

MOLLY HOLLISTER
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BEATRICE DISMAN, ASST. TREASURER
KATHY THOMPSON, SECRETARY
AMELIA ACOSTA, ASST. SECRETARY

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX
211 EAST 43RD STREET, SUITE 1404
NEW YORK, NY 10017

January 23, 2019

Fernando Ferrer
Acting Chairman
Metropolitan Transportation Authority-New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Polly Trottenberg
Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation
55 Water Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10041

Dear Chairman Ferrer and Commissioner Trottenberg,

Governor Cuomo's intervention may have reshaped how the Canarsie Tunnel will be rehabilitated, but it's unlikely that we'll know exactly how for some time. This is a major reason Manhattan Community Board Six (CB6) believes that the remediation plans developed for the tunnel's complete shutdown (which we supported in our July 2018 resolution, attached) still have undeniable value and should be retained.

There are numerous uncertainties surrounding the proposal and there is no clear timeline for the project's inception or completion. Resolving the many issues associated with the proposal will impact how long the project will take—and whether the Metropolitan Transportation Authority-New York City Transit (MTA-NYCT) will be able to implement it as initially presented. If the tunnel will only be closed on nights and weekends, one tube at a time, and then immediately reopen, the turnaround time required for the work zone's cleanup before resuming public use could be days, not hours.

These uncertainties illustrate why the remediation plans that MTA-NYCT, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), and other agencies have developed and installed for the original tunnel shutdown should stay in place: to provide flexibility for dealing with the new approach's potential disruptions. Weekend closures, with L trains running every 20 minutes, will require multiple transit options to avoid severe and dangerous overcrowding. If one tunnel tube is regularly shut not just for weekends, but also on work days, a system will need to be in place for commuter displacements.

It makes sense not to negate the carefully constructed safety net of remediation planning that has been years in the making before we have a much clearer picture of this massive project's future directions, requirements, and weaknesses.

CB6 also sees the beneficial potential for some of the remediation plans, which we feel should be maintained. We believe that the 14th Street Busway and Select Bus Service, along with the new bike lanes and street-safety improvements implemented for the tunnel closure, are positive steps toward redefining how our streets will need to function. The additional ferry service and the connectivity of the ferry to other modes of transportation will be positive additions to our transportation network.

Sincerely,



Molly Hollister
Chair
Manhattan Community Board Six



Sandra McKee
Chair
Manhattan Community Board Six
Transportation Committee



Gene Santoro
Vice Chair
Manhattan Community Board Six
Transportation Committee

Enclosure

Cc: Hon. Andrew Cuomo, Governor
Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Corey Johnson, New York City Council Speaker and Acting Public Advocate
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Brad Hoylman, State Senator
Hon. Liz Krueger, State Senator
Hon. Harvey Epstein, Assembly Member
Hon. Carlina Rivera, Council Member
Hon. Keith Powers, Council Member
Edward F. Pincar, Jr., Manhattan Borough Commissioner, New York City DOT
Robert Marino, Metropolitan Transportation Authority-New York City Transit

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX
211 EAST 43RD STREET, SUITE 1404
NEW YORK, NY 10017

VIA E-MAIL

September 14, 2018

MTA New York City Transit
Andy Byford
President
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Edward F. Pincar Jr.
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane, 37th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Resolution regarding the upcoming L Train Shutdown

At the September 12, 2018 Full Board meeting of Manhattan Community Board Six, the Board adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS, L train service will be shut down from Bedford Avenue in Williamsburg to 8th Avenue in Manhattan for 15 months starting in April 2019, for post-Superstorm Sandy reconstruction and reengineering;

WHEREAS, New York City Transit (NYCT) of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), and New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) have jointly presented to the Transportation Committee of Community Board Six (CB6) their proposed but still-evolving mitigation plans for 400,000 daily commuters affected by the L closure;

