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RIDER ADVOCATES REACT TO RELEASE OF MTA CAPITAL PLAN OVERVIEW

*It's An Investment in the Region's Riders And That's The Way It Should Be –
But Where Is The Actual Plan?*

“From what we’ve seen, the proposed \$51 Billion capital plan is more than an investment in the region’s transit network, it’s an investment in the region’s riders and that’s the way it should be. In fact, it’s what riders have been asking for and what we’ve been calling for since before the last capital plan. We are hopeful that all of the much-needed funds from the city, state and federal governments will be forthcoming to get things moving quickly. The cost of delayed projects is too high.

“We’re pleased that there is a focus on increasing service, reliability and accessibility by funding for stations, signals and rolling stock – including the increase in electric buses. We hope that recent talk of service reductions is now by the wayside as improving the system should get more riders on board and any service reduction will have exactly the opposite effect, as we saw in 2010. Funding *Fast Forward*, *LIRR Forward* and *Metro-North Way Ahead* are critical to meeting the needs of the traveling public now and into the future and at first blush the plan hits all the right notes – but we need to see the actual lists of projects. The MTA’s press release and PowerPoint provide great high-level visuals and are long on praiseworthy elements, but short on details. We’re also concerned that the MTA Board will only have a week to consider this \$51 Billion plan before voting to send it to the Capital Program Review Board – and clearly missing is how the proposed projects fit into the agency’s 20 Year Needs Assessment, which should be the guiding document for the capital plan, but is nowhere to be found. We also wonder how the transformation plan will affect the way projects are prioritized and urge adequate funding to support the MTA’s Capital Construction efforts under the new configuration.

“Listed under ‘Transparency’ on the MTA’s website, this summary release is anything but. The public has the right to see, review and provide input into the next capital plan – which charts the MTA’s course for the next five years – for more than a week. If the MTA cannot provide us with ample time to weigh in, we are hopeful that legislative hearings will provide such a forum.”