



April 26, 2019

Re: Transparency and L train partial shutdown

Dear Governor Cuomo and Chairman Foye,

Our organizations were happy to read this morning that construction to address the L train are moving ahead of schedule and may result in a shortened partial shutdown, which if realized will provide relief to hundreds of thousands of commuters. However, we are writing you today to express our concerns with other components of the current L Train partial shutdown plan. There are many questions as the partial closure begins and we would like to outline a few steps the MTA can take, working with the City, to make the best out of a difficult scenario.

We were very pleased to see some of the previous plans put back in place this week, such as turning 14th Street into a bus and truck street, and making permanent bicycle routes on 12th and 13th Streets in Manhattan and Grand Street in Brooklyn.

Going forward, we ask for transparency and accountability. The manner in which the MTA announced changes to the project and mitigation plan early this year were disappointing. After months of exhaustive preparations for a full shutdown, there were decisions made to remove a number of effective traffic relief strategies. And the new MTA capital project was never reviewed and vetted by a third party.

Moving forward, we ask that the MTA work with the City to provide monthly updates on construction schedule, cost, and safety – including air quality monitoring. In addition, to keep New Yorkers informed about how the L Train repair work is impacting travel, we ask for daily or weekly tracking and updates on traffic in Manhattan, across bridges and in northern Brooklyn. Similarly, we ask that the agencies monitor bike use, along with train and bus

ridership, and the use of for-hire vehicles during the partial closure, and make this information publicly available.

All of this data will help guide more informed decisions throughout the partial shutdown and in the future when the MTA is faced with reducing transit service during periods of subway construction. It will also be valuable as the MTA and City prepare for congestion pricing.

We also ask the MTA not rule out previous shutdown mitigation proposals, especially if the current plan does not finish on the expedited manner indicated in the *Daily News*, or worse, leads to more disruption than has been anticipated. While it is very heartening that the current plan now includes a 14th Street bus/truckway, other mitigation strategies, such as HOV3 restrictions on the Williamsburg Bridge and inter-borough bus service, remain off the table at present.

It is imperative that we are fully prepared to adapt if the current partial shutdown plan is not working for the 400,000 riders who rely on the L Train every day. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to fix our subway and bus system.

Sincerely,

David Bragdon, Executive Director, TransitCenter

Jaqi Cohen, Campaign Coordinator, Straphangers Campaign

Marco Conner and Ellen McDermott, Co-Interim Directors, Transportation Alternatives

Lisa Daglian, Executive Director, Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA

John Raskin, Executive Director, Riders Alliance

Nick Sifuentes, Executive Director, Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Julie Tighe, President, New York League of Conservation Voters

Tom Wright, President, Regional Plan Association

CC:

NYC Transit President Andy Byford

Mayor Bill de Blasio

NYC DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg