Good morning. My name is Jack Friedman, and I am speaking today on behalf of the Times Square Alliance, the business improvement district that works to improve and promote the Times Square area.

While Times Square thrives on the approximately 400,000 pedestrians that pass through daily, vehicular traffic is also key to day-to-day life in our district. Between deliveries to hotels, visitors to the Broadway theaters and employees commuting to the neighborhood, we must find a policy balance that mitigates growing vehicular congestion while considering Times Square’s huge volume of pedestrian activity.

To start, we believe the city should conduct a comprehensive study of Theater District traffic to analyze what’s choking it, from street fairs to clustering hop-on hop-off busses to pedestrian crossing bottlenecks. This study would allow the Department of Transportation to create flow and fact-based criteria for filtering street closures, event applications, tour buses and film shoots in Times Square every day.

Hop-on hop-off busses have proliferated throughout the Times Square area in recent years, exacerbating congestion because of an excess of stops placed without a rational framework. The placement and number of these bus stops, as well as the enforcement of bus stacking and dwell times, must be evaluated by the Department of Transportation.

The City should consider reopening the left turn-lanes onto 44th and 46th Streets, which had been closed due to construction to allow more direct access to key venues on those blocks. There should also be consideration of a moratorium on permitted events and street closures for the balance of the construction period, as these closures further exacerbate traffic headaches.

Thinking beyond construction, a comprehensive traffic study would also help determine the total number, timing and location of events in Times Square, so that event regulations can be responsive to neighborhood needs and preferences. SAPO or DOT should have the tools to cap or limit events in certain circumstances, particularly when pedestrian and vehicular traffic are going to be adversely impacted.

We should also consider placing pedestrian crossing guards at key intersections throughout the Bow Tie to help reduce congestion at key pinch points where pedestrians currently spill into traffic.

It is clear that, in the Times Square area, there are multiple & varied contributing factors to slower vehicular traffic. We believe these can be mitigated by interagency cooperation and a data-driven approach to the rules and regulations governing the space.

The Alliance thanks the Borough President for her commitment to this issue, and we look forward to continuing this conversation.