WHEREAS, a primary goal of the agencies' mitigation planning is to discourage commuters from increasing automotive traffic, whether private or fee-for-hire vehicles (FHVs), while encouraging mass transit solutions that enable travel through the affected areas with maximum efficiency and minimum negative impact on safety and the environment;

WHEREAS, NYCT and DOT have done extensive traffic analyses and modeling of alternative approaches to mitigation, and are open to continuing community input for planning reassessments;

WHEREAS, Community District Six (CD6) will be heavily affected by both the L train closure and the proposed mitigation measures, which include:

- Creating a restricted-access “busway” on 14th Street between 3rd and 8th Avenues from 5am to 10pm 7 days a week
- Running a 149-passenger ferry shuttle between South Williamsburg and Stuyvesant Cove eight times per hour
- Running shuttle buses from a temporary “terminal” below the FDR Drive at E. 23rd Street to E. 14th Street and Avenue C to carry ferry passengers to NYCT crosstown buses
- Improving the M23SBS and installing the M14SBS bus routes
- Operating new L1 and L4 buses to shuttle Brooklyn commuters across the Williamsburg Bridge, restricted at “peak hours” to HOV-3 and bus lanes, to the north side of E. 15th Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues
- Expanding nearby Citibike stations, valet availability, and bike corral availability;
- Installing extensive wayfinding signage;

WHEREAS, approximately 7000 residents of Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village (STPCV) use the L train daily, thousands of others use the 14th Street bus and sidewalks, and they are augmented by thousands of additional CD6 residents and commuters;

WHEREAS, E. 14th Street east of 3rd Avenue will not, according to current NYCT/DOT plans, be part of the proposed 14th Street “busway,” and so will bear the brunt of additional automotive traffic, including for-hire vehicles (FHVs), thus hampering bus flow;

WHEREAS, Avenue C, the proposed route for the shuttle bus from the ferry to E. 14th Street, is a two-lane road already subject to unexpected snarls;

WHEREAS, the M23 bus, though now upgraded to SBS status, lacks a dedicated lane for most of its route and remains among the slowest buses in the NYCT system;

WHEREAS, the L1 and L4 shuttle bus are slated to drop commuters in front of a school building housing multiple facilities, on a narrow street that features heavy foot and car traffic, local hospitals, a dormitory, a park, and a bike lane;

WHEREAS, NYCT projects running 80 buses per hour across the Williamsburg Bridge, and will add 200 new diesel buses to its fleet to ensure reliability and lower emissions, as well as a yet-to-be determined number of electric buses;

WHEREAS, E. 14th Street is the site of several ongoing construction projects in addition to L train work already underway, like the reconstruction of the 1st Avenue L station with its new ADA-compliant elevator;

WHEREAS, E. 14th Street’s sidewalks host many food and other vendors whose carts can bottleneck pedestrian passages;

WHEREAS, the New York Police Department (NYPD) has announced a “dedicated force” of 46 police officers and 102 traffic enforcement agents to “monitor traffic flow” on the proposed “busway” and neighboring streets

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CB6 applauds and supports the extraordinary efforts and planning by NYCT and DOT to mitigate the widespread and drastic effects of the L train shutdown, and appreciates the agencies’ flexibility and openness to feedback, and so has suggestions that it respectfully asks these agencies to study and seriously consider as part of their ongoing dialog with CB6, including:

