Good morning! I’m Kara Gurl, Planning and Advocacy Manager at the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC).

Nearly a month into the full implementation of the Queens Bus Network Redesign, we’re glad— but not surprised— that things are working smoothly. This generational upgrade to the Queens bus network and $35 million in new operating funding was sorely needed, and it’s great to see that many of the common-sense improvements like balancing stop spacing, streamlining routes, and creating new “Rush” routes are helping riders already. The PCAC team was out at bus stops around Queens as ambassadors for both phases of the redesign implementation. We were glad to see such a robust in-person program informing riders about changes— it’s clear that the best way to tell riders that their commutes are changing is by meeting them where they already are, at their bus stops and in their neighborhoods.

But the MTA can’t improve the bus network alone: NYC DOT has a major role to play in upgrading our buses. We’re very happy that construction on the upgraded Flatbush Avenue began last week with center-running bus lanes, reduced traffic lanes, and bus boarding islands. This is a big step in the right direction towards true BRT in New York City, and we encourage the city and MTA to work together to upgrade street-level infrastructure around the five boroughs that will speed up buses. Our report, released earlier this summer, “[BRT for the Boroughs](https://pcac.org/report/brtfortheboroughs/),” outlines even more improvements that can be made on Flatbush and around the five boroughs – but only with the city's direct involvement.

We’re also calling on the city to expand the Fair Fares program to at least 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and to the railroads within the city so that 450,000+ more New Yorkers can afford transit. Currently, minimum wage workers earn too much to qualify— that needs to change. Especially as we approach a potential new mayoral administration, the time has never been better to make major upgrades to the city’s transit commitments and opportunities.

Thank you.