



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

Riders Alliance, Senator Squadron, Elected Officials Rally to Keep Free Transfer for G, J and M Train Riders

DANIEL L. SQUADRON August 27, 2014

| ISSUE: **TRANSPORTATION, MTA (METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY), NEW YORK CITY**

Free Transfer, Set to Expire Next Week, Could Make Commuting Cheaper and Faster for Thousands of Riders

BROOKLYN, NY—This morning, the grassroots organization Riders Alliance, State Senator Daniel Squadron, Deputy Borough President Diana Reyna, Senator Martin Dilan, Assembly Member Joseph Lentol, Council Members Stephen Levin and Antonio Reynoso, and the office of Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez rallied in front of the Broadway G train station to ask the MTA to make permanent a well-received free transfer between the G train at the Broadway station and the J and M trains at Lorimer.

The free transfer was temporarily implemented while the G train tunnel is under construction and is currently set to expire next week. A Full Line Review requested by State Senators Squadron and Dilan in 2013 found that about 2,300 riders transferred daily between the G and J/M trains, even before construction began on the G train tunnel. People with

pay-per-ride Metrocards would have to pay twice to make that transfer if the MTA does not agree to make the free transfer permanent.

“One silver lining to the G train outage has been the free transfer to the J/M line. Making it permanent is an affordable way to improve service and respond to riders,” said **State Senator Daniel Squadron**. “I want to thank the Riders Alliance and my colleagues for their advocacy, and the MTA for the great and responsive way they handled the G train outage.”

Rebecca Bailin, senior organizer at the Riders Alliance, said, “This free transfer is a cheap, convenient way to better connect G train riders to the rest of the city. Keeping the transfer in place could help thousands of riders every day, especially low-income riders who rely on pay-per-ride Metrocards. It’s not just an easy fix; it’s also good policy.”

Following a town hall meeting hosted by Senator Squadron, the MTA agreed earlier this summer to adopt a proposal made by the Riders Alliance, Senator Squadron and many local elected officials to provide free transfers for riders for the 5 weeks that the G train tunnel is closed for construction. Those free transfers are set to expire next week.

Today, riders and elected officials are calling on the MTA to make the transfer permanent. The advocates and elected officials argued that:

- A free transfer between the G and J/M trains would better connect G train riders with the rest of the city.
- Low-income riders stand especially to benefit, because more low-income riders traditionally use pay-per-ride Metrocards instead of unlimited passes.
- G train riders could benefit especially because G riders rely more heavily on transfers than any other line in the system, according to the MTA's Full Line Review of the G. The review found that G train riders transfer an average of at least once per trip.
- The G train at Broadway is less than a three minute walk from the J and M at Lorimer.
- The proposed transfer is an affordable way to provide better connectivity, because no construction or physical infrastructure would be required; the MTA would just have to keep the Metrocard readers programmed to accept free transfers.

The MTA estimated last year that the only cost to providing the free transfer would be lost fares from people who are currently transferring at that location and paying full fare to enter the system again. The MTA estimated that there would be \$770,000 in fares that pay-per-ride riders would save and the MTA would lose in revenue.

Last week, Riders Alliance members and elected officials including State Senator Squadron, Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney, Congresswoman Nydia M. Velazquez, Borough President Eric Adams, State Senator Martin Dilan, State Assembly Member Joseph Lentol, State Assembly Member Maritza Davila, Council Member Steve Levin and Council Member Antonio Reynoso, sent letters to the MTA requesting that the free transfer be made permanent. The Riders Alliance is also collecting 500 petitions signatures from G, J and M

train riders in support of the free transfer; an online version of that petition is available at www.ridersny.org/free-transfer-jmg.

"Commuters should pay one fare for one subway trip, it's that simple. Just as the MTA did for those traveling along Lexington Avenue in Midtown East over a decade ago, a free out-of-system transfer should be permanently in effect between the Broadway G stop and the Lorimer Street J/M stop. As North Brooklyn continues to grow, the number of riders impacted by this double fare continues to rise, adding to an unnecessary economic burden faced by this community. The MTA should take leadership on this issue and right this wrong, once and for all," said **Borough President Eric Adams**.

"The increase in G ridership and growth of the communities it connects is unprecedented. However, the continued growth of North Brooklyn is not limited to any one stop on the G Line or the Greenpoint community; case in point, ridership increases on the J and M lines to stops further east and north. The MTA made the right call to make the out-of-service connection between the G to the L/M free as work on the G Line tunnel progresses. Upon completion of these repairs, in light of ridership increases and in the interests of improving service and access in the area, this free transfer should be made permanent," said **Senator Martin Malave Dilan**.

State Assembly Member Joseph Lentol said, "The expansion of the transportation system in North Brooklyn has been slowly but surely happening as a result of the area's population growth. Yet, the G train is the only subway that fully serves Brooklyn. The MTA must realize

that to access southern Manhattan and eastern Brooklyn the J/M train serve as a great alternative. However, riders of these lines are currently forced to make an out-of-station transfer between the G and J/M that is costly for those without unlimited cards. I stand with my colleagues in urging the MTA to permanently instate a free out-of-station transfer for the Lorimer J/M and Broadway G stops.”

"The introduction of free transfers from the G train at Broadway to the J and M trains at Lorimer has been a success on all levels and now is the time to make it permanent. With limited transportation options, it is important that we make it as easy and affordable for New Yorkers to get where they need to go and making this free transfer permanent is an important step in accomplishing that. I'm proud to join with Rider's Alliance and my fellow elected officials in calling for free transfers from the G train at Broadway to the J and M trains at Lorimer,” said **Council Member Stephen Levin.**

“If you take the B43 bus to the J train just one stop away at Flushing, the transfer is free. Riders of the G train who want to transfer to the J in the same way should not be charged twice. This charge is a particular burden for low-income people who cannot afford monthly Metrocards,” said **Council Member Antonio Reynoso.**

David Estrada, a Riders Alliance member who lives off the G train in Brooklyn, said, "This free transfer really matters to me. I'm unemployed at the moment and I don't have a monthly MetroCard. I feel cheated because I've already paid my fare and there's a transfer, that I can see but I can't use! Why should I have to pay double to go to visit my friends and family? I

call on the MTA to do what is fair and make this free transfer permanent."

Jason Saven, a Riders Alliance member who lives off of the Broadway G stop, said, "More than once I've had to transfer here and had to pay double. It doesn't make a lot of sense. Why should I have to pay double to get where I need to go? I want to see the transfer between the J and M at Lorimer and the G at Broadway made permanent."

Andrea Smith, a Riders Alliance member who lives in Brooklyn off of the Alabama Avenue stop on the J train, said, "I transfer from the J to the G train at this stop all the time. Transferring from the J to the G train is the easiest way for me to get around. I want this free transfer to be permanent because it saves me time and money when I'm traveling"

A copy of the letter can be found below.