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**Gale A. Brewer, Borough President**

August 15, 2018

Joseph Lhota  
Chairman  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
2 Broadway  
New York, New York 10004

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

Dear Mr. Lhota and Mr. Byford,

I write regarding the delay of future Select Bus Service routes until 2021 following the installation of the B81 SBS in Southern Brooklyn. This and other significant cuts, quietly included in the MTA's July Financial Plan document with no meaningful discussion or public announcement, are gravely concerning. Moreover, the way in which these cuts were communicated to the public runs counter to the new culture and process that President Byford has promised to bring to MTA New York City Transit. I am requesting that these decisions and the way in which they were communicated both be re-evaluated.

At a time when bus ridership is dropping and the system is in crisis, cutting long-awaited service improvements to save relatively little money seems likely to worsen the problem. Select Bus Service routes are proven to produce increased reliability, decreased travel times, and therefore increased ridership. Specifically in Manhattan, in its first year of operation, the M15 SBS saw a 12% increase in ridership, with a 15% increase in service over the local M15 bus. It has long been clear that we need more Select Bus Service routes to stem ridership drops, not less. MTA New York City Transit cannot and should not unilaterally renege on its promise to Manhattan residents and its partnership with the city's Department of Transportation.

Additionally, we are grateful that President Byford has committed to making the subway system fully accessible in 15 years. However, at this moment only 25% of the system is accessible to those with a disability and seniors. Listed within these budget cuts are reductions to the MTA's Mobile Sales Program visits, highly used by seniors and riders who are disabled, many of whom cannot use staircases to enter subway stations to refill their MetroCards before getting on the bus. The reduction of these critical MetroCard vending buses represents a step backwards in terms of serving disabled and senior populations.

MTA New York City Transit and the state have repeatedly requested massive increases in financial support from the city as you embark upon the Fast Forward Plan to modernize our city's transportation system. We are very excited about this plan, but if city officials are ever to entertain further increases in aid, none could responsibly do so without the absolute certainty of transparent cooperation from MTA New York City Transit.

It speaks volumes about how MTA New York City Transit's community engagement processes need to improve that the only notice of these massive changes in policy can be found hundreds of pages into a dense and relatively arcane preliminary budget. This lack of communication, like the service cuts themselves, is ultimately counterproductive, further fraying strained trust in the MTA.

I hope that MTA New York City Transit will take these concerns to heart. We cannot move toward addressing the city's ongoing transportation crisis if we cannot make decisions cooperatively and transparently.

I anticipate hearing back from you soon. Thank you for your attention to this matter and should you have any questions, please contact Paul Goebel, Transportation Policy Analyst, in my office at 212-669-8151 or pgoebel@manhattanbp.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gale A. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Gale A. Brewer  
Manhattan Borough President

Cc: Patrick Foye, President, Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
Veronique Hakim, Managing Director, Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
Darryl Irick, President, Metropolitan Transportation Authority Bus Company  
Alex Elegudin, Senior Advisor for Systemwide Accessibility, New York City Transit  
Sarah Meyer, Chief Customer Officer, New York City Transit  
Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner, NYC Department of Transportation  
Ed Pincar Jr., Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC Department of Transportation  
Gabrielle Dann-Allel, Manhattan Borough Director, Mayor's Community Affairs Unit  
Jaqi Cohen, Campaign Coordinator, NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign  
Tabitha Decker, Deputy Executive Director, TransitCenter  
Nick Sifuentes, Executive Director, Tri-State Transportation Campaign  
John Raskin, Executive Director, Riders Alliance