- Extending the 14th Street “busway” eastward to 1st Avenue and/or Avenue C, to minimize bottlenecks caused by private vehicles and FHV’s that could severely hamper ferry shuttle buses and STPCV and neighborhood commuters
- Maintaining the 14th Street “busway” on a 24/7 basis for the duration of L train stoppage, since heavy L commuter patterns, especially on weekends, extend far beyond “busway hours”
- Finding ways to ease traffic flow on Avenue C between E. 23rd and E. 14th Streets, to maximize the efficiency of ferry shuttle buses
- Reevaluating the E. 15th Street commuter drop-off point, possibly relocating it to E. 17th Street, which has less traffic, no schools, and no bike lane
- Assessing the transit needs of seniors and physically challenged residents along the 14th Street “busway” and proposing adequate solutions involving people movers and other transit modes
- Revisiting the M23SBS street design to maximize that troubled route’s efficiency
- Installing additional Metrocard vending machines along the river-to-river length of 14th Street to ensure access for local residents and commuters
- Specifying limited hours for truck deliveries to 14th Street merchants that, whenever possible, fall outside the currently proposed 5am-10pm “busway” times, expand the DOT existing off hour delivery program, while coordinating closely with the New York Police Department (NYPD) to ensure trucks don’t migrate to smaller side streets during off-limits times
- Banning traffic by FHV’s and private vehicles on 14th Street 24/7 during the L shutdown, except for emergencies or local residents needing access to garages on a limited basis
- Increasing the projected number of electric buses, rather than diesel buses, that NYCT plans to purchase and use on the 14th Street “busway” as well as shuttle routes;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NYCT and DOT should consult with the New York City Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC) to maximize commuter access to TLC cab apps on their own websites and apps, to encourage commuters to avoid other FHVs, which don't subsidize mass transit to the same extent;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NYCT, DOT, and TLC should implement a partnership with WAZE, a widely available traffic app, to allow drivers and passengers to connect online for minimal federally defined compensation, thus allowing drivers to use HOV-3 lanes with minimal effects on pollution and traffic as compared to FHVs, which cruise and idle after drop-offs;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DOT ensure that Motivate, which operates Citibike, deliver better service for existing and new corrals during the L emergency, since they are already too often depleted or emptied by slow rebalancing of bikes from site to site between uses;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that New York City's Department of Buildings (DOB) should delay the start of any construction projects not already in process within the affected areas until the L train shutdown ends in July 2020, to avoid further demands on overburdened streets;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that New York City's Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) should relocate all vendors along the proposed 14th Street "busway" and ban all street fairs and similar street-closing activities in the affected area during the L train shutdown;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CB6 applauds the newly announced NYPD "dedicated force," but hopes that number is in addition to overtaxed local precinct personnel, while urging NYPD to dramatically expand enforcement, via additional personnel and cameras, throughout all affected areas during the L train shutdown, to secure pedestrian safety while maintaining strict vigilance over all traffic requirements imposed by the emergency;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CB6 supports expanding Citibike as another transit option, but urges DOT to reexamine the cycling dangers posed by the Con Ed plant "choke point" at E. 14th Street and the badly designed and labeled stretch between E. 25th and E. 34th Streets, and mitigate them however possible;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CB6 also looks beyond its district's borders to incoming commuters with additional suggestions for city agencies, including:

- That DOT convert the Williamsburg Bridge to HOV-3 and bus use only 24-7 for the duration of the L shutdown
- That the DOT study converting the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges to HOV-2-only during at least peak hours of commuting, to stop single-occupant cars and FHVs from using them to overwhelm the areas affected by the L

· That New York City’s Economic Development Corporation (EDC) consider using larger, 349-passenger ferries currently used between Rockaway and Wall Street as part of the shuttle between Williamsburg and Stuyvesant Cove

· That EDC examine adding ferry service between Williamsburg and Manhattan’s West Side to help alleviate pressure on the 14th Street “busway”;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CB6 urges NYCT, DOT, and TLC to coordinate their efforts and begin real-time trials of their plans for L mitigation six months before the actual shutdown;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NYCT and DOT regularly consult with affected community boards and their L train task force, working under the Manhattan borough president’s office, to keep an open feedback loop for the L shutdown’s duration, since situations will inevitably change, so that strategies and solutions can be identified and implemented quickly and efficiently.

VOTE: 36 in Favor 0 Opposed 2 Abstentions 0 Not Entitled

Best regards,



Jesús Pérez
District Manager

Cc: Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Keith Powers, Council Member
Hon. Carlina Rivera, Council Member
Marcus Book, MTA New York City Transit
Colleen Chattergoon, New York City Department of Transportation
Sandra McKee, Chair, CB6 Transportation Committee