**Transit and Housing Go Hand in Hand**

**New York City Charter Revision Commission Testimony**

**April 23, 2025**

Good evening members of the Charter Revision Commission, my name is Benjy Ross, and I’m a Research and Advocacy Intern at the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. Created by the Legislature in 1981, PCAC is *The Official Voice of MTA Riders.*

PCAC exists to fight for better service for every rider across the system. So why am I here today talking about housing?

Excellent transit is the key to plentiful housing. And plentiful housing is the key to excellent transit. People want to live where there is good transit – unfortunately, they are too often priced out.

Car-centric requirements for new housing dramatically increase costs, reduce the amount of housing that can be built, and disincentivize residents to use our city’s greatest asset: our robust transit system.

New York City’s housing crisis results from an incredible deficit of affordable homes, 473,000 according to the Regional Plan Association. To realistically build the homes needed to resolve this crisis, we need to plan around transit.

We have four recommendations for the Charter Revision Commission:

1. **Expand Zoning for Accessibility** to apply to developments within a larger radius of all city subway and rail stations, and extend it to include bus stops. Allowing more developers than just those within a close distance of stations to pitch in on accessibility projects and other station improvements is a great way to solve two problems at once.
2. **Create a comprehensive citywide plan incorporating transit**. New York City is defined by two things: our housing density and our transit system. Creating a citywide plan that addresses our dire need for more housing while encouraging residents to utilize transit is critical to solving our housing crisis and cementing a stable future for mass transit. For example, our analysis shows that City of Yes would increase daily transit ridership by up to 97,000, bringing in $304 million annually over 15 years in subway and bus operating funds.
3. **Streamline projects that achieve citywide goals**. Streamlining development that eases our housing shortfall and addresses community needs will save time and money. With 146,000 New York City Public School students experiencing homelessness last year, we don’t have time to wait. Curtailing council member deference, reforming the ULURP process, and rationalizing environmental review would go a long way towards letting New York City meet New Yorkers’ needs.
4. **Eliminate parking minimums citywide**. Car-centric cities like Minneapolis and Austin have eliminated mandatory parking minimums. In the most transit rich city in the Western Hemisphere with an acute housing shortage, there is no reason for developers to be legally required to replace housing with off-street parking. Continuing to build car-centric infrastructure makes transit and our housing crisis worse.

The housing crisis is the defining crisis of this city today, but we have the tools to fight it. Even after City of Yes, our zoning text today looks more like Houston than Houston St. This is the greatest city on earth, and New York City needs to start planning like it’s New York City.

Thank you for your time.