32:17,18 41:11
standard 36:16,19
 51:17 52:1 54:22 55:6
standards 54:10
standpoint 25:3 33:17

45:18 48:8 52:11
stands 7:19 29:20,21
 41:4
start 5:1,13 16:2,9
 17:10 23:18 40:8
State 41:16
Station 30:4
statistics 26:17
stats 36:14
stay 36:9 37:10,18
staying 6:4
steady 29:16
step 14:1 46:7
steps 8:22 46:6
stop 24:3
strategy 34:10
streamline 5:6 9:6
streamlining 4:6 11:16
 13:21
street 45:1
streets 41:1,3 57:15
stricter 28:14
strikes 27:2
strongly 11:17 33:22
structure 14:17,21
subject 11:15,18
submit 32:11
successful 13:4,7
suggestions 38:16
Suite 1:9
summer 49:4
support 36:3,19,22
 37:13 46:15 57:8,9
suppose 51:16
supposed 52:3,4
surcharge 46:19,21
suspending 50:3
switch 52:19 55:17
sympathetic 32:6
system 50:7
systems 32:15

T

tablet 55:15
tag 21:8
taken 18:4,4 47:1 55:3
 55:10
takers 47:4
talk 8:15 15:5 22:19
 42:8
talked 6:4 22:8,12
 26:11 42:13
talking 43:1
tarnished 48:21
tax 18:9,12
taxes 40:20,22 41:8
taxi 5:21 6:19 7:19 8:4
 8:13,19 10:17 11:7

16:12 19:14 25:6 29:5
 29:9,14 30:22 31:4
 32:7 34:6 36:14 37:4
 37:8,10,18,22 38:3
 41:4 56:13,20
taxicab 4:10 10:2 16:14
 16:15,20,22 19:2,5,5
 19:21 20:16 22:14
 35:9 56:17
taxicabs 35:15 36:10
taxis 5:16 6:8 7:8,17
 9:10 11:3 24:12,19,22
 25:5 29:18 36:13
 39:15 45:19 46:8
 48:22
technological 44:12
 51:11
technology 6:21 40:17
 45:8 53:9,9
telephone 17:14
television 39:14
tell 31:17 55:14
telling 28:8
terms 4:16 13:22 47:2
 53:2
testify 4:13 10:16 15:21
 17:8 34:19,21 50:13
testifying 4:17
testimony 34:17 57:12
thank 2:12 4:1,3 5:14
 8:2 11:12,13 15:18
 22:21,22 23:8 29:2
 34:16 38:18,19,20
 42:10,11,13 43:12,16
 50:8 56:5,9 57:21
 58:5
thankful 43:18
thanking 57:6
thanks 46:22
Theirs 9:19
things 6:1 11:1 21:19
 39:17,20 40:3,6
third 27:2
Thirdly 37:2
Thomas 3:8
thought 42:4 57:5
thousand 11:22
thousands 12:12
threatening 17:7
three 4:9 8:21 18:9 37:2
 43:19 49:21 57:16
THURSDAY 1:7
ticket 27:3,5,8,22 28:1
 28:11,13
tickets 20:9,9 26:11,12
 26:15
ties 13:17
tired 30:10

title 4:5,7 5:6,16,21
 9:12 10:1 11:15 13:19
 13:21 20:3,6 23:18,18
 23:21 30:15 36:20
 42:3
titles 7:11,12
TNCs 25:5
today 4:3,15 12:9 17:8
 31:7 35:14 36:7 38:15
 38:17,20 40:7 50:13
 52:16 53:17 56:9 57:6
 57:9,21
today's 4:5,6 34:17
told 9:17 21:12
tolerance 27:21 28:17
 55:19
tons 56:21
top 47:6
total 36:15
totality 53:7
touch 25:21 55:2
touched 42:15
traffic 7:10 26:21 53:18
training 25:10,12
transact 33:3,10
transactions 33:11
transcripts 56:3
transit 13:15
transparent 14:2
Transport 13:11 43:3,4
transportation 12:15
 13:8,12 29:16 45:22
trend 24:22
tried 41:22
trip 24:10
tripled 20:13
trips 25:19 29:17,18
 33:20 43:5
trouble 16:19 17:16
True 44:11
Trust 17:5
try 53:15
turn 26:10 53:18,18,19
 53:20 54:4
turned 57:11
two 8:17 9:14,16 18:8
 27:2 28:11 32:2 35:16
 57:9
type 23:21
typically 47:2

U

Uber 10:15 12:9 34:6
 39:15
Ubers 7:16
Ultimately 38:10
uncomfortable 39:20
understand 28:5 36:2

40:12,14,15
uniform 11:7
Union 30:4
unique 35:10
unnecessary 42:1,1
update 23:7
updates 40:17
use 18:6 40:16 41:1,1,7
 51:7,10
user 7:7
users 7:2 10:15
uses 29:1

V

V 16:10
valid 37:15
vehicle 1:5 2:4 11:8
 14:10,17 15:4,6 22:18
 27:19 31:11,13 33:11
 43:7 45:13 49:18 54:1
 54:2
vehicles 1:3 4:11 7:8,17
 8:16 9:8 10:11 12:1,2
 12:2,22 22:6,13 28:3
 28:6 29:19 30:7 36:13
 36:21 39:2,8 45:10,20
 56:19 57:7
vein 32:21
verbal 26:22
veterans 13:13 26:6
videos 55:10
vigilant 53:1
violate 27:4
Virginia 18:16 19:1,3
 30:20
visas 41:13
visited 10:1 19:17
voiced 23:2
voices 7:15
volume 25:1,22

W

Wade 1:16 3:10,16,19
 3:20 6:12,17 9:14
 27:12,15 40:9,11
 57:17,18
waiting 56:3
walked 3:16
walls 53:17
wanted 4:14 42:7 57:21
wants 14:19 46:16
warning 27:1,1,22 28:2
 28:11
warning-first 26:13
Wash 3:12
Washington 1:10
wasn't 42:15
watching 28:12 56:2

WAV 35:15,20,22 36:3
way 11:20 12:2,14
 24:19 45:2 48:20
 49:21 51:22 53:8,9
ways 7:13 12:11 46:10
website 23:20 24:2
 26:17 30:2
weeded 57:1
week 56:10,12,14
went 24:12
wheelchair 6:5 25:11
wheelchair-accessible
 43:7
willing 43:6
window 49:8
winning 34:9
wish 50:20
witnesses 15:21 57:10
 57:11
wonderful 57:14
word 21:12 43:9
work 17:13 18:19 24:3
 30:22 31:6,15 38:13
 43:4 49:11 51:22
 53:13
worked 6:19 17:20 49:1
workers 41:14
working 15:15 17:19,20
 18:16 29:15,22 35:17
 37:20 38:4,6 39:3,5
 44:6,15 51:22 55:17
works 49:5,6
world-class 37:10
worst 16:14
worthwhile 8:13
wouldn't 32:18 53:5,15
wrap 50:17
wrap-up 5:10 43:15
write 16:6
written 13:19 27:1
wrote 36:6

X

Y

yank 49:20
year 21:2 22:4 24:20
year's 35:22
years 4:9 6:2,4 8:18,21
 10:18 11:18,19 16:13
 16:13 19:21 35:15,16
 36:10,12 37:2,15,15
 39:2,2 41:12 43:19,22
 49:11,22 57:16
yelling 39:14
Yellow 34:7 44:20
yesterday 4:19

Z

Zackarias 16:12 34:15
zero 27:21 55:19
zero- 28:16

0

1

10 6:2 11:18 17:15
 35:15 36:10,12 39:2
 49:10 55:22
10-year 36:21 48:17
 49:14
10:00 1:10
10:19 2:2,4
100 18:17 19:2 20:11
 32:3 53:14
100,000 12:1
11:27 58:5,6
12 6:5 35:22 36:4,9
15 41:17
155 30:1
17 24:21
180,000 12:2
1930s 19:10 20:7
1940s 19:10 20:7
1979 16:13
1991 10:11
1st 56:1

2

2 37:15
20 35:20,22 56:13
200 20:12,15
200-\$250 18:9
2018 1:7
2032 1:10 2:6
21 1:7
2235 1:10 2:5
25 20:10,11,18,22 24:9
 24:10,11,14
250 18:12 21:6 43:21,22

3

3 6:4 11:19 20:19 35:15
 37:15 39:2 43:22
3-year 49:13
3.1 24:22
30 56:13
31 4:7 5:6,16,21 7:2
 9:12 10:1,7 11:16
 13:19,22 20:3,6 23:18
 23:19,21 30:15 36:20
 42:3
37 16:13

4

4 26:1 35:16
4.53 24:21
40 10:17 16:13
400 20:15
45 41:18

5

5 17:15 36:14,17
5,000 45:1
50 20:11 21:4,9,10,11
 21:14 32:10,17,18
 41:15

6

6 11:4

7

7 36:13
7-11 56:15
75 17:11,13 21:5

8

8 6:2

9

9 55:22
95 36:16

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Advisory Council Meeting

Before: DC Department of For-Hire Vehicles

Date: 06-21-18

Place: Washington, DC